
Introduction

Knox College was founded in 1837 by anti-slavery activists driven by a deep sense of mission. Remarkably, their original commitment to access for all qualified students, regardless of financial means or background, race or gender, still serves to guide the College today. Indeed, we believe that it is this mission of access and inclusion that has been the single most important source of the College's capacity to adapt and thrive for over 180 years.

The world has changed immeasurably since 1837, but the institution has evolved to meet the times through the efforts of generations of faculty, staff, students, trustees, alumni and friends. In peace and war, prosperity and hardship, through social transformations across the nation, the College has succeeded in educating its students for lives of distinction and purpose. We can say with pride that Knox ranks with the best colleges in the country in preparing its graduates to earn advanced degrees in the arts, humanities, social sciences and sciences, and in the professions. Inspired by the motto *Veritas*, Knox graduates have held leadership positions in business, journalism, law, medicine, the academy and public service. All this has been accomplished through careful stewardship of our resources -- modest in comparison to some of our peer institutions -- and the unlimited dedication of the Knox community, including our nearly 16,000 living alumni who generously support the institution.

The last decade has been characterized by profound changes, and all institutions of higher education must rise to the challenge. Our students will enter a world transformed at an accelerating pace through globalization, climate change, technological and social revolutions, demographic shifts, and economic uncertainty. Over the decade, we have sought at Knox to strike a balance between allegiance to mission and responsiveness to change. This has not always been easy. We recognize that we must strive to build a more inclusive campus community, drive institutional and educational planning to respond to new challenges, and gather data consistently and systematically to inform our decisions. Addressing the financial burden of college on our students and their families while also ensuring that the faculty and staff of the institution are appropriately supported and rewarded for their good work remains a challenge for all institutions of higher education. As an inclusive community, we strive to honor the important principles of deliberation through shared governance in an environment of extraordinarily rapid change.

It can be easy to lose sight of the larger picture in the demands of daily operations. The preparation of this assurance argument has provided an important institutional moment of reflection on progress made over the past decade and challenges yet to be overcome. We submit this report with full confidence that the peer review process by the Higher Learning Commission will provide the College with significant guidance for the future so that we can provide a Knox education for generations to come.

Teresa L. Amott
President
Knox College



Assurance Argument

Knox College - IL

Review date: 1/27/2020

1 - Mission

The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

1.A - Core Component 1.A

The institution's mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations.

1. The mission statement is developed through a process suited to the nature and culture of the institution and is adopted by the governing board.
2. The institution's academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.
3. The institution's planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission. (This sub-component may be addressed by reference to the response to Criterion 5.C.1.)

Argument

Since its founding by anti-slavery activists in 1837, Knox College has been a mission-driven institution: *"Knox College is a community of individuals from diverse backgrounds challenging each other to explore, understand and improve ourselves, our society and our world."* Although Knox's complete [mission statement](#) is several paragraphs long, this first sentence summarizes the College's commitment to educational excellence, diversity, and civic engagement, while the additional paragraphs spell out the ways in which the College achieves this mission. As noted by HLC reviewers in the College's 2009 comprehensive appraisal, "The essence and spirit of Knox's mission statement is understood across campus, despite its acknowledged length and complexity." The same is true today.

Knox's mission was drafted as part of the College's formal strategic planning process in 1992-1993. Members of the strategic planning committee interviewed many individuals and conducted focus groups with all Knox constituent groups, including members of the Galesburg community. The mission statement was approved by faculty in 1993 and was reaffirmed by the Board of Trustees in 2008.

The mission statement has endured since 1993 because it is inclusive and expansive enough to adapt to significant changes in both the educational environment and the needs of our students. Even in this volatile time for higher education, Knox's mission statement continues to be relevant and guides priorities and the allocation of resources. Although the mission has not been revisited in its entirety since it was written, the College is responsive to concerns and suggestions from its constituents. In 2017, the Board of Trustees approved a [minor update](#) to the statement in response to a suggestion from a student organization and the College's diversity committee. However, we recognize that best practice suggests that all institutions should revisit their mission statements to ensure that they serve as the best possible guidepost. It is our plan to undertake a complete review of the mission statement in the near future. As noted above, Knox's mission statement is atypically long and is often shortened to just the first sentence. Its length will be a point of discussion when the review takes place.

Knox's mission provided a focus for its [strategic plan](#), which was affirmed by the Board of Trustees in October 2014 after an extensive [planning process](#). Creation of Knox 2018 involved six campus [committees](#) composed of Knox faculty, staff, administration, students, alumni and parents—approximately 120 participants in all. The strategic planning exercise was built around six framing discussion points, each of which served to focus discussion and direction:

- Enrolling a 21st Century Student Body
- Providing a 21st Century Education
- Engaging the Knox Community
- Supporting a 21st Century Faculty and Staff
- Sustaining Knox Financially
- Designing and Maintaining a 21st Century Campus

Based on their discussions, the groups developed themes and suggested initiatives for inclusion in the strategic plan; this input was fundamental to the plan's development.

The first strategic goal in the Knox 2018 plan reflects the mission's stated commitment to educational excellence: *Advance Knox's Distinct Approach to Liberal Learning*. The second addresses Knox's goal to build a strong community through diversity, alumni and civic engagement: *Engage Our Diverse, Vibrant Campus Community*. The third provides for the future: *Ensure a Knox Education for Generations to Come*.

In October, 2019, the Knox Board of Trustees was presented with a draft for Knox 2022. Knox 2022 is a continuation of Knox 2018 and retains the strategic goals listed above as they are still relevant to the mission of the College (refer to 5C). The Senior Staff has revised the strategic priorities to remove those well underway, refine and refocus priorities that have changed over time, and continue to work on those that were not achieved during Knox 2018. The draft of the [plan](#) (pp.10-13) was presented to all faculty and staff in two open forums following the October Board meeting and the final affirmation of Knox 2022 is scheduled for the February Board meeting.

As detailed in 5C, budgeting and fundraising priorities for Knox 2018 were guided by the strategic plan. Senior staff developed strategic priorities and assigned [cost estimates](#) for each priority and they also continually refined specific objectives based on the plan goals. For example, fundraising initiatives for [Phase II](#) of the Above and Beyond fundraising initiatives, as referenced in 5A, aligned with specific funding needs arising from the strategic plan projects and priorities.

The College's ongoing review and [progress reports](#) on the strategic plan goals, which are posted on the College's website, keep the mission at the forefront of all activities. [Updates](#) are presented to the Board at each meeting (3 times per year) and are incorporated into the strategic plan progress reports. After each Board meeting, the president and Senior Staff host forums open to all faculty and staff (see 2019 forums in 5A) to apprise the campus community of progress toward the Knox 2018 goals.

Knox College's academic programming, student support services, and enrollment profile are aligned with its mission as detailed below, and the mission is articulated publicly in a variety of ways as detailed in 1B.

Academic Programs

The mission statement is, at its heart, about the nature and the outcomes of a Knox education. The mission states that Knox has a “tradition of active liberal arts learning,” and the College’s curriculum combines *“inquiry in traditional as well as newer disciplines with the integrative perspective of interdisciplinary work; building from basic skills of writing, reading, calculating and critical analysis to opportunities for sophisticated student research and creative expression.”* Knox offers 41 majors and 51 minors that include traditional disciplines as well as several interdisciplinary programs and courses that involve multiple fields of study.

Knox offers several programs to help students achieve academic success. The Student Preparation and Readiness for Knox (SPARK) summer bridge program meets two weeks before the start of the academic year and helps prepare a subset of incoming students for the academic rigor of college as well as learning how to balance academic and residential life (see 3D). The College offers two TRIO programs: the [TRIO Achievement program](#) (Student Support Services) and [McNair Scholars Program](#). Both support underrepresented students who have modest incomes and students with disabilities. Additionally, the [Center for Teaching and Learning](#) provides holistic academic support services for all Knox College students, including peer tutoring and writers’ workshops. [Disability Support Services](#) provides accommodations and other support for students who have documented disabilities (see 3D for additional information).

Knox has a longstanding commitment to support advanced student research and creative work—intensive, substantive projects that go beyond coursework. Nearly 90% of students complete independent study, research, or creative projects (this estimate is according to the Knox Registrar -- see 3E for more information). [The Gerald and Carol Vovis Center for Research & Advanced Study](#) administers institutional funding for student work and showcases this work to the campus and external Knox audiences. Every year, Knox awards more than \$350,000 in grants (see [breakdown](#)) to individual students to support their research and creative projects, and many students participate in study abroad or one of the College’s immersive terms (3B). In 2017-2018, the Higher Learning Commission approved the College's request to offer Bachelor of Science degrees in nine science fields of study (biochemistry, biology, chemistry, computer science, mathematics, neuroscience, physics, psychology, and environmental science) in addition to the B.A. degrees offered for those majors (see 3A for more information). These majors provide a more rigorous science program for students wishing to complete additional coursework.

As described in 1D, service is a crucial component of the Knox mission and education. The College’s mission states that the Knox community challenges each other to improve “our society and our world.” In its most recent curriculum reform, Knox formally integrated civic engagement into the fabric of its curriculum as described in 3B.

Student Services

The mission states that Knox provides a supportive environment, and the Division of Student Development offers an array of services that have adapted to our changing environment and students’ needs. The division has grown significantly in sophistication and professionalism since the 2009 reaccreditation review, with substantial changes in areas such as campus life, counseling, disability and health services, career development, and the recognition of diverse cultural heritages and programs.

- The [Bastian Family Center for Career Success](#) sponsors career development programming,

career and graduate school fairs, maintains internship and job listings, provides one-on-one guidance for students, and aligns with Alumni Engagement to provide opportunities for interactions between current students and alumni. The Center's new [strategic plan](#) "Connecting and Transforming the Bastian Family Center for Career Success," is aligned with the College's mission statement, which includes the commitment to "... put learning to use to accomplish both personal and social goals ..." The Bastian Center's plan recognizes that services must meet the needs of increasingly diverse student populations by continually reviewing the efficacy of services provided and adding or adjusting as needed. The Center has begun to create strong partnerships with alumni who are potential employers or internship sites to give Knox students the support they need to achieve success after graduation. See 3E for additional information.

- Knox provides health care and confidential counseling services to all students. The College's [Health](#) and [Counseling](#) Services offers medical and mental health services including general medical evaluations, treatment for acute medical problems, reproductive health care, individual, couples, and group counseling, and referrals to community resources.
- Knox's residential campus culture provides "supportive residential opportunities" as referenced in the mission. The [Campus Life](#) office promotes the importance of being a member of a vital, diverse residential community through a variety of housing options and student activities. Refer to 3E for additional information.
- The College has more than 80 [student organizations](#), including active fraternity and sorority life. Knox offers both intercollegiate and recreational sports.
- The [Office of Spiritual Life](#) exists to nurture the diverse spiritual lives of Knox students and the wider community of the College, and the [Office for Intercultural Life](#) promotes campus-wide intercultural awareness through programming and dialogues. Both of these offices, along with the [Office of International Student Services](#), are housed in the new [House of Peace and Equity \(HOPE\) Center](#) on campus.

Enrollment profile

Knox has always prided itself on its mission of access, and in its early years was a "manual labor" college at which students provided labor in lieu of tuition, thus ensuring that tuition would not be a barrier to entry for families without means. While no longer a labor college, Knox has reinterpreted this mission in the past decade, focusing on serving underrepresented students to give them a ladder for economic mobility. We are heartened to have received [national recognition](#) for that mission of access. The New York Times 2017 College Access Index [ranked Knox #16](#) in the nation for colleges "doing the most for the American Dream."

The College is seeking to more fully achieve its mission in the midst of challenging demographic and economic changes. In the wake of the 2008 recession, very few observers fully appreciated how long it would take for family incomes to return to healthy growth levels, how racial and cultural diversity would drive comprehensive inclusion efforts in the curriculum, staffing, and campus life, or how rapidly technological change and social media would transform our campus life.

While declines in college-bound youth were long forecasted for the Midwest, the rise in numbers of Illinois youth [leaving the state](#) for college education was more rapid than anticipated, and the competition from public universities and other private liberal arts colleges also intensified more rapidly than anticipated. The increase in tuition discounting and resulting stagnation in net tuition revenue, also forecasted but occurring at a more rapid pace, has certainly challenged the College's

fiscal situation. Fortunately, donors have responded to our mission, and fundraising, particularly for capital and endowment projects, has offset some of the strains on the budget. Meeting this mission is now more challenging than ever before, but the College remains committed (see 5C for additional information).

The first sentence of the mission references Knox's commitment to serving individuals from diverse backgrounds, and the College's enrollment demographics reflect this commitment. When compared with 26 similar liberal arts colleges who are a part of the Great Lakes Colleges' Association or the Associated Colleges of the Midwest, Knox had the [highest percentage](#) of U.S. citizens / permanent residents who are students of color at 41.9% (2017). The next highest college had 37.6%. In the [2020 Best College Rankings](#) from *US News and World Report*, Knox ranked in the top 50 among the nation's liberal arts colleges in several areas, including international and ethnic diversity of the student body.

Sources

- 1A_ABBY_2019
- 1A_ACM_GLCA Diversity_2019
- 1A_Bastian Family Webpage_2019
- 1A_Bastian Strategic Plan_2019
- 1A_BOT Mission Statement Update_2017
- 1A_Campus Life Webpage_2019
- 1A_Counseling Services Webpage_2019
- 1A_Crane Bus Article IL outmigration_2018
- 1A_CTL_2019
- 1A_Disability Support Services_2019
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- 1A_HOPE Article_Newsletter_2019
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- 1A_Knox2018ProgressReport
- 1A_McNair website
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- 1A_NYT Ranking
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- 1A_OpenForum_Oct2019
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- 1A_Spiritual Life Webpage_2019
- 1A_Strategic Plan Knox 2018
- 1A_Student Organizations Webpage_2019
- 1A_TRIO Achievement website
- 1A_USNWR Rankings_2020
- 1A_Vovis Center Webpage_2019

1.B - Core Component 1.B

The mission is articulated publicly.

1. The institution clearly articulates its mission through one or more public documents, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans, or institutional priorities.
2. The mission document or documents are current and explain the extent of the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development, and religious or cultural purpose.
3. The mission document or documents identify the nature, scope, and intended constituents of the higher education programs and services the institution provides.

Argument

Knox College's mission statement is articulated publicly:

- It is published on the website and is in the [faculty](#) (p.4) and [employee](#) (p.7) handbooks;
- It forms part of the suite of [online materials](#) that together comprise the student handbook;
- It is included in the Knox catalog (both [online](#) and printed);
- It is inscribed [on the wall](#) above the bust of young Mr. Lincoln as part of an exhibit commissioned by an alumni donor and designed by faculty and administrators. This bust sits on a pedestal in the main hallway of the Old Main building on campus, which is the location of the Knox president's office, academic affairs, student development, the business office, and faculty offices for several academic departments, and it is the first stop on the admission tour.

The mission statement is also included in the orientation sessions for new trustees and new employees. Additionally, the College created [bookmarks](#) with the mission printed on them, and these are distributed to new employees.

As noted in 1A, Knox's mission statement is long, but the length provides detail regarding how Knox carries out its mission "to explore, understand, and improve ourselves, our society, and our world." The statement describes the College's mission of liberal arts learning by providing information about the curriculum, learning environment, residential campus culture, and community.

Sources

- 1B_Catalog Webpage
- 1B_Employee Handbook
- 1B_Employee Handbook (page number 7)
- 1B_Mission Bookmark_2019
- 1B_Mission photo_2019
- 1B_Student Handbook
- Faculty Handbook
- Faculty Handbook (page number 4)

1.C - Core Component 1.C

The institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society.

1. The institution addresses its role in a multicultural society.
2. The institution's processes and activities reflect attention to human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

Argument

Knox was founded in 1837 by a group of Presbyterians and Congregationalists from upstate New York led by the Reverend George Washington Gale, who founded both Knox College and the town of Galesburg. The College's founding document (called the [Circular and Plan](#)) opposed slavery in all forms—physical, spiritual, intellectual—and declared that the College would be accessible to students regardless of their financial means or race. This was a radical idea at the time. Knox was among the first colleges in the nation open to both African-Americans and women. Knox's founder was indicted for harboring fugitive slaves, and its first president, Hiram Huntington Kellogg, opposed discrimination against women. In 1858, Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas held one of their historic debates at Knox, and Lincoln spoke out publicly to condemn slavery on moral grounds during this debate. Two years later, one of the first Black students in Illinois, Barnabas Root, graduated from Knox; in addition, the first Black U.S. Senator, Hiram Revels, who served in the Senate during Reconstruction, was also educated at Knox.

The College's mission statement reflects the continuation of this deeply held belief, citing that Knox is “a community of individuals from diverse backgrounds....” As noted in 1A, Knox's student body is highly diverse; currently, approximately 40% of the College's U.S. students are students of color, and 19% are international. The number of Knox students who self-identify as LGBTQ+ is growing each year and currently represents more than 25% of the entering class, with the majority of those students identifying as bisexual, according to the latest CIRP survey of first-year students.

Knox is committed to supporting its diverse student population. As noted in 1A, Knox's processes and activities support its diversity. The requirements for a Knox degree include the satisfactory completion of at least 36 credits, including the [Elements](#) (pp.22-24), which are seven areas of study that cultivate the skills of liberal learning, and students must take at least one course that satisfies each element (see 4B for more information). Element 3 is “Critically examine questions of power and inequity,” and student learning goals associated with Element 3 are:

- Recognize and discuss issues of power and inequity in diverse human societies.
- Articulate ways that specific cultural perspectives and personal experiences shape individual reality.
- Examine and critique cultural perspectives, including their own.

Campuses have not been quiet over the past decade, and the mission to “challenge each other” to improve the world has certainly manifested itself at Knox College through Title IX, Black Lives Matter, DACA and LGBTQ+ activism. There have been uncomfortable moments on the Knox campus as on others, with students and faculty demanding that the College live its mission rather than simply give it lip service. However, the foundation of a Knox education is open and honest

discussions in and out of the classroom. As a part of the [Interdisciplinary Studies program](#) (p.189), the College offers three courses in social justice dialogues which teach students to engage in open and constructive dialogue, learning, and exploration concerning issues of interpersonal relations, conflict, and community. After completion of the first course, students can take the second course, in which they are trained as inter-group dialogue peer facilitators and are utilized by the campus community to lead campus conversations and negotiate difficult discussions between campus groups.

In the fall of 2018, students, faculty, and staff were invited to the first [Day of Dialogue](#), organized by the Multicultural Student Advisory Council (MSAC). Classes were canceled on that day. The event included facilitated discussions on socioeconomic class, race, gender and political ideology, and concluded with a community dinner for all participants. The [second Day of Dialogue](#) took place in the fall 2019.

Knox's [Office for Intercultural Life](#) helps to meet the academic, and personal needs and concerns of underrepresented students as described in 1A. Most recently, the College has supplemented its diversity and inclusion programming by providing a part-time [LGBTQ+ advisor](#) to work exclusively with LGBTQ+ students, developing programming to encourage appreciation and inclusion and providing institutional support and visibility for this community. Donors have been identified who will make the LGBTQ+ position full-time. In November 2019, Knox announced creation of a new [Gender and Sexuality Center/Group Study Commons](#).

Knox has several student organizations that support our diversity, including but not limited to: an active LGBTQ+ student organization, [Common Ground](#); [Allied Blacks for Liberty & Equality \(A.B.L.E\)](#); [Asian Student Association](#), which encompasses the Chinese Club, Japanese Club, Korean Club, and aaina Club (South Asian cultures); [MEChA](#), which promotes activism in higher education, culture, and the history of Chicanos; and the [First Generation club](#). Additionally, Intercultural Life sponsors a [Multicultural Student Advisory Council](#), which responds to issues of diversity, inclusion, and multiculturalism at the College.

Although Knox's student body is highly diverse, the College has had less success at increasing the diversity of faculty and staff. Searches we've undertaken showed that we are hampered by the rural location of the College and by faculty salaries that are not nationally competitive. As shown in the [charts](#), 84% of the faculty and 85% of the staff identified as white in 2018. Nonetheless, the College recognizes that increasing the diversity of our faculty and staff is central to the mission, and we are focusing on improving faculty salaries over the next 3 to 5 years.

To address the gap between our current faculty and staff diversity profile and that which we desire, Knox has expanded advertising for positions through channels that focus on equity and inclusion hiring, revised the [faculty hiring handbook](#) to include recommendations for recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce, and engaged in equity hiring workshops such as the [Fellows Program Workshop](#), offered in June 2018, to address implicit bias. In addition, newly implemented human resources software allows the College to collect demographic data from our applicant pools to verify that we are reaching a more diverse population. If reports in our applicant tracking system BambooHR (see 5A for more information) suggest the need, Human Resources staff can recommend advertising in additional channels to increase diversity. In addition, as a member of the Associated Colleges of the Midwest consortium of 14 liberal arts colleges, the College has benefited from participation in a Mellon Foundation grant that subsidizes diversity hires to the faculty for the first two years of employment. At present, two Knox faculty members are subsidized under this program.

Sources

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- 1C_Asian Student Assoc_webpage
- 1C_Common Ground Webpage_2019
- 1C_Day of Dialogue Article_2018
- 1C_Day of Dialogue_2019
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- 1C_Faculty Hiring Guidelines
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- 1C_FirstGen_webpage
- 1C_Gender and Sexuality Center_Email
- 1C_History Circular and Plan
- 1C_Intercultural Life Webpage_2019
- 1C_LGBTQ advisor resp_2019
- 1C_MEChA_webpage
- 1C_Multicultural Student Advisory Council_webpage
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1.D - Core Component 1.D

The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.

1. Actions and decisions reflect an understanding that in its educational role the institution serves the public, not solely the institution, and thus entails a public obligation.
2. The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.
3. The institution engages with its identified external constituencies and communities of interest and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

Argument

Knox's mission affirms that the College is committed to improving "our society and our world," and the strategic plan frames this commitment in Goal 2 as engaging "our vibrant, diverse campus community." The College is an active participant in Illinois Campus Compact and national Campus Compact, coalitions of colleges and universities working to promote the civic mission of higher education through civic engagement by students, faculty and staff. Knox President Teresa Amott serves on the national Campus Compact board and chairs the Illinois Campus Compact board. Two years ago the College signed on to the [Campus Compact 30th Anniversary Commitment to Civic Engagement](#) to reinvigorate our commitment to the public good. At that time, Knox committed to developing a civic action plan that brings the campus and community into closer collaboration.

Knox has a [significant impact](#) on the Galesburg community and beyond. The College is highly active in the local Galesburg community and offers programs (described below) that integrate students into the community. In its draft strategic plan, [Knox 2022](#) (p.3), the College includes the strategic priority, "Create a Galesburg community advisory board to provide counsel and feedback on campus community matters and enhance relationships with our community partners. Identify shared goals and avenues for collaboration. Increase programming that strengthens relationships between students, faculty, staff, and members of the Galesburg community." This initiative is currently underway. See 1A and 5C for additional information on Knox 2022.

[Washington Monthly ranks Knox #42](#) among more than 200 national liberal arts colleges for its contributions to the public good. Knox students serve in the community for many local non-profit organizations, schools, and charities. In 2017-2018, students engaged in more than 80,000 hours of service in the Galesburg area, as measured by criteria developed by the Corporation for National and Community Service. In addition, the College participates in extensive voter registration for its students to encourage their civic engagement. The [2019 report](#) from the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) showed that 78.4% of eligible voters at Knox were registered to vote in midterm elections in 2018, an increase of nearly 10% from 2014. In comparison with all institutions tracked by NSLVE (approximately 1,000), 39.7% of Knox students voted in 2018, compared with 39.1% of all institutions. While the high percentage of international students at Knox does place a ceiling on the number of students who can vote in U.S. elections, it is our goal to be among the national leaders in this area.

Through the [Kleine Center for Community Service](#) Knox students contribute thousands of hours of

service every year through established partnerships and special programs, including days of service and the groundbreaking [KnoxCorps program](#), which places current students and recent graduates in long-term positions with local and regional organizations. KnoxCorps has completed six years of service to the community. The program also receives ongoing support from community partners and industry, including funding to expand into summer programming.

- The Knox [JusticeCorps](#) continues to serve the Knox County Courthouse with student volunteers. Each volunteer serves 300 hours or more in the Courthouse.
- Over the past three years, the Kleine Center has hosted an Americorps Vista volunteer through the College's membership in Illinois Campus Compact. The volunteer assists students in identifying volunteer placements throughout Galesburg. Knox students also perform valuable services for area businesses as interns and have interned at more than 50 different organizations in this area.
- Each summer, several Knox students support the work of the Knox College for Kids (C4K) program. Held in June, C4K is a summer enrichment program for students from Galesburg and the surrounding communities who are entering grades 1-8. The program began at Knox College in 1975. The College offers reduced tuition for students who are financially eligible, supporting this through fundraising efforts. [Classes](#) are taught by Knox faculty, master teachers from area schools, professionals, and Knox College [students](#) who serve as teachers or teaching assistants.
- Considered a "Best Practice" within the state of Illinois, the [Gale Scholars Program](#) is a collaborative three-way partnership between Knox, District 205 (the local school district), and Carl Sandburg College (the area community college), to encourage and support higher education aspirations and success for academically promising first-generation and income eligible youth within the community. Ten promising [eighth graders](#) are identified and supported through high school graduation by a counselor who promotes academic achievement, co-curricular involvement, and community service; the counselor's salary is paid for by the three entities, and he is considered a Knox employee. The students participate in summer enrichment and academic preparation, community service, and special skill-building experiences. Students who complete the program in high school receive tuition-waiver scholarships toward the completion of associate's and bachelor's degree programs at Carl Sandburg College and Knox, respectively. Highly academically successful students at Galesburg High School may qualify for direct enrollment at Knox College. Since 2006, 46 Gale Scholars have graduated from Knox College.
- In 2019, the College launched an [Early College](#) program offering qualifying area high school students the opportunity to take tuition-free courses at Knox for credit. We look forward to reporting on that program in future years.
- Knox was the first higher education institution in the country to host a contemporary [Peace Corps Preparatory Program](#), which aligns with the goals of the Peace Corps under its charter: to help the people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained men and women; to help promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served; and to help promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans. Students in this program take courses to develop their intercultural competence, and Knox offers coursework and experiences to fulfill Peace Corps requirements in all six sectors (a rarity for schools our size): education, health, environment, agriculture, youth in development, and community economic development. In 2014 and 2015, Knox ranked in the [top 10 colleges](#) with enrollment under 5000 in the number of currently serving alumni; in recent years, the published list has been pared down so we cannot update that ranking.
- As a result of the civic engagement activities described above, the College has received

national recognition by being named to the [President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll](#) six times since 2009. The award (which was discontinued three years ago) highlights higher education institutions that display values of exemplary community service and that achieve meaningful outcomes in the communities served.

- Knox faculty and staff volunteer and contribute to nearly 100 different service, civic, and community organizations in the Galesburg area, including the FISH food pantry, Galesburg Civic Art Center, Safe Harbor Family Crisis Center, and Discovery Depot Children's Museum.
- Knox College is a leader in sustainability and has won awards and received national rankings for its efforts in this area, including the *Princeton Review's* Green Guide to Colleges. Knox received a first place award in the Food Organics category of RecycleMania in [2018](#) and [2019](#), a contest that attracts approximately 300 college campuses in 43 states. To achieve this award, Knox donated nearly 5,000 pounds of surplus cafeteria food in two months.
- Knox's [Office of Sustainability](#) was created in 2012 when the College hired its first sustainability coordinator. The office supports, encourages, markets, and advocates for sustainability across all departments and at all levels of the Knox Community. Since then, the office has taken initiatives started by students and a group of dedicated supporters to institutionalize environmental, social, and economic sustainability efforts on campus. All levels of the food system are addressed at Knox, from growing almost 2,000 pounds of food a year for the Hard Knox Cafe in the student-run Knox Farm, to on-campus dining services purchasing local and healthy foods, to Knox reducing the volume of waste it sends to the landfill by composting food waste from its main two dining facilities. Starting in 2019, all pre-consumer waste from the cafeteria (scraps from food prep) and post-consumer waste (food left on plates or not served after dining) is now collected and picked up by an off-campus vendor for composting. Excess food not served is collected once a day, 5 days a week, by the Knox chapter of the Food Recovery Network and delivered to local organizations that feed the community. Post-consumer food and all disposables (made of compostable material) from the on-campus snack bar are also sent to the compost vendor allowing us to compost the majority of food from our dining facilities.
- The "[There is No Away](#)" campaign during campus move out collects items that would otherwise end up in the landfill. In 2018, almost 6 tons of donations, including clothing, household items, food, and personal care products, were distributed to local charities, shelters, and used to stock the Knox College [Share Shop](#), an on-campus resource for reusing materials and fostering a sharing economy. This student-run "store" includes clothing, home goods, electronics, books, shoes, kitchen supplies, and more that are in good condition for the Knox community to take for free.

Sources

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- 1D_C4K Fellows_2019
- 1D_Campus Compact Action Statement_2017
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- 1D_Economic Impact 18-19
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1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

Summary

Since its founding in 1837, Knox College has been a mission-driven institution. Since 1993, the College has benefited from a strongly articulated mission statement that has guided the institution through the past decade's significant societal changes and challenges to higher education. The mission appears ever more relevant in the face of these changes, and the Knox community strives consistently and collaboratively to achieve our mission. As societal change accelerates, the mission statement should be reviewed periodically to ensure that it maintains its currency.

Several paragraphs in length, the statement is expansive and inclusive, adapting easily to changes in the educational environment as well as to students' needs while upholding the tradition of liberal arts learning. The mission clearly addresses Knox's role in a multicultural society and our enrollment trends demonstrate our commitment to inclusive programs and activities that promote student success.

The mission statement affirms the College's commitment to "explore, understand and improve ourselves, our society and our world." Knox is active in the Galesburg community, providing meaningful programs that support the community and enhance student learning, such as KnoxCorps, JusticeCorps, Early College, and Gale Scholars.

Strengths of Knox's Mission:

- The mission supports a broad educational program, which can change and adapt with time.
- It specifically addresses Knox's increasingly diverse student body and recognizes our role in a multicultural society.
- Knox has strong programs integrating the College with the Galesburg community.

Areas for Improvement:

- While our mission statement guides Knox's operations, it is atypically long, which results in it often being shortened to just the first sentence.
- Although Knox has amended the mission statement in response to constituents' concerns and suggestions, the College has not undertaken a complete review of the full mission statement for quite some time.
- Although the diversity of Knox's student body is in alignment with the mission statement, the College has had less success at increasing the diversity of faculty and staff.
- Knox is deeply committed to promoting civic engagement and has several programs integrated into the surrounding community. However, the mission statement does not clearly reflect this emphasis and only has one reference to serving the public good.

Sources

There are no sources.

2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

2.A - Core Component 2.A

The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions; it establishes and follows policies and processes for fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff.

Argument

Veritas

In 1903, Knox College adopted a [seal](#) that has on it the word “Veritas.” Latin for “truth,” veritas is the core value to which the Knox is committed; the College aspires to advance the highest standards of ethics and honesty in all aspects of its operations.

Financial

Knox has established policies and procedures that guide its budgeting, accounting, and purchasing activities to assure compliance and ensure integrity in all operations. The Vice President for Finance and Administrative Services/Chief Financial Officer is responsible for managing the financial affairs of Knox College and supervises the Business Office. This individual is responsible for carrying out the mandates of the Board and its Finance Committee, which reviews the annual budget and recommends its approval to the entire Board each June.

The College’s financial statements are audited annually by an independent certified public accounting firm to ensure compliance with accounting principles and financial reporting. The audit subcommittee of the Board receives the draft audit report from its auditors at the October Board meeting and accepts it on behalf of the Board. The College has received an unqualified opinion on its audits each year since its last accreditation. See 5A for additional information.

The Board of Trustees oversees the management of the College's endowment. At the February meeting, the Board approves the endowment draw for the upcoming fiscal year. Additionally, the Board of Trustees policies and procedures includes the [Investment Policy Statement](#) (p.7) for the endowment and any other supplemental investments. The policy articulates the responsibilities of the Investment Subcommittee of the Board as well as the specific roles of the Board of Trustees, supporting administrative staff, and the investment advisor (currently T. Rowe Price). Up until July 2017, the Investment Subcommittee itself managed the investment portfolio of the College (led by a long-serving Board member whose expertise and dedication were exceptional). Anticipating his retirement, the College decided to move to the “outsourced chief investment officer (CIO) model,” and undertook a thorough RFP process. As a result of that process, T. Rowe Price was selected to

serve in the CIO capacity. To date, the performance of T. Rowe Price has exceeded the benchmarks set by the Board.

The Office of Advancement annually reviews all endowed funds (see [list](#)) to ensure that they are being used appropriately, in accordance with the fund agreements and honoring the donor intent. On occasion, when the fund agreements are excessively restrictive, the College has worked with the donor, if still living, to modify the use, or in cases where the donor is deceased, petitioned for release from those restrictions from the Attorney General of Illinois. These releases have been obtained, freeing up funds for use in order to meet contemporary needs of the College.

In [April 2016](#) (p.3), in response to advocacy from students and faculty for more transparent consideration of social and ethical concerns in the investment of the College's endowment, the Board of Trustees created the [Knox Advisory Committee on Socially Responsible Investing \(KACSRI\)](#). KACSRI monitors investment trends and reports to the President. KACSRI is composed of students, alumni, staff, faculty, and Board members who are appointed by the president. The Board charged the committee with:

1. Monitoring trends and activities in investment responsibility that have an impact on educational and other institutional investors;
2. Receiving issues referred to it by members of the Knox community;
3. Conducting research on companies and issues and providing analyses when requested by the President; and
4. Making recommendations to the President regarding those corporations that seriously violate Knox's social and ethical standards, and for which actions on shareholder resolutions, proxy issues, and/or divestiture should be considered.

To ensure the College exercises integrity in honoring donor intent, Knox has adopted a "[Gift Acceptance and Valuation Policy](#)" that "gives guidance and counsel to those individuals within the Knox College community concerned with planning, promotion, solicitation, receipt, acceptance, application, and disposition of charitable gifts." The "Gift Acceptance Guidelines" within the policy clearly define how the Advancement Office handles the various kinds of gifts made to the College. Since its adoption in 2012, it has been [amended](#) once by the Board on February 20, 2016 to incorporate three changes. These included: 1) a new Board procedure for authorization of capital projects; 2) clarification that corporate and foundation gifts are only accepted where there are no reciprocal obligations, that public grants and contracts that do have reciprocal obligations are not counted as charitable gifts, and that the director of corporate, foundation, and sponsored research is an approved signatory on such grants/contracts; and 3) adjusted downward the remainder beneficiary percentage needed for the College to serve as trustee for a charitable trust.

Academic

The foundation of student academic responsibility at Knox is the [Honor Code](#), which states as its founding principle: "Intellectual integrity is the underpinning for all educational, scholarly, and creative work at Knox College. The College community expects its members to demonstrate a high degree of ethical integrity in all their actions, including and especially academic work. At Knox, each individual is held responsible for ensuring that his or her academic work meets the institutional standards of honesty." The Honor Code is upheld through the Knox College Honor System, which has been in place since 1951. A comprehensive review of the Honor Code was undertaken in the

2011-2012 academic year by a committee of faculty and students. The Code has been updated over the intervening years to reflect current best practices in academic integrity; the most recent update occurred in Summer 2019.

Students are trained in the Honor System, and a student-led [Honor Board](#) upholds and enforces the Code. The Academic Standing Committee administers the Honor Code to ensure that it operates with integrity. In addition, the Committee administers the program of honors studies in accordance with the policies established by the faculty. These responsibilities are detailed in the [Faculty Regulations](#) (p.8-9).

Policies and procedures for students are available in the catalog and on the [website](#). The online student handbook links to many policies and procedures, including the [Student Code of Conduct](#), [Acceptable Use Policies](#) for computer use, [Discrimination & Harassment](#) policies, and the [Community Living Standards](#) policies, to name a few. The website is kept current so that students always have access to the most recent iterations of the policies.

Faculty guidance is provided by the [Faculty Handbook](#), which is available on the Knox website. It includes many policies and procedures relevant to faculty, including the [Statement of Rights and Responsibilities](#) (p.78), [performance evaluation](#) (p.30) and [grievance](#) (p.48) procedures, [Policy on Intellectual Property Ownership](#) (p.105), and [Policy on Acceptable Use of Information Technology Resources](#) (p.113).

The Provost and other academic administrators have oversight and monitoring responsibility for all academic functions and activities. As described in 2E, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) ensures that the College maintains compliance with human subject protection regulations.

Personnel

The Board of Trustees sets the President's salary annually and adopted [principles, policies, procedures and guidelines for Executive Compensation and Financial Benefits](#) in 2016. The document ensures that compensation is aligned with the College's mission and is competitive as measured by appropriate peer data.

Over the past several years, the Human Resources Department has become more professional, systematic, and innovative in its processes. It updates the [Employee Handbook](#) annually and this document is available online. The handbook covers "General Employment Information" including information on time off, accommodations for disabilities, background checks, non-discrimination policy, and employee records. It provides detailed information on employee compensation, overtime, pay periods, and employee safety. There is also a section on employee conduct and performance, which covers expectations and includes various policies such as the [Cellular Services Policy](#) (pp.80-82), [Information Security Policy](#) (pp.69-75), and [Media Policy](#) (pp.79-80).

The College conducts pre-hire background and reference checks on every new employee and volunteer at Knox, and the College complies with all applicable federal, state, and local laws relating to these background checks. In addition, as a condition of employment, Knox requires that all new hires complete Department of Children and Family Services' Mandated Reporter Training and Discrimination and Harassment training as part of the new hire orientation process; this requirement is included in [offer letters](#) from the College. Employees who are involved in purchasing must sign

annual [conflict of interest forms](#).

Knox College also has a full-time Title IX Coordinator, who reports directly to the President. The Coordinator handles all sexual discrimination, misconduct, or violence violations. This individual provides [training](#) to both employees and students on related issues, and she coordinates with the President on the [Culture of Respect](#) web pages, which contain information for students including contact information and relevant [policies and procedures](#). The Title IX Coordinator and the President post Title IX [updates](#) on the College website.

In 2014, Knox was one of 55 colleges that received notice that the Office of Civil Rights of the Department of Education was investigating a complaint alleging a Title IX violation. As part of its extensive investigation, the OCR carefully reviewed a substantial amount of information, including the College's policies and procedures regarding sexual misconduct and other forms of sex discrimination; information provided by students and College representatives; and information regarding the Title IX training provided to the College community. As a result of its investigation, OCR identified concerns regarding delays in processing some of the complaints included in the resolution agreement and some concerns with the College's Title IX policies and grievance procedures in effect at that time. The OCR specifically noted, however, that the "College recognized and took affirmative steps to address and resolve" these concerns. In light of the commitments the College has made in the resolution agreement, OCR determined that it was appropriate to close the investigative phase and resolve these complaints with a resolution [agreement](#).

Auxiliary

Auxiliary services at the College include the following: Knox Bookstore, dining services, student housing, and postal services.

- **Dining Services:** Knox contracts operation of dining services to a third-party company. The Compass Group food service company operates Bon Appetit, Knox's dining service provider. Compass has provided Knox with a [Code of Ethics](#) that defines the ethical standards of behavior that the company expects from its employees.
- **Knox Bookstore:** The Follett Corporation operates the Knox Bookstore. Similar to dining services, Follett provides Knox with its [Code of Conduct](#) that defines standards of employee behavior for the company.
- **Student Housing:** Professional housing staff is hired in accordance with the College's Human Resources hiring policy, with explicit requirements for appropriate degree attainment and experience. Student resident assistants (RAs) are hired via the student leader selection process, which includes an application, group interview, individual interview, and references. RAs are also required to take a credit-bearing leadership course and participate in intensive in-service training. Both the class and training explicitly address ethical behavior. The [RA contract](#) details these requirements. In addition, Knox has [Community Living Standards](#) for residents. Both of these documents are posted on the Student Handbook web page. Violations are addressed through the [Student Code of Conduct](#) system administered by the Dean of Students. The room selection [process](#) is comprehensive as where students live is critical to their Knox experience. The process is clearly defined and communicated to students in multiple ways.

- **Postal Services:** The Knox postal service monitors all standards, guidelines, and procedures for mail processing to ensure compliance with relevant federal postal regulations. The manager of postal services also maintains an understanding of international customs procedures and documentation. The manager has also deployed a computer system that improved the speed, accuracy, dependability, and integrity of the entire process of handling packages.

Governing Authority

The Knox College Board of Trustees is legal custodian of the corporate existence of the College and is responsible for general policies. The authority of the Board, its composition, activities, and responsibilities are delineated in the Knox College [Bylaws](#). Please refer to 2C and 5B for more information about the Board.

Sources

- 2A_Community-Living-Standards
- 2A_Compass Code of Ethics
- 2A_Conflict of interest form
- 2A_Culture of Respect_webpage
- 2A_Discrim_Harassment
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- 2A_Employee_Handbook_2019 (page number 69)
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- 2A_Endowment Database_2018
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- 2A_Exec Comm KACSRI_2016 April (page number 3)
- 2A_Exec Comp Policy
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- 2A_Follett Code of conduct
- 2A_Gift Acceptance Amendment_2016
- 2A_Gift policy as of December 5 2019
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- 2A_KACSRI
- 2A_OCR_Resolution_Agreement_2018
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- 2A_Student Code of Conduct
- 2A_Student Handbook
- 2A_Technology Policy
- 2A_Title IX Messages to Community

- 2A_Title IX Policies
- 2A_Title IX Training_webpage
- 2A_Veritas Seal.pdf
- BOT_Policies and Guidelines
- BOT_Policies and Guidelines (page number 7)
- Bylaws
- Faculty Handbook
- Faculty Handbook (page number 30)
- Faculty Handbook (page number 48)
- Faculty Handbook (page number 78)
- Faculty Handbook (page number 105)
- Faculty Handbook (page number 113)

2.B - Core Component 2.B

The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public with regard to its programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation relationships.

Argument

In keeping with the Veritas motto, Knox strives for complete and transparent communication with its stakeholders. Knox uses both electronic and print media to provide comprehensive information about programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, and accreditation relationships. Knox regularly provides open forums (see 5A) and access to senior leadership to those seeking information about the College.

The Knox website is the primary means for communication with stakeholders, including faculty staff, students, alumni and the public. The homepage of the website has links to academics, the mission, values, and strategic plan, leadership, and an A-Z index. The website is easy to navigate, and it has quick links to academics, admissions, campus life, athletics, upcoming events, campus news, and an employee directory. The New Student link on the homepage provides a link to the financial aid section. The website also has a financial aid section that includes consumer information, with the net price calculator, and the [Financial Aid Handbook](#). To address website accessibility, the College utilizes the cloud-based digital presence optimization software *Siteimprove*, which scans all web pages and PDFs in the College's web content management system. Our goal is for all pages to meet level A, AA, and AAA guidelines. We currently conform to 95.1% of these standards, and strive to meet 100%.

The [accreditation web page](#) provides details about the College's HLC accreditation, including a link to the Statement of Affiliation and information about its accreditation with the [American Chemical Society](#). Knox is authorized to operate in the State of Illinois by the Illinois Board of Higher Education, and this is also recognized on the accreditation web page.

The [catalog](#) is located on the [website](#) and has links to the various sections as well as a link to a downloadable pdf. Print copies are also available for those who request them, in keeping with the College's sustainability efforts. The catalog presents the Knox College academic program and the rules for satisfying the degree requirements, and each department or program lists its learning goals, course descriptions, and course requirements for its majors and minors. The catalog also defines a Knox credit, explains how transfer credits are determined, how GPAs are calculated, and how students are determined to be in good academic standing.

The catalog also has information on the latest tuition and fees and explains the College's financial aid policies, scholarships, and other awards and prizes. The catalog includes a directory of the College's administrative officers, staff and trustees, including names and academic credentials. The catalog is updated yearly to reflect changes made by the Curriculum Committee and administrative offices.

Sources

- ACS approved programs
- 2B_Accreditation webpage
- 2B_Catalog webpage_2019
- 2B_Financial Aid Handbook_webpage
- Knox_catalog

2.C - Core Component 2.C

The governing board of the institution is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure its integrity.

1. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.
2. The governing board reviews and considers the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.
3. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties when such influence would not be in the best interest of the institution.
4. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the administration and expects the faculty to oversee academic matters.

Argument

The authority of the Board of Trustees is derived from the [Knox College Bylaws](#), which outlines the governance and structure of the College. The Bylaws limit the Knox Board of Trustees to no more than 43 elected members and of this number, "... no more than thirty-seven shall be General Trustees, and no more than four shall be Alumni Trustees... ." The trustee selection process is comprehensive and deliberative, as documented in the Knox College Board of Trustees [Policies and Guidelines](#). Further information is provided in the [General Trustees Selection Process](#) and [Roles and Duties of the Nominating Committee](#).

Trustees are assigned to serve on committees that have specific and clearly defined [responsibilities](#): Academic Affairs, Admission & Financial Aid, Advancement, Campus Life & Athletics, Facilities & Infrastructure, and Finance. In addition, the Committee on Trustees is responsible for recruiting and assessing trustees. The chairs of these seven committees, along with the Board chair and the vice chair, serve as the Executive Committee, with the president of the College as *ex officio*. The Finance Committee has three subcommittees: Budget, Investment and Audit; Academic Affairs has a subcommittee to select honorary degrees. During each board meeting, every standing committee meets, and board members receive a report from Senior Staff representatives assigned to that committee. Every summer, each committee develops its annual work plan that is aligned with the strategic plan. The work plans are then discussed and approved at an Executive Committee retreat.

In the past, new trustees have cycled through all six committees their first year and are then placed on two committees that reflect their own interests and abilities. However, because of interest in moving trustees to leadership roles more quickly, in 2019 the Board instituted a new procedure where new trustees joined committees directly based on the skill set that they bring to the Board. All new Board members undergo a formal [orientation process](#), to acquaint them with their new [responsibilities](#) (p.3), which are outlined in the Knox College Board of Trustee Policies and Guidelines. As noted in the Guidelines, the Board of Trustees is responsible for "... appointing, advising, supporting, evaluating, and if necessary, replacing the President of the College" (p. 3). The Board reviews the President annually and does a major review every five years in accordance with the procedures for [Annual Evaluation and Periodic Review of the Knox College President](#).

The past 10 years have been characterized by an increased culture of self-assessment by the Board of

Trustees, beginning with the decision in 2008 to impose term limits on Board membership. The imposition of term limits reflects, in part, the observation from the 2009 HLC review team that the Knox Board had very few non-alumni members. By imposing term limits (which were staggered to provide continuity over the transition), the Board sought to provide more openings so that the Board is continually refreshed with new and diverse perspectives. The resulting need for new Board members on an annual basis has created a structural incentive to engage more fully with individuals who can give time, talent, and treasure to the institution and has also enhanced the [diversity](#) of the Board.

To facilitate the new structure, the Committee on Trustees created a formal document of trustee responsibilities; a staged process for identifying, reviewing, and recruiting new trustees; an inventory of trustee expertise and talents to identify skills needed from new trustees; and a process and rubrics for trustee self-assessment at the [end of a term](#) (four years) and [midway](#) (two years) into a term. At the end of the first year of a new member's Board service, the Committee on Trustees member who is in charge of assessment has a conversation with the member to ensure that he or she has a good understanding of the Board's role at Knox and has no concerns or questions. The College has also implemented a system of [mentoring](#) (p.5) for new trustees, along with other best practices to ensure that trustees can come quickly up to speed on how best to fulfill their responsibilities. Term limits have also created the need for more conscious succession planning, particularly in terms of leadership of Board committees and length of committee chair terms to ensure that a number of trustees may partake in leadership roles.

Another change since the last reaccreditation was a change from life status for those Board members moving off the board to emeritus, with the most significant change being that emeritus Board members no longer have a vote on Board matters, unlike life trustees who retained voting privileges. Emeritus trustees automatically move to this status upon completion of three terms (12 years) of Board service and may return to the Board after one year off the Board but must be invited back by the full Board as part of the normal process of recruitment. Criteria were developed for how to select emeritus trustees to move back to general Board service, and the Board has elected to be very selective with this process to ensure that the majority of positions that come available on the Board bring in new members. At present, only two emeritus trustees have been reappointed to the Board.

The sum result of these changes has been a generational change in the composition of the Board, with trustees from the 1980s and 1990s moving into leadership positions. These trustees have brought new energy, talents, and fresh perspectives to the Board. In addition, since Knox's last reaccreditation, the College has added [faculty and student members](#) to Board committees. Although they are held to the confidentiality requirements of Board members, they are not fiduciary or voting members of the Board and do not participate in executive session. They do, however, provide valuable context to committee discussions and are included in all the social events—especially lunch and dinner events—associated with a Board meeting. The rationale for these additions was to ensure that the Board's understanding of the campus remains contemporary and connected to other stakeholders.

Board members complete annual [evaluations](#) of the content of the Board and committee meetings that are compiled by the College's director of institutional research. As an example of a response to these assessments, the Board meeting agenda has been revised to make more opportunities for interaction with a variety of student groups, the elected staff council and other staff groups, faculty leadership and nontenured faculty, etc. At the Board meeting that is associated with Homecoming, we also hold a "meet the trustees" event so alumni returning for Homecoming have an opportunity to

share their views with trustees. Attendance at this event suggests it serves an important purpose.

The Board holds retreats every two to three years, featuring outside speakers and extended discussions at the strategic level. At the most recent [retreat](#) in April 2019, an Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges professional and a board professional from Wellesley College made presentations and facilitated discussion. That retreat resulted in an interest in reorganizing the meetings and the committee structure in ways that are more nimble and responsive to current issues facing the institution in recognition of the volatile and rapid pace of change in higher education, and there are likely to be some experiments over the coming year in the structure of the Board meeting.

As noted above, the 2009 HLC review recommended that the Board identify more non-alumni members for service as trustees. We have been less successful with this, partly because the requirements of Board membership at Knox are high and it is difficult to identify individuals with that degree of affinity for the workload or the philanthropic expectations. At one point in the past decade, we did have three non-alumni trustees on the Board at the same time; we currently have one. We continue to seek trustees who are not alumni, especially current or former parents and local business leaders, but we recognize that it is likely that the Knox Board will be majority alumni for the foreseeable future. That imposes heightened requirements on the Board to seek outside perspectives and enhance the vibrancy and openness of its own discussions, requirements which it has embraced.

The College has taken several measures to ensure that the Board of Trustees preserves its independence from undue influence. As noted above, the College's Board of Trustees Policies and Guidelines clearly defines [conflicts of interest](#) (p.28), and Board members must complete a [conflict of interest disclosure form](#) annually. New Board members receive a formal orientation and they are partnered with an experienced trustee mentor.

Sources

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- 2C_BOT Retreat_2019
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- 2C_BOT_Policies and Guidelines (page number 3)
- 2C_BOT_Policies and Guidelines (page number 5)
- 2C_BOT_Policies and Guidelines (page number 28)
- 2C_End of Term Trustee Self-Survey
- 2C_New Trustee Orientation_2018
- 2C_Pres Review Procedure
- 2C_Proposal for Enhanced Governance
- 2C_Roles and Duties_Nominating
- 2C_Second_Year BOT Survey
- 2C_Selection of Trustees
- 2C_Trustee Conflict of Interest Form

- Bylaws

2.D - Core Component 2.D

The institution is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.

Argument

Knox College is committed to academic freedom of expression for both students and faculty and this commitment is evident throughout the College's mission statement:

- ...teaching is characterized by inviting and expecting students to pursue fundamental questions in order to reach their own reflective but independent judgments.
- our curriculum: combining inquiry in traditional as well as newer disciplines ... building from basic skills...to opportunities for sophisticated student research and creative expression.
- the character of our learning environment: encouraging the critical exchange of ideas, challenging our students with high expectations and persistent demands for rigorous thinking..."

Faculty: the College's faculty handbook is easily accessible on the website, and it clearly describes the faculty's rights and responsibilities through several documents, including the [academic freedom policy](#) (p.19), which states in part: "A teacher is entitled to full freedom in research and in publication of its results ... the teacher is entitled to freedom in the classroom discussing a subject ..." The Policy on Intellectual Property Ownership (see 2A) encourages faculty's creative and scholarly works, and the College's tenure guidelines describe the process for awarding tenure.

Students: Knox's educational experience encourages both inquiry and innovation, and all three of the curriculum's [guiding principles](#) (p.9) encourage critical and independent thinking:

1. Creativity, Innovation, and Critical Thinking;
2. Immersive Learning Experiences/Active Inquiry;
3. Civic Engagement.

Outside the classroom, the College has an internal [protocol](#) for demonstrations and protests, which recognizes that "the right to dissent is essential to academic freedom and scholarly pursuits." The College encourages students' freedom of expression unless the protest activity is non-peaceful or is disruptive. In the [Constitution of the Broadcast, Internet, & Publications Board](#) (found in the student handbook), Knox defines the rights and responsibilities of students who are involved in the production of student media. The chief student media outlet, *The Knox Student*, was founded in the late nineteenth century by Knox student Samuel McClure, who went on to create one of the first publications in the field of American investigative journalism. The paper notes that it has been "student-written, student-run, and student-read since 1878." It has been treated by the College administration as any other independent media outlet as it conducts investigative journalism and reports on campus events. The newspaper has its own [Ethics Statement](#) and has won national and state awards as it continues the tradition of its founder.

Sources

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- 2D_TKS Ethics
- Faculty Handbook
- Faculty Handbook (page number 19)
- Knox_catalog
- Knox_catalog (page number 9)

2.E - Core Component 2.E

The institution's policies and procedures call for responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge by its faculty, students and staff.

1. The institution provides effective oversight and support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff, and students.
2. Students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information resources.
3. The institution has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

Argument

Faculty and student researchers receiving funding through the Vovis Center for Research & Advanced Study or working on federally funded research projects must complete Responsible Conduct of Research CITI Program training available through the Vovis Center. The Office of Corporate, Foundation, and Sponsored Research Support documents and verifies this requirement for students doing research using federal funds in accordance with its [Responsible Conduct of Research \(RCR\) policy](#) and [RCR Training Verification Form](#). The Vovis Center administers this policy in the award and administration of grants under their supervision.

Knox has an active Institutional Review Board (IRB) that ensures that the College maintains compliance with human subject protection regulations through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The IRB is a standing committee comprised of five Knox faculty members and one community member. The College's IRB Policy is found in the Faculty Handbook, Appendix L, [Policy Concerning Investigations Involving Human Subjects](#) (p.114). Similarly, Knox has an active [Institutional Animal Care and Use \(IACUC\) Committee](#) (p.130) that reviews animal research proposals. In accordance with regulations, the committee comprises four faculty members (including one that is not in a scientific area), the College's live collection facility manager, a doctor of veterinary medicine, and a representative from the Illinois Department of Agriculture. The guidelines for the IACUC and list of members are detailed in the [Animal Study Proposal Form](#) (p.131) that must be completed by any faculty member proposing research with live animals. Completed forms are reviewed by the committee.

All faculty participating in research funded by the National Science Foundation or the National Institute of Health must annually complete a [Federal Conflict of Interest form](#) through the Office of Corporate, Foundation, and Sponsored Research Support. As described in the [policy](#), Financial Conflict of Interest Policy for Federally Funded Research Grants, "All individuals who are responsible for the design, conduct, or reporting of research funded, or proposed for funding, by NIH, NSF, FDA, or other federal agencies ('Investigators') are required to disclose to the College the Significant Financial Interests (SFIs) of self, legal spouse, and dependent children." The policy clearly describes what must be disclosed and details how disclosures should be reviewed and a determination made.

The College has a clear policy regarding research misconduct. Appendix H, "[Investigations of Allegations of Research Misconduct](#)" (p.96) in the Faculty Handbook, defines research misconduct and details the procedures for submitting a misconduct concern, reviewing the allegations, investigation process, rights and responsibilities of the complainant and respondent, and

determination of findings and institutional action.

All Knox students are given instruction in the College's Honor Code (refer to 2A), which has been in place since 1951. The Honor Code documents Knox's expectations for students' intellectual integrity. It provides a comprehensive definition of the various forms of intellectual dishonesty and details the responsibilities of both students and faculty in this area. The Code also provides information on the structure and function of the Honor Board, which oversees the honor system. The Code provides the process for reporting violations to the Honor Board. As noted in 2A, students are also given instruction in appropriate use of technology resources in the [Acceptable Use Policy](#), also found in the student handbook.

Knox ensures the integrity of research and scholarly practice through a combination of training and oversight. Faculty provide students with guidance in the ethical use of information resources from the first days in the classroom. The SPARK Summer Bridge program for incoming students takes place before the start of class, and one of the program's learning goals is "Learn academic and behavioral community standards and why they matter." Additionally, all students (except those who transfer to Knox) must take the First-Year Preceptorial (FP) course that includes comprehensive instruction on [academic integrity](#). The College's Assistant Librarian for Research & Instruction developed a curriculum that she [presents](#) to all FP sections. The following topics are covered:

- Situations where you and academic integrity interact;
- What is plagiarism and why does it happen;
- When to cite;
- What is common knowledge and do we cite it;
- Cite or don't cite activity;
- Quote, paraphrase, or summarize;
- Overview of citation styles and where to find help.

The library also provides easy-to-access online [resources](#) for citing sources and avoiding plagiarism.

Sources

- 2E_Academic Integrity Pres_ 2018
- 2E_FCOI Form
- 2E_FCOI Policy
- 2E_FP Acad Integrity lesson_2019
- 2E_Library citation resources
- 2E_RCR Policy
- 2E_RCR Training Form
- 2E_Technology Policy
- Faculty Handbook
- Faculty Handbook (page number 96)
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- Faculty Handbook (page number 131)

2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

Summary

In 1903, Knox College adopted a College seal featuring the word “Veritas,” or truth, reflecting the College’s commitment to acting with integrity.

As detailed below and in Criterion 5, Knox has well-developed policies and procedures governing financial operations, including a third-party annual audit and policies governing acceptance of gifts and investment of the College’s endowment. Academic, personnel, and auxiliary operations similarly follow policies and processes that ensure ethical behavior. These include a student Honor Code and Faculty and Employee Handbooks.

Knox strives for complete and transparent communication with its stakeholders and uses electronic and print media to provide comprehensive information about programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, and accreditation relationships.

The authority of the Board of Trustees is derived from the Knox College Bylaws, which outlines the governance and structure of the College. The trustees have a well-defined committee structure, each committee with a clear charge, and trustees are provided with multiple opportunities to understand their fiduciary responsibilities.

Knox emphasizes freedom of expression, and this emphasis is reflected in the mission statement and in the academic freedom policy. The College also has policies and procedures that ensure integrity and responsible research and application of knowledge by faculty and staff.

Strengths:

- Knox has a strong culture of integrity, reflected across all of the College’s constituencies from the student Honor Code to the operation of the Board of Trustees. Each of these constituencies has undertaken significant review of its policies, procedures and guidelines in the past decade.
- Board policies and procedures have been reviewed and substantially revised over the past decade to reflect emerging best practices for private college governance.
- Since the College’s last reaccreditation, we have added students and faculty members to Board committees to encourage transparency and inclusion.

Areas for Improvement:

- While Knox reviews and updates many policies and procedures on a scheduled basis, not all are reviewed regularly. The College will create a calendar to ensure that all policies and procedures are reviewed and updated according to a transparent timeline.
- The Board of Trustees seeks to achieve excellence through diversification by race/ethnicity, gender and alumni/non-alumni status; progress has been slower than hoped. The majority of

members are Knox alumni.

Sources

There are no sources.

3 - Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support

The institution provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

3.A - Core Component 3.A

The institution's degree programs are appropriate to higher education.

1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded.
2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate, and certificate programs.
3. The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements, or any other modality).

Argument

Standards of Performance

Knox College has numerous processes, policies and procedures in place to manage degree and program requirements, set standards for student performance, monitor progress toward degree completion, and review the quality of these programs to ensure that they are appropriate to the baccalaureate degrees offered. Over the past decade, substantially new (and in some cases entirely new) policies and procedures have been implemented to undertake program review, guarantee the currency of programs and consistent articulation of learning goals, and assess the effectiveness of programs and courses in achieving those goals.

The College offers a Bachelor of Arts degree in [41 distinct majors](#) (p.32) and, since Fall 2018, offers a [Bachelor of Science degree](#) in nine science fields. The B.A. and B.S. degrees share common general education requirements, consistent with the College's mission as discussed below. B.S. degrees require four additional courses beyond the B.A.-level requirements in the approved fields. The B.S. degree was added to provide an opportunity for students seeking additional rigor in their science programs, especially those considering advanced study. The College offers no graduate or post-baccalaureate certification programs.

General education and program requirements reflect our emphasis on integrative perspectives, the growth and cultivation of intellect that comes from critical engagement with ideas and multiple viewpoints, and the aim that all students build confidence and take ownership of their educational lives during and beyond their campus years. Our residential setting and the co-curriculum offerings reinforce the curricular mission while providing avenues for personal development. Even in the difficult and shifting resource landscape of higher education (see 3C) (particularly among liberal arts colleges), and the acute economic challenges faced by Illinois, this shared sense of mission continues to guide decision-making and shape the allocation of resources in support of them.

Degree requirements, academic policies, and faculty governance processes require the endorsement of the full faculty at its regular monthly meetings (see [sample agenda and minutes](#) and [faculty regulations](#) p.21). All faculty with the rank of instructor or above have the right to vote on these matters. In this collective governance role, the faculty carries primary responsibility for establishing graduation requirements. [Responsibility for general oversight](#) (p.29) of the educational program resides with the Executive Committee, which sets the faculty policy agenda. In addition, individual faculty also have the right to bring questions of policy to the full faculty for consideration.

Degree Requirements and Administration of the Curriculum

All Knox students, regardless of major and degree track, share common graduation requirements that are consistent with the College's mission as a residential liberal arts college (discussed further in 3B). These [graduation requirements](#) (pp.4-9) are housed in Faculty Regulations and are reported annually in the catalog. The regulations require 36 credit hours for all graduates, in accordance with the established [Credit Hour Policy](#) (p.320). As an example of the Executive Committee's oversight role in managing these requirements, the committee reviewed this credit hour policy in 2019. Based on this review and discussion with the full faculty, the [Executive Committee adopted a new Credit Hour Policy](#), to be implemented in Fall 2020.

Regular administration of the curriculum, including interpretation and implementation of policies approved by the full faculty, is the [responsibility of the Curriculum Committee](#) (p.31). This committee has [broad faculty representation](#) (p.27) from the four divisions of the College—Arts, Humanities, History and Social Science, Natural and Physical Sciences—to ensure that comprehensive and balanced perspectives emerge in the committee's deliberations. The committee includes key administrative personnel, notably the Provost, Registrar, and Director of Academic Assessment, as well as student representation. In 2015, this committee was revamped and expanded in recognition of the scale of the committee's charge and the important new tasks under its purview. Its three subcommittees—Policy, Implementation, and Assessment—work independently on some tasks while also meeting collectively to set overarching policies.

The Curriculum Committee, through its Implementation subcommittee, carries responsibility for approval of all courses. It has explicit, uniform standards for adoption of [new courses](#) as outlined in [Faculty Regulations](#) (p.31). Course proposals (see [examples](#)) must include course learning goals and make explicit their relationship to program goals. The whole committee takes responsibility for initial review of proposals for new academic programs (see [New Major Proposal Form](#)). New majors and minors are first reviewed by the Curriculum Committee, which presents its findings to the faculty. [Approval of new majors and minors](#) requires a vote of the full faculty. Recent program approvals include a [new major in business and management](#) and a minor in [peace and justice studies](#). Programs review their major/minor requirements and course offerings collectively as part of the program review process (see 4A for more information). The Committee also must approve proposals for self-designed majors.

The Committee also has authority to manage cooperative arrangements with other entities. Thus it has oversight of [cooperative degree programs](#) (p.306) and [off-campus study programs and student exchange relationships](#) (e.g., Akita, Flensburg, Kansai Gaidai). It also has [oversight of the Off-Campus Study Committee](#), which reviews all programs and manages participation in off-campus study.

The Curriculum Committee's Assessment subcommittee is an entirely new entity since the 2009 re-accreditation, as are the new departmental and program assessment programs it oversees (see 4B). This subcommittee undertakes assessment of the general education program (see 3B and 4B). A separate program review process overseen by the Provost and managed by an associate dean obligates every program, on an eight-year cycle, to undergo a comprehensive self-study and external review from specialists from similar institutions (discussed in detail in 4A). This process was designed in response to the 2009 reaccreditation review.

An academic standing committee comprised of faculty, the Associate Dean of the College, the Dean of Students, and supported by various student support areas, reviews student progress toward graduation according to [guidelines](#) approved by the faculty. Additionally, the College participates in the Franklin & Marshall College grade distribution report, and the Registrar provides to the full faculty annual reports on grade distributions across departments. The College has witnessed [little grade inflation](#) over the past decade. Participants in the study commit to confidentiality, but we can share that Knox has ranked consistently about 20th out of 24 schools with an average around 3.20 GPA.

To ensure that courses and programs are appropriate to the degrees offered, the College is committed to ensuring that knowledge and conversations related to the educational programs do not occur in a vacuum. Participation (see [Faculty Achievements document](#)) in regional and national associations (see [conference travel allocations for 2018-2019](#)) is crucial to keeping faculty, staff, and administration in regular contact with national trends in higher education. Through its main consortial partnership, the [Associated Colleges of the Midwest](#), the President, deans, faculty, and staff participate in regular meetings and workshops, collective grant-seeking, and joint educational projects through cross-institutional collaboration. Over the past decade, eight to ten faculty have participated in the ACM's Institute on College Futures, a multi-day seminar on the economics of higher education, which is also offered in an online version to all faculty and staff. Deans, Registrar, Director of Assessment, Off-campus Study Director, directors of federally-funded TRIO programs, and directors of key student support areas are expected to be regular participants in national higher education conferences appropriate to their institutional roles.

The Provost ensures that travel funds are made available to all academic offices. Administrators and faculty are regular participants in [AAC&U conferences and workshops](#). Knox is a member of the Annapolis Group of national liberal arts colleges and the Council of Independent Colleges. President Amott has served on the President's Trust of the AAC&U and the Executive Committee of the Annapolis Group. The [faculty development program](#), reinvigorated through a major grant from the Mellon Foundation (2014-2018) (see [final grant report](#)), draws on these links to inform workshops on pedagogy and curriculum design. External facilitators are regularly invited to support these on-campus programs. See [Diversity Workshop Website](#) 2015 and [Pedagogy Workshop Schedule](#) 2018.

Sources

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- 3A_ACM website
- 3A_Business Major Proposal 2018
- 3A_Conference Travel Allocations 18-19
- 3A_Course Proposal Form
- 3A_Course_Proposals_Examples

- 3A_Diversity Workshop Website 2015
- 3A_Exec Comm Mtg 11.18.2019
- 3A_Fac Dev Website Sample
- 3A_Faculty Achievements 2016-2018
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- 3A_Historical Grade Data
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- 3A_Mellon FACE final rpt
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- 3A_PoE grant website
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- Knox_catalog
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3.B - Core Component 3.B

The institution demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs.

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the institution.
2. The institution articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.
3. Every degree program offered by the institution engages students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.
4. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live and work.
5. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their programs and the institution's mission.

Argument

General Education Requirements

The Knox College mission statement declares that, "Knox College is a community of individuals from diverse backgrounds challenging each other to explore, understand and improve ourselves, our society and our world." The mission statement further affirms, "The mission is carried out through... Our curriculum: Combining inquiry in traditional as well as newer disciplines." The catalog expands on these themes through its statement of the [philosophical framework](#) (p.9) for a Knox Education and its declaration of the [Aspirations for Knox Graduates](#) (p.20). These statements collectively express the foundational belief that a life pursued with "competence, confidence, and a sense of proportion" must be rooted in skills of critical inquiry, experiences undertaken with curiosity and integrity, and perspectives that encompass a wider world than one's own.

In fall 2018, the College adopted new general educational requirements for completion of the Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degrees. These new requirements were developed over the course of three years of dedicated effort to reconsider general education requirements (in place since 2002). As part of the Knox 2018 strategic goal, *Advance Knox's Distinct Approach to Liberal Learning*, the Curriculum Committee, the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees (see [minutes](#)) and FASCom (faculty members of the Executive Committee) (see [agenda](#)) established the Task Force on the Knox Educational Experience. The [charge](#) to the Task Force began with, "Become familiar with national scholarship, trends, models, best practices, and accrediting agency guidelines with respect to general education," so that new curricular models would be developed within this context. In addition to extensive review of literature on trends in higher education and pedagogy, the Task Force members as a group attended the 2016 AAC&U Annual Meeting.

This review also involved deep reflection on the evolving demographics of the Knox student body and the curricular innovations undertaken since the last reform a decade and a half earlier. The Task Force engaged in an iterative process through which curricular [ideas and initiatives](#) (p. 3) were developed, with multiple points for engagement and reflection on emerging themes and proposals. As the Task Force developed its key recommendations for the new general education program, it established large working groups (approximately 15 members in each) around its key themes: First Year Experience, Elements, Specialization/Majors, and Immersion. These working groups developed the foundational principles for defining learning goals and implementation of each theme. The [proposal](#) for an immersion/active learning term was among the most provocative ideas emerging from the working groups but also the most controversial from the perspective of implementation. The Task Force brought a [unified proposal](#) from the working groups to the faculty in November 2016 for deliberation in winter and spring 2017. With the conclusion of the Task Force's work in May 2017, implementation of the proposed framework for the new curriculum passed to the Executive Committee and Curriculum Committee (see [faculty meeting minutes](#)). The Executive Committee crafted the formal language in Faculty Regulations to adopt the new program, while the Curriculum Committee crafted learning goals for the foundational pieces of the general education program: the First Year Experience and Elements. These changes were [approved by the faculty](#) in spring 2018.

It is important to note that turnover in the position of the chief academic officer influenced this process, slowing formal adoption of new regulations and implementation of new programs. The Vice President for Academic Affairs leading the task force resigned at the end of the 2016-2017 academic year and has since been appointed provost at the University of Puget Sound. An interim VPAA in 2017-18 led the faculty in formal adoption of the new regulations. A new provost and dean of the college was appointed in 2018 to lead implementation of the new program, but he resigned in June 2019 to take up a position as provost and vice chancellor at the University of North Carolina Asheville. Provost Schneider, appointed in June 2019 (and also the interim VPAA in 2017-18), provided continuity and leadership throughout the process.

Despite these personnel changes, the robust participation of faculty in the Task Force and working group process cultivated a broadly shared understanding of the aims of the curriculum reform. The principles for the Knox education articulated in the [Executive Committee memo of January 2018](#) are as follows: 1) creativity, innovation, and critical thinking, 2) immersive learning experiences/active inquiry, and 3) civic engagement. These guided the process in its late stages and through its implementation. The general education curriculum cultivates skills in these areas, which are sustained and advanced in the student's specialization (a major and a minor) and other enhancements to a Knox education.

The general education program has four components addressed below:

1. First Year Experience, including the common course, First-Year Preceptorial
2. Elements
3. Civic Engagement
4. Immersion/Active Learning

First Year Experience (FYE): An intentional and structured first year is a key component of the new curriculum (see [FYE curriculum map](#)). It includes a required course for all first-time first-year students, First-Year Preceptorial, which engages a fundamental question of human experience as a means to introduce students to learning in a liberal arts context. The course learning goals, therefore, emphasize foundational skills of written and oral communication as well as expectations for academic integrity. Assessment of the impact of writing instruction in FP has been the major focus of

assessment of that course (see 4B). The Associate Dean of the College works with transfer students who do not take FP to establish a [substitution for this requirement](#) (p.22), in accordance with Curriculum Committee oversight.

The FYE also consists of new student orientation programs, targeted summer bridge programs, and a residential curriculum, all of which are outcomes-based and engage students in the skills necessary to succeed in an environment of diverse learners and perspectives.

Elements address the seven broadly defined foundational skills of critical inquiry that students will apply in Specializations and other components of the General Education program. These include:

1. Communicate in a second language (SL)
2. Analyze social, economic, or political aspects of human behavior (SA)
3. Critically examine questions of power and inequity (PI)
4. Engage in artistic creation (AC)
5. Interpret human experience through text, sound, visual image, or performance (IC)
6. Conduct scientific inquiry (SI)
7. Apply quantitative analyses or symbolic reasoning (QR)

[Learning goals](#) (p.23) for each Element have been approved by the Curriculum Committee, and the committee also maintains [lists of courses](#) (p.24) that meet these learning goals.

Civic Engagement and **Immersion/Active Learning** operate as embedded components of the general education program. These are the most innovative features of the new curriculum and arise from deeply rooted commitments to the transformative power of a liberal arts education through high-impact practices. As embedded components throughout the Knox education, however, they elude being completed or recorded through a simplistic, check-box system. The tension between the desire for clarity on one hand, and a recognition that the highest ambitions of the educational program defy easy solutions on the other, has shaped the curriculum reform process. Substantial faculty engagement with this puzzle has led to a robust, lengthy, and iterative process in clarifying the aims of these components. The faculty have, thus, moved deliberately to write learning goals and guidelines for implementation that do not stunt experimentation but instead capture the aspirational dimension of these components. The Curriculum Committee crafted [new learning goals](#) for these general education components in fall 2019. The Curriculum Committee is, as of December 2019, writing new guidelines for recording student completion of these components.

Pursuit of the learning goals for the Civic Engagement and Immersion/Active Learning components is intended to span all four years of the student's Knox experience, beginning as early as the FYE, and also embedded in disciplinary and interdisciplinary programs, as well as in the co-curriculum. As noted in 3D, the Kleine Center for Community Service provides short- and long-term civic engagement opportunities in which students may engage throughout their educational experience. The curriculum is organized to provide multiple opportunities for students to pursue the Immersion/Active Learning learning goals. Immersion/active learning programs, long a signature at Knox, are a direct expression of these goals. [Repertory Theatre Term](#), [Start-Up Term](#), [Clinical Psychology Term](#), and [Green Oaks Term](#) employ the model of term-long sustained engagement with the active learning/learning-by-doing pedagogy. [Japan Term](#), [Cuba Term](#), Experiencing [China](#), [London Arts Alive](#) and others adopt the model of intensive engagement with the subject matter, with potentially all courses in a single term devoted to the subject matter, followed by an immersive travel experience to apply knowledge outside of the classroom. Faculty resources are offered to support development of this kind of new program. While some of these programs (e.g.,

Green Oaks, London Arts Alive, Repertory Term) have long histories, others (StartUp Term, Clinical Psych Term, China, Berlin/Istanbul, Jerusalem, Cuba, Mexico and Bulgaria programs) are new over the past decade and reflect ongoing experimentation with these ideas.

Off-campus study and senior capstone experiences constitute the most common ways that students engage with immersion/active learning. As many as 50% of students participate in short-term (2-3 weeks) or term-length (10-weeks) or longer study abroad; see 3E for more information about the [Stellyes Center for Global Studies](#). All disciplinary (except physics) and interdisciplinary majors have a required capstone course or senior research experience. See the [catalog courses of study chart](#).

To facilitate student participation and equality of access in all programs, the College began to provide [Power of Experience Grants](#) up to \$2,000 per student to all entering students in 2017. Additional direct grants to students are provided through endowment and grant funds within the Stellyes Center for Global Studies, the Vovis Center for Research and Advanced Study, and the Bastian Family Center for Career Success.

Specialization (Majors and Minors)

In addition to the learning goals of the general education program, every departmental and interdisciplinary program has established learning goals described in the [catalog](#). These goals must be approved by the Curriculum Committee. Additionally, new learning goals must be established for [new majors and minors](#) (see 3A for additional information) and for substantially redesigned programs ([Environmental Science](#)), and these proposals must map how learning goals are achieved through the required courses in the major/minor. Review of program learning goals is an important piece of the [program review process](#) (p.10-12) and assessment activities (see 4B).

As a feature of the 2018 curriculum revision, all major programs are required to establish embedded pathways through the major that ensure students develop competency in writing and oral presentation appropriate to each academic discipline. Embedded writing and oral presentation are listed with departmental learning goals and are the focus of Assessment Subcommittee review (see 4B.)

Diversity of Human Experience

As noted in Criterion 1, engagement with the diversity of our world and our Knox community is a pillar of our mission. Throughout the curriculum and co-curriculum, faculty, staff, and students work together to create a learning environment that is “supportive and egalitarian” (Knox Mission Statement) in its content and practices. Beginning with the New Student Orientation, students are asked to consider their own experiences of privilege and to engage in interaction with people different from themselves, and are equipped with the [tools](#) to communicate across those differences. [Element #3](#) (p.23) of the general education program requires all students to complete at least one course developing those skills.

A College-wide standing committee, the Campus Diversity Committee, which includes representation from faculty, staff, and students, provides guidance to College leadership on the pressing issues within the community. This committee has influenced [faculty hiring processes](#) (p.36-39) and advocated for the creation of a campus-wide Day of Dialogue in 2018 and 2019 to encourage

community conversation (see 1C). Faculty initiatives regarding issues of diversity have supported new activities in long-standing programs such as Africana Studies and Gender and Women's Studies. These initiatives have also supported entirely new activities over the last decade such as an intergroup dialogue program (see 1C), and [courses throughout the conventional disciplines](#) that give these perspectives a voice in the mainstream of the curriculum. In 2014, faculty mandated diversity training for all faculty. The Faculty Development Program led [training sessions](#) for all faculty in 2014 and 2015 and continues to provide [workshops and mentoring](#) in inclusive pedagogies and course design.

The College's commitment to the diversity of global experience is reflected in the variety of pathways and opportunities for engagement with communities near and far. Nearly [one in five students](#) in the current student body is an international student, reflecting the student recruiting priority that students live and learn in a diverse community in pursuit of global citizenship. The study of a second language and the study of human social organization are [required in the general education curriculum](#) (p.23), as is engagement with knowledge in a social context in the [Civic Engagement component](#). International and area studies command a prominent place in the curriculum. In addition to International Relations and International Studies majors, majors and minors are available in Africana Studies, Asian Studies, and Latin American Studies, coursework is provided in Middle East and Southeast Asian studies, and regular language instruction is offered in modern languages (Spanish, French, and German to the advanced level and Chinese and Japanese to the intermediate level). To engage students with historical perspective on the diversity of human experience, the College offers regular courses in Classics (including instruction in Ancient Greek and Latin), religious studies, history, and archaeology. In total, 31 faculty out of 120 have specialized training in fields such as international and comparative studies and global languages and cultures.

Off-campus study is a major vehicle through which students link their studies to a practical awareness of the surrounding world. As noted above, approximately 50% of students engage in some form of off-campus study during their time at Knox. For conventional term-length or longer study abroad, the College [maintains a long list](#) of pre-approved study abroad and student exchange options, but students are permitted to propose alternatives to this list in pursuit of academic programs that support their educational goals. Most on-campus student financial assistance may be applied to off-campus study, and the Stellyes Center for Global Studies actively supports students in seeking financial resources. In addition to direct grants from the College, Knox students have received seven [Gilman scholarships](#) in 2016-2017, six in 2017-2018, and five in 2018-2019. A decade ago Knox rarely counted any recipients among its study abroad students. The College also supports faculty-led immersive study programs, most of which take advantage of the College's distinctive calendar to combine a fall term course or set of courses with travel during the December break. See information about the Cuba program (see above), China program (see above), [Bulgaria program](#), and [Ecology Seminar in Germany](#). These considerable efforts have allowed us to sustain interest in off-campus study. However, we are concerned that participation rates in term-length or longer off-campus study might remain flat or may even decline slightly, primarily due to financial concerns and limited family contributions for many students. The recently launched Power of Experience Grants are designed to counter these trends, and we will be monitoring this closely.

Faculty and Student Research / Creative Work

Knox views research and creative engagement as critical to successful teaching. In turn, engagement with teaching and up-to-date pedagogies is a touchstone of excellent research and creative work.

Consistent with this vision, we believe all faculty should have an active and engaged [research or creative program](#) (pp.30-33). The annual [Faculty Achievements document](#) records the scholarly and creative work of faculty during the preceding year and also indicates works accomplished in collaboration with students. Support for student conference participation (e.g., McNair Program, Midstates Science Consortium), and on-campus recognitions ([Horizons](#), shows for [senior art majors](#), and [student publications](#)) aim to capture the range of student engagement in research and creative activities.

To support their own research and creative activities, all faculty have access to research and conference travel funds (see 3C). New faculty receive start-up funds and mentoring to support their work in the early years. New tenure-track faculty are eligible to take one term of leave with full pay, typically between the third and fifth year on the tenure track. After tenure, faculty are eligible for [sabbatical leave](#) (pp.53-56) on a regular basis, as long as they present a [compelling case](#) that the leave promotes scholarly and creative projects.

Academic programs are designed to give students diverse and rich opportunities for research and creative activities specific to their disciplines. [Capstone and senior project requirements](#) exist in most departmental majors and are required of all interdisciplinary majors. Programs without a summative senior capstone, such as history, have multiple research opportunities embedded in the major. Many majors have [research methodology courses](#). Some programs—Art’s Open Studio, English writing workshops, Theatre’s Repertory Term—offer term-length opportunities for creative engagement. Given the considerable investment of institutional time and resources in these endeavors, capstones and senior projects are a common focus of program reviews and departmental assessments, providing evidence of student outcomes (see 4B). Furthermore, we believe student involvement with faculty research and creative activities rank among the highest expressions of the Knox education.

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3.C - Core Component 3.C

The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.

1. The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance; establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff; involvement in assessment of student learning.
2. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual, and consortial programs.
3. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.
4. The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.
5. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.
6. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and co-curricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development.

Argument

Over the past decade, Knox College has added new faculty expertise and professional staff in academic support, strengthened faculty development, and enriched its academic programs. These improvements have occurred despite an environment of resource constraints that promotes a reactive posture toward immediate problems rather than an ambitious agenda to advance a strategic vision. Despite this environment and transitions in academic leadership, we have maintained a consistent agenda and increased resources committed to developing faculty and staff capacities to teach in diverse settings and build inclusive classrooms.

To these ends, the College employs highly skilled instructors with a [commitment to undergraduate education](#) (p.31-32) who are also productive in their scholarship and creative work. It follows a rigorous process for approval of faculty hiring, maintains uniform expectations for qualifications of new hires, and provides sufficient support for instructors' professional development. The College seeks to maintain a 12 to 1 student-faculty ratio and targets for average class size are 17-18 students per course section. Enrollment declines since 2016 have pushed that [ratio closer to 11 to 1](#). Therefore, the College is exercising strict control over new position hiring, continuing to address specific enrollment demands while aligning overall faculty numbers and enrollments to achieve the 12 to 1 target. In addition, the College introduced an enhanced phased retirement program to create more opportunities for alignment (see 5A).

Guidelines for [hiring new faculty](#) are published by the Provost, and the Provost actively engages departments in their use of these guidelines from the initial conception of a new position through the advertising, interviewing, and recruiting stages. These practices were thoroughly revamped in 2015 to incorporate best practices in conducting faculty searches and bring heightened awareness to the imperative to diversify the faculty. Requests for hiring must be submitted to the Faculty

Subcommittee of the Executive Committee, which makes recommendations to the Provost. Departments seeking to engage in a search must provide rationale for the position in terms of institutional and programmatic mission and provide evidence of institutional and programmatic need (this process is outlined in the [Faculty Handbook](#) (p.29-30)). All searches require the final approval of the president, who consults with the vice president for finance before approving requests.

New faculty hires are expected to hold the highest academic degree in an appropriate academic discipline, with 96% of current faculty meeting that criterion. See CVs for faculty [last names A-D, E-G, H-L, M-R, and S-Z](#). The remaining 4% possess significant work or professional experience in the area of academic specialization. [Academic staff leadership](#) must also hold appropriate advanced degrees. New faculty must submit a final transcript showing attainment of terminal degree. New faculty participate in a [two-day orientation](#) that introduces College policies, covers all instructional roles, and shares expectations for faculty and student performance. New faculty orientation extends through the first year in a [series of support seminars](#). [Orientation for faculty advisors](#) (advising responsibility normally begins in the second year of employment) occurs during a [full-day advising workshop](#).

To ensure continuity of academic programs, course offerings, and development of these programs, [approximately 80% of all instructors](#) (p.363-370) hold tenured or tenure-track appointments. An additional 10% hold continuing appointments as professionals in residence or instructor-level appointments in specific technical areas. A small number of visiting, short-term, and adjunct appointments are made to ensure continuity of course offerings during periods of faculty leaves and sabbaticals, to support programs during a period of transition due to retirement and resignation, and to address shifting student interests and enrollment demands. These appointments must meet the same standards as regular faculty hires.

In recent years, faculty compensation has lagged the targeted benchmark for comparison, conventionally defined as the median of the ACM, for which we have [detailed comparison data](#). We have identified noncompetitive salaries as a strategic risk to the academic program, and addressing this issue has become a key strategic goal as the College moves into its next strategic plan, with conversations ongoing between administration and faculty leadership about how best to address it.

Evaluation of faculty

Faculty are evaluated according to the procedures detailed in the [Faculty Handbook](#) (p.30-38). These policies were reviewed carefully in 2013-14 and an [updated review calendar](#) consistent with AAUP guidance was implemented for all faculty hires after 2014. Tenure track faculty enter into a probationary period with biannual reviews before review for tenure and promotion, most commonly in the sixth year. Faculty who have held the rank of associate professor for a minimum of six years may elect to be reviewed for the rank of full professor. Evaluation for tenure and promotion require external evaluation. Non-tenure track instructional staff are reviewed according to similar procedures and may seek promotion in rank.

Courses are evaluated through a student online [course evaluation system](#). Faculty submit [annual updates](#) of the teaching, research/creative work, publications, conferences and other avenues for dissemination of their work, grants and fellowships, and work with students. Faculty publications, grants, and conference presentations are compiled into an annual faculty achievement record (see 3B). Course evaluations and annual updates are reviewed by the Faculty Personnel Committee

annually in order to recognize those attaining exceptional levels of achievement. These are recognized with monetary awards and distinguished professorships. See [exceptional achievement awards](#) and [endowed chair appointments](#).

Faculty Development and Support

Knox College offers a full range of faculty development opportunities and provides significant funds (see [table showing summary of resources](#)) to support faculty training and resources in pedagogical development, scholarly research and creative activities, and conference travel in support of these aims, and information about these is [posted online](#). Even during years of budget challenges, the College has maintained support through general operating budget, external grants, and significant investment from the Office of Advancement in raising funds for faculty activities. Since 2013, the Associate Dean for Faculty Development (later “Faculty Affairs”) has been a full time administrative position, occupied by a faculty member, with independent budget allocations to pursue a wide-ranging faculty development program.

Faculty development resources are managed by the [Committee on Faculty Resources](#) (p.33), which reviews requests for institutional funds and [sets policies](#) for the use of these funds (p.90-95). In addition to College-wide research/creative work and conference travel funds, many departments and programs have access to endowed research and development funds to support research, creative work, and pedagogical innovation. The College regularly seeks resources from external granting agencies and works in collaboration with the Associated Colleges of the Midwest institutions for internal projects and inter-institutional collaborations that expand faculty capabilities, develop awareness of national trends, and support new pedagogies and programs. See [examples of grant funded activities](#).

Accessibility for student inquiry

All instructors have on-campus offices that are private, with rare exceptions of offices shared through differing work schedules. Although the College does not have official policies on the extent or frequency of in-person office hours, instructors are obligated to [meet students by scheduled appointment](#) (p.20). In practice, open office hours and other methods for ensuring regular and predictable availability to students are a focus of best practice as discussed during New Faculty Orientation and course design workshops. Instructors have regular support of instructional technologies in their offices and communication and availability of instructors through various media (Moodle, chats, online office hours, etc.)

“[Advising is part of the responsibility of faculty](#)” (p.24). Advisors must meet with all advisees at least once a term to gauge progress and pre-enroll for the next academic term. In addition to this minimum obligation, advisors are expected to meet with students throughout the academic term by appointment to address concerns either specific to course performance or general academic progress, to discuss educational and career opportunities, and discuss post-graduate plans. An early alert system provides instructors with a simple pathway to share concerns about student academic progress immediately with the Associate Dean of the College, who in turn meets with the student of concern and communicates the concern to academic advisors.

Staff Training and Professional Development

All staff members providing student support services must possess the degrees, certifications and experience appropriate to their positions. Minimum qualifications are determined by the hiring manager in consultation with the supervising vice president and Human Resources. These qualifications are clearly outlined in job descriptions (see [examples](#)) for new position.

Knox supports staff in their professional development through training programs offered by Human Resources and Information Technology, department and division level staff retreats, and webinars. Staff also participate in regional and national meetings of their respective professional associations.

The College seeks to develop a consistent approach to staff professional development. While funds have not been available with the same regularity as faculty development funds and a centralized process for requesting such funds does not currently exist, many student support offices, including the Division of Student Development, [Stellyes Center for Global Studies](#), Vovis Center for Research and Advanced Studies, and the Library, have set aside professional development funds to promote participation in national organizations and awareness of national best practices. Funds are also regularly made available to health and counseling staff as well as science laboratory coordinators and managers to ensure they have adequate training per requirements of their licensures and risk management best practice. In addition, as part of the goal two initiative for campus engagement in the Knox 2018 Strategic Plan, the Staff Council also provides a forum for discussion of staff needs, a venue for staff participation in shared governance, and a vehicle to provide staff professional development activities.

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3.D - Core Component 3.D

The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.

1. The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.
2. The institution provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. It has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared.
3. The institution provides academic advising suited to its programs and the needs of its students.
4. The institution provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning (technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites, museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).
5. The institution provides to students guidance in the effective use of research and information resources.

Argument

Student Support Services

Knox College offers a full spectrum of support services to help students succeed. With the increasing diversity of student backgrounds, higher percentages of first-generation and low-income students, and an expanding international student cohort, the College has sought to expand the role of student support services. These offices must reach more students than ever before. Therefore, to achieve consistent and integrated support, it is critical that access to student support services be strengthened and that instructors also have a comprehensive understanding of available services.

Incoming students complete [placement assessments](#) prior to New Student Orientation. At orientation, students meet with their assigned faculty advisor to review College and program requirements. Through this one-on-one conversation, advisors review with each student their incoming credits, placement assessment results, and the student's interests in order to recommend courses for which the student is adequately prepared.

Entering first generation and income-eligible students are given the opportunity to participate in one of the College's two bridge programs, the federally-funded TRIO Student Success Seminar and the College's [SPARK](#) (Student Preparation and Readiness for Knox) program. Each offers specialized advising, peer mentoring, and social activities that strengthen students' learning strategies and promote meaningful relationships with peers, faculty, and advisors. Approximately 65 students in each entering class participate in TRIO bridge, with intensive TRIO support services continuing throughout the student's four years. Students who are first-generation or low-income but do not qualify for TRIO are offered the opportunity to participate in SPARK. In 2019, [70 students were invited](#) to participate in SPARK, with 31 students choosing to participate. SPARK and TRIO outcomes are detailed in 4C. Additionally, a credit-bearing Student Success Seminar, which focuses on study skills, learning strategies, motivation, resources and time management, is offered to students whose academic performance in high school or at Knox indicates a need for supplemental support.

First-Year Preceptorial is a required component of the First Year Experience (see 3B). This course is

a vehicle to make students aware of their access to other campus services, notably tutoring and library services. Some departmental curricula (e.g., Biology, Chemistry, Psychology) offer supplementary instruction courses to support students in introductory courses in their programs.

All students have access to the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), which offers evening peer tutoring in both the Seymour Library and the Science Learning Commons. Tutoring is available in all areas of the College's curriculum, including specialized writing workshops. Tutors participate in a rigorous training program and must receive the endorsement of specific departments to serve as tutors for specific disciplines. Since 2000, the CTL peer tutoring program has held Master's Level certification from the College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA), based on a comprehensive review of our 30-hour instructional program, pedagogical practices and teaching materials, and procedures and protocols for ensuring academic integrity. The peer tutoring program will be up for recertification again in 2022. Writing tutors are available most days for four to six hours, while discipline-specific tutoring is offered in the evenings for six or more hours per week.

[Usage data](#) for CTL shows a general upward trend in students accessing CTL services (despite overall student enrollment declining from 1400 to 1230). The lower 2018-19 usage figure reflects the unexpected departure of one staff person at the start of the fall term 2018, with the general trend line reestablished after a new hire. Students in First-Year Preceptorial are especially encouraged to use CTL services; [survey data](#) shows a common trend (discussed in 4B) that students with a higher grade in FP were more likely to use CTL, while less successful students sought out help from CTL less frequently.

Disability Support Services fosters an accessible learning environment by coordinating academic and housing accommodations for students with disabilities. Examples of services include note takers, testing accommodations, support with assistive technologies such as Read&Write and Sonocent (audio note-taking), and guidance for faculty seeking to improve accessibility of course materials. An additional staff member was added in the summer of 2019 to meet growing student needs. See [usage data](#)).

The Division of Student Development supports students' personal, social, wellness, and other co-curricular needs. Departments within Student Development include Counseling Services, which offers individual, group, and crisis counseling as well as consultation to faculty, staff, and parents, and wellness programming; Health Services, Campus Life (residential life, student activities, and leadership programs); Intercultural and Spiritual Life, and the Dean of Students' office.

Four experiential learning centers (two housed within Student Development and two housed within Academic Affairs), provide experiential learning opportunities that supplement the in-class education. The work of these centers is detailed in section 3E.

Academic Advising

Effective academic advising is a central commitment of the College in the conceptualization and implementation of the Knox education. Academic advising is offered to new students in person and virtually during the summer before matriculation. A meeting and dinner with the academic advisor is the first formal event of New Student Orientation. Each student must have at least one advising meeting per term in order to enroll for courses during the next academic term. In practice, advisors and students meet more frequently. The frequency and importance of these interactions with advisors

reflects the key implication of the mission: a life of competence and proportion as a life-long learner demands a sense of responsibility and ownership over one's education. Conversations with advisors are critical to cultivating that sense of ownership.

The Associate Dean of the College has [primary responsibility](#) for the system of academic advising. The Associate Dean makes all academic advising assignments for new students. Once students declare their major (usually near the end of the second year of enrollment), the student is assigned a new major advisor by the department/program chair, subject to review by the Associate Dean. The Associate Dean of the College works closely with the Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs to provide training and guidance for academic advisors in the roles and responsibility of their work. An [advising workshop](#) is offered annually for new and continuing advisors. The Associate Dean also publishes an [Academic Advising Manual](#) (updated annually) and meets with all academic advisors mentoring entering students at the start of the academic year. Issues related to academic advising are linked to student support conversations throughout the [Faculty Development program](#).

Instructional Facilities

Technology infrastructure: The College operates a switched ethernet network. All offices, workrooms, labs, and classrooms are wired with one or more ports that have one gigabit per second ethernet access. All residential, academic buildings, athletic facilities and campus green spaces have Wifi connectivity to the campus network. Students, faculty, and staff are provided 11 gigabytes of personal, on-campus disk storage and unlimited storage for files and email on the College's Google Suite. In addition, community members are provided access to the full suite of Google productivity applications (GMail, Drive, Calendar, Sites, etc.) as well as the College software catalogue which includes the Microsoft Office Suite, Adobe Suite, and numerous discipline-specific software, tools, and programs. Most of these titles are available on Knox's desktop and application virtualization platform, KnoxAnyWare, which makes these titles available on virtually any network-connected device including tablets, smartphones, and personal computers from both on- and off-campus locations. Training and support for the course management software, Moodle, is available to all instructors.

Library and Special Collections: Library resources combine historically rich print-based collections together with ever-expanding online collections and services. Responsive support for courses and student research has come through an e-book purchase on-demand service that allocates a portion of our book budget to just-in-time acquisitions, a similar service of on-demand digital and hard-to-access journals primarily in STEM, expanded video streaming and online journal collections, and the provision of dozens of [research databases](#). The Library's continuing membership in consortial borrower services such as I-Share (managed by the Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois), RAPID, and other interlibrary loan services allows [Knox students and faculty access](#) to robust collections of research materials outside of Knox College.

Seymour Library is open 106 hours per week during each academic term; the science branch library will have similar hours when it reopens as the Amott Science Commons in its newly renovated space in January 2020. Though students' continuous access throughout campus to the library's on-line reference, reserve, and periodical collections might give them fewer reasons to visit the library, students continue to use the library for study, to work on group assignments, to seek research or tutoring assistance, to access the campus network, or to visit our Special Collections and Archives. High-traffic space on the library's first floor, once occupied by reference and index collections now

found online, has been repurposed as expanded technology-supported group study space.

Classrooms and Laboratories: Over the past decade, the College has made numerous investments in classroom infrastructure to support the educational mission, with particular emphasis on active/immersive learning spaces. All classrooms are outfitted with instructional technologies appropriate to the disciplines that use them. Regular renovations of classroom spaces have also been carried out in the past decade, with particularly noteworthy improvements in the renovated Alumni Hall and the Whitcomb Art Center; see 5A for details.

The complete renovation of the central classroom core of the Science and Math Center, re-opening in January 2020, brings into service new flexible classrooms appropriate to current pedagogies. Old “pit-style” lecture halls have been replaced with more intimate classrooms, technology-enhanced classrooms, new collaborative meeting spaces, and a re-imagined science learning commons. This renovation also puts in place the mechanical infrastructure for renovation of the remainder of the building where laboratories reside. While updates to lab spaces have been modest in anticipation of this full renovation, major equipment purchases and numerous smaller ones are made through internal funds and external grants: e.g., a scanning electron microscope and a new 400 MHz NMR spectrometer purchased through NSF major research instrumentation grants. In the past two years, the science faculty have received more than \$850,000 in [research and education grants](#).

To support biological sciences, ecology, environmental studies, and interdisciplinary work in related areas, the College maintains a greenhouse, an [urban agricultural space](#) on the edge of campus, and a 704-acre Green Oaks Biological Field Station. The field station is the only classroom facility separate from the contiguous main campus and supports the [Green Oaks Term](#) experiential learning program. The College is currently considering an [expanded residential living space](#) at the site to allow for greater participation programs at the Field Station.

Research Support and Training

Instruction utilizing scholarly materials begins in the required First-Year Preceptorial (FP) course. This instruction includes both effective reading and interpretation of these resources as well as the [skills and obligations](#) (p.22) to carry out academic work with integrity. Introduction of the College’s Honor Code occurs there, as well. Library staff coordinate with each seminar instructor in the academic integrity unit. Library staff develop and implement a number of new customized orientation sessions for all FP sections and other courses based on instructor’s interest.

Members of the library’s professional staff act as liaisons to each of Knox’s academic departments and programs; this is primarily an instructional role, though they also work with Knox’s faculty in developing print, reserve, digital, and electronic resource collections. The instructional program reaches courses at all levels of a student’s academic program, from introductory 100-level courses to departmental research courses for majors such as biology’s ‘Introduction to Research,’ the history department’s ‘Historian’s Workshop,’ and the anthropology/sociology department’s ‘Research Design’ with both in-person group library instruction sessions and [course research guides](#). The library’s staff delivered more than [100 instruction sessions](#) during the 2018-2019 academic year, including instruction on academic integrity as noted in 2E.

Also as noted in 2E, the Vovis Center for Research and Advanced Study provides guidance to students on research expectations and integrity. All recipients of Vovis Center grants must complete

Responsible Conduct of Research CITI training. The Center also guides students in [Institutional Review Board procedures](#) (p.114-121).

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3.E - Core Component 3.E

The institution fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment.

1. Co-curricular programs are suited to the institution's mission and contribute to the educational experience of its students.
2. The institution demonstrates any claims it makes about contributions to its students' educational experience by virtue of aspects of its mission, such as research, community engagement, service learning, religious or spiritual purpose, and economic development.

Argument

As a residential liberal arts institution, Knox College is committed to providing a robust educational experience both inside and outside of the classroom. Students' co-curricular education, delivered primarily through the Division of Student Development, is designed to complement the in-class experience and, as such, is centered around five overarching learning goals: healthy sense of self, values-based decision making, ability to develop and sustain meaningful connections, value and respect for differences, and commitment to community. Each unit within Student Development has identified department-level learning outcomes in service of these five goals. These learning outcomes serve as the foundation for program delivery and resource allocation. The [Student Development curriculum map](#), which was initially developed in 2016 and [updated in 2019](#), identifies how learning outcomes are delivered across departments. Every major program delivered through the co-curriculum is [assessed annually](#) so that staff may evaluate and improve program effectiveness. Knox also regularly participates in the [National Survey of Student Engagement](#) and the [CIRP Senior Survey](#)—which provide indirect measures of student learning—as means to evaluate the extent to which students are achieving both curricular and co-curricular learning outcomes.

At the heart of the co-curricular experience is the residential curriculum. Initially developed in 2016 as part of the new First Year Experience and since refined, the residential curriculum is a year-long series of programs in and around the residence halls focused on the developmental tasks of first-year students. Examples of topics covered in the [residential curriculum](#) include communication across difference, time management, anxiety and depression management, and financial literacy. Attendance at residential curriculum programs has ranged from 20 to 385 students per event. While assessments have largely indicated that students who participate in these programs are learning what we intend for them to learn, staff continue to consider ways to maximize attendance. In addition to first-year focused programs, Student Development also delivers regular programming focused on the developmental needs of upper-level students.

In Fall 2017 the College piloted two living learning communities (LLCs)—a high-impact practice well-suited to the mission of a residential liberal arts college. Students were housed in suites with their First-Year Preceptorial (FP) classmates, and the FP faculty member engaged with students both in the classroom and in the residence halls in order to provide a seamless curricular and co-curricular experience, facilitate faculty-student and student-student connections, and promote a sense of belonging. Compared to control groups (non-LLC sections of the First-Year Preceptorial and non-LLC first-year residence halls suites), students in the pilot living-learning communities [reported](#) feeling both a greater sense of belonging at Knox and that they were treated with more

openness and respect by their peers. In fall 2018, the number of LLCs was expanded to five. Assessment data again revealed positive pro-social gains for LLC students compared to control groups, and also indicated that LLC students were more likely than their non-LLC peers to discuss course content (both FP and non-FP) with peers outside of class. Five LLCs are also in place for the 2019-20 academic year, with post-fall assessment data currently being collected.

In addition to assessing learning outcomes, departments that deliver the co-curriculum are responsible for assuring that programs and services are accessed equitably by all Knox students—a promise that is central to the College’s mission of inclusivity. Some departments have been doing this well for the past few years, while others are just beginning. For example, an initial [2016 analysis](#) of Counseling Services’ usage revealed that Black, Latinx, and international students were underrepresented among Counseling Services clients. This discovery resulted in targeted outreach to those populations; for the 2018-19 academic year, Black and Latinx students were proportionately represented, and the gap for international students decreased considerably. Beginning this academic year, all Student Development departments are implementing similar usage tracking/analysis.

With 24% of students participating in a Division III or club sport, athletics also comprises a significant part of the Knox co-curricular experience. All Division III student-athletes complete both [post-season surveys](#) and [exit surveys](#) so the College may assess the extent to which the athletic program supports students’ academic and personal success. Examples of program improvements made as a result of survey results include more consistent access to WiFi during travel to competitions so students can study and do homework, and increased marketing and promotions efforts to create a more robust game-day atmosphere that engages the whole campus community.

In pursuit of Knox College’s mission to challenge each other to explore, understand, and improve ourselves, our society, and our world, experiential learning is a quintessential feature of a Knox education, and students are encouraged to build at least one such activity into their educational plan. As noted throughout this document, experiential learning opportunities are largely facilitated by the four centers located in Alumni Hall: the Stellyes Center for Global Studies, the Vovis Center for Research and Advanced Study, the Kleine Center for Community Service, and the Bastian Family Center for Career Success.

The Stellyes Center for Global Studies (3B) provides students guidance on off-campus and overseas study opportunities, facilitating their preparation for off-campus study and serving as a resource and liaison for students and families during the off-campus experience. In 2016, the College hired its first full-time professional director, a post previously held by a part-time faculty member. The Center has resources to assist students financially with expenses that might serve as a stumbling block to participation and also devotes considerable energy to assisting students in seeking scholarships and grants-in-aid outside the institution. Over half (53%) of Knox students participated in study abroad in AY 2018-19 (34% in traditional study abroad programs, and an additional 19% in short-term, faculty-led trips). The Stellyes Center also administers the Peace Corps Prep Program (1D), which prepares students for international development fieldwork and potential Peace Corps service. Twenty-four students have participated in the program over the past four years.

The Vovis Center for Research and Advanced Study (see 1A) assists students pursuing undergraduate research, scholarship, and creative work through advising and connection to resources. Within the Vovis Center, the [Artists, Scholars, Scientists, and Entrepreneurs of Tomorrow \(ASSET\)](#) program recruits a student cohort of 10-12 members, and together they identify and discuss connections across disciplinary boundaries through a weekly seminar. The annual Horizons undergraduate research celebration (3B) serves as an undergraduate research conference where students present their

research and creative work to faculty, staff, peers, and the public. Over the course of the past four years, the Registrar estimates that nearly 90% of our students completed an independent research or creative project by the time they graduated, as reflected in student transcripts.

As noted in 1D, the Kleine Center for Community Service offers both short- and long-term volunteer opportunities accounting for thousands of hours of service. In addition, students participate extensively in the community through student clubs and organizations such as [Best Buddies](#) and [Blessings in a Backpack](#), through Greek organizations' philanthropic activities, through efforts by athletic teams, through activities associated with coursework and partnerships with the school district, and with both paid and unpaid internships at local non-profit organizations. In 2012, the College introduced the KnoxCorps program—a local civic engagement partnership that matches recent Knox graduates and current students with local non-profit organizations for 10 to 20 hour a week paid placements over a 10-month period to support existing projects, build new programs, and help meet the critical needs of the community (see 1D). A similar partnership with the Illinois JusticeCorps also provides opportunities to students (1D). Using the criteria provided by the Corporation for National and Community Service that combine Kleine Center sponsored volunteer activities and the multiple other forms of civic engagement, both paid and unpaid, the College's efforts in this area have earned it national recognition as noted in 1D.

The Bastian Family Center for Career Success (see 1A) prepares students for professional life after Knox through individualized advising, skill development, on- and off-campus experiences, and alumni and employer connections. The Career Center utilizes a four-year development model to engage students at each phase of their Knox education, and offers signature programs along with their partners in Alumni Engagement such as the [Business Intensive Seminar](#), [Career Impact Summit](#), and spring break networking and career exploration trips. In AY 2017-18, 60% of the student body engaged with the Career Center. In January 2019, the College hired a new Executive Director of Career Development, who has been charged with increasing student engagement, strengthening employer relations, and improving outcomes data collection. The pathway to these goals is outlined in the three-year [Career Center strategic plan](#).

In line with our mission of access, the College applied for and was awarded a [grant from the Mellon Foundation](#) to support experiential learning opportunities for first generation/low income students. Since the grant's inception in 2016, a total of 83 students have received funding (known as Mellon Fellowships) ranging from \$990-\$3,000. To sustain the access afforded by the Mellon grant, in 2017, the College implemented a campus-wide Power of Experience Grant program (3B) through which all students are eligible for a \$2,000 grant to offset experiential learning costs once they have reached junior standing.

Sources

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- 3E_Career_Center_Strategic_Plan

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- 3E_DSDCurriculumMap2016
- 3E_DSDCurriculumMap2019
- 3E_LLC_History_and_Assessment
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- 3E_Percent_of_Counseling_Services_clients_by_race
- 3E_Residential_Curriculum_Fall_2017_through_Spring_2019
- 3E_Student_Athlete_Exit_Interview
- 3E_Student_Athlete_Post_Season_Evaluation

3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

The institution provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

Summary

The College has rigorous policies in place to ensure the delivery of a high quality educational experience consistent with its mission. These policies are subject to consistent oversight by faculty governance and have undergone substantial review and revision in the past decade. The policies and practices in place are responsive to the ever-shifting landscape of higher education. To ensure that the College adopts appropriate best practices, systematic evaluation and review of the educational program should become more systematic and nimble. Investment in faculty and staff development and compensation will be a priority in the next iteration of the College's strategic plan.

Strengths:

- A major revision to the general education program and development of new academic programs have been carried out over the past four years through the faculty governance system as part of the College's strategic plan. These changes demonstrate a College-wide commitment to promote up-to-date pedagogies and an education relevant to our diverse society and global challenges in the 21st century.
- The College has enhanced its faculty development program, improved support for new faculty, and sustained support for faculty and student research and creative work despite an environment of resource constraints at an institutional and national level.
- Embracing our identity as a residential college, we have developed a robust co-curriculum that complements and enhances the in-class experience. Student support services have been expanded in many areas in pursuit of these aims.

Areas for Improvement:

- Multiple transitions in the Provost's position in recent years have slowed the full implementation of the new curriculum and plans for reform of policies and procedures. Distinctive elements of the new curriculum regarding civic engagement and immersive/active learning require further elaboration and some best practices in recruiting diverse faculty and staff await full implementation.
- The College continues to develop a more consistent approach to staff professional development.
- Competitiveness of faculty compensation requires attention.

Sources

There are no sources.

4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

4.A - Core Component 4.A

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.
2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.
3. The institution has policies that assure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.
4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It assures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.
5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.
6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution assures that the degree or certificate programs it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission, such as employment rates, admission rates to advanced degree programs, and participation rates in fellowships, internships, and special programs (e.g., Peace Corps and Americorps).

Argument

The College has always taken care to ensure the currency and rigor of its educational programs. During the past decade, the College has dedicated substantial resources to create regular and consistent processes for review and revision of academic programs. In a period of rapid change in higher education and in the composition of the student body, maintaining innovative programs of high quality requires greater effort on the part of the College and its academic staff. Please note that evidence of the role of assessment in maintaining educational quality can be found not only in this Criterion, but also in Criteria 3 and 5.

Program Reviews

The Office of Academic Affairs has devoted the past decade to the creation and implementation of a system of [regular review](#) for all its academic departments and programs. Since this system's

implementation in 2010, all major and minor programs have been organized into a rotating [timetable](#). As of fall 2019, the final few programs (e.g., history, film studies) are finishing their first complete review. We are currently evaluating the review process and making refinements as we launch into the second review cycle in 2019, with English serving as a trial run for the new program review model.

The program review system has four major components: a program self-study, a review of the program and its self-study by external consultants who visit campus, consultation between the program members and the Provost to chart a future path for the program, and a one-year re-evaluation of the program's progress. Programs facing significant change after a program review will continue to work closely with the Provost over many years.

In the first cycle of program reviews since 2009, departmental and program self-studies placed considerable emphasis on retrospective analysis of each program's development as a way of anticipating what the future might hold. This approach detailed the history and logic behind existing program components and policies, but it ran the risk of leaving less time and energy for comprehensive analysis of existing problems and innovative ways of addressing them. Nonetheless, program reviews have contributed to important revisions to departmental work to focus on new priorities.

The philosophy department program review is a rich example of the program review in implementation. The [departmental self-study](#) involved frank analysis of departmental business. External [consultants visiting campus](#) gave clear and sober advice in a [report](#) on how to advance the program learning goals through a deliberate process of curricular revision. The department has worked with the Provost to implement changes aligned with [initial changes](#) made in Fall 2019. Significant [changes are proposed](#) for the year ahead. Other program reviews, such as [computer science](#), focused on questions of accessibility of program courses among untapped constituencies. The [art and art history program review](#) informed the construction of the new art building and art gallery. The [biochemistry program review](#) resulted in the reintroduction of biochemistry within the chemistry department, although it had been a separate program for many years.

Beginning in 2019, the [revised program review process](#) has encouraged departments to dispense with the retrospective portions of the self-study and engage in intentional "program planning" as the focus of the review. This shift necessitates a corresponding shift to align ongoing annual program assessment with the program planning stage of the review, since a forward-looking posture is well suited to the current period of accelerated change in higher education.

Transfer Credit

The College Registrar holds authority over [evaluation of credits](#) (p.325) and transcripts. The Registrar must hold a relevant advanced degree and is a member of the faculty. The Registrar is an *ex officio* member of the Curriculum Committee, which reviews all courses for approval.

Knox accepts credit for courses from domestic institutions only if they are accredited by an official accrediting agency and if the course content, as determined by the Registrar, lies within the broad spectrum of the liberal arts fields as offered by the College. Current students must receive prior approval before they can enroll in a course at another institution with the intent to transfer credit back to Knox. Knox does not accept mathematics courses below the level of college algebra, nor

coursework in English language or reading. Consistent with the College's core emphasis on the residential experience in its mission and common practice among ACM consortial institutions, we accept up to two credits for online courses at accredited institutions but do not accept credit from producers of MOOC courses (e.g., StraighterLine, Coursera).

Students may, with the approval and sponsorship of a faculty member, earn credit for work on an [internship](#) (p.309). That credit is normally contingent on an evaluation of the student's work by the internship external supervisor, and the writing of a reflective essay on the internship experience. Knox does not award credit for life experience or non-academic learning.

Approval of credit transfer from international universities involves research on the accreditation status of the university, in particular whether it is listed among non-accredited universities. Further, a course description or syllabus must convey that the level of the course would meet the standards the Knox Curriculum Committee would require for approval of a Knox course. If information about an international transfer course is sparse, the student may be requested to provide additional information to the Registrar, including course syllabi and submitted course assignments, for clarification of the course content and appropriate credit.

For both domestic and international coursework, a grade of C or better is required for transfer credit. Department / program chairs must approve transfer credit used to fulfill major or minor requirements.

Courses, Prerequisites and Accreditations

All courses offered at Knox College require explicit [approval](#) of the Curriculum Committee. The materials the Committee evaluates for a course include a proposed set of learning goals for the course, how the course content articulates with departmental or program learning goals, and whether proposed course requirements and assessments are consistent among courses approved for credit. Course approval requires clear definition of course prerequisites. As noted elsewhere, course prerequisites and cross-listing of courses is a major component of departmental/program reviews. With our strong institutional emphasis on interdisciplinary learning and cross-departmental collaborations, transparency across departmental course offerings is a key component of the course proposal process.

The College does not maintain dual college credit programs at the high school level. However, through Knox Early College, high school seniors from local school districts can earn scholarships to enroll in regular Knox courses and earn College credit (See 1D).

The College maintains specialized accreditation with the American Chemical Society (see 2A). The ACS approval program for bachelor degree programs is consistent with the College's mission to promote inquiry in traditional disciplines alongside integrative work in newer disciplines. The ACS commitment to undergraduate teaching and promotion of chemistry as a foundational discipline with connections throughout the sciences echoes our mission.

The College received [Illinois State Board of Education approval](#) to offer teacher certification training in nine subject areas. In 2007, Knox became the first undergraduate institution in the nation to host the contemporary Peace Corps Preparatory Program (1D) in cooperation with the Peace Corps and remains a proud [partner school](#) in the program.

Graduate Outcomes

Incorporating robust graduate outcome data into a feedback loop for programmatic change is an area for improvement at Knox. While seniors and recent graduates are asked to complete the [First Destination Survey \(FDS\)](#), response rates are relatively low. The College is continually testing measures to increase participation in the FDS; for example, in Spring 2020, we will utilize our new career services software platform Handshake to implement the FDS. Since the majority of our student body is already accessing Handshake on a regular basis, we expect to see an increased response rate. Of equal importance is the College's plan to clarify and enhance how results of the FDS (along with supplemental information from the National Student Clearinghouse and the Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium Alumni Survey, in which the College participates on a biannual basis) are disseminated and utilized. For example, as the Bastian Family Center for Career Success strives to implement more data-driven initiatives, they will utilize these survey results to design targeted programs to launch our graduates into the workforce and to serve alumni beyond graduation.

Academic departments engage various measures for tracking the success of their graduates to inform the development of their curricula. The College celebrates a strong tradition of graduate school placements. In the 2017 [HEDS Baccalaureate Origins of Doctorates survey](#), Knox was ranked #66 among baccalaureate institutions for all disciplines, #42 in the social sciences, #51 in the humanities, #63 in life sciences, #31 in physical sciences, and #48 in math/computer science. Many departments maintain strong graduate-track training. This continued success in placement and student interest in graduate school was a critical consideration in the decision to offer the Bachelor of Science degree in 2018 (see 3A). Concerns about the competitiveness of Knox students for medical school admissions have led the College to pursue significant changes to its health professions advising.

Departments seek to measure other post-graduate outcomes but such tracking can be uneven, and the College recognizes that improvement in this area will require more systematic efforts. The College participated in the [Strategic National Arts Alumni Project](#), which showed high satisfaction among alumni who, among other findings, reported that Knox helped cultivate critical thinking skills needed for success in post-graduate work. The arts faculty maintain an [anecdotal report](#) on post-graduate work life, as do other departments. The most extensive surveys of graduates by major occur through the alumni survey of the program review process (see above). These alumni surveys within the departmental self-study provide the most direct link for departments to evaluate learning goals as they relate to post-graduate outcomes.

In addition to these general measures, Knox College tracks graduate outcomes of specific student populations. The Peace Corp Prep program tracks students who have participated in that program with regard to participation in the Peace Corp and other service opportunities. Based on graduate reporting, of the 17 graduates of this program in the past three years, four have or will serve in the Peace Corp, two have been Fulbright Fellows, and one has participated in Americorps City Year. The [McNair Scholars Program](#) tracks graduate outcomes for 10 years.

Sources

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- 4A_First_Destination_Survey_Report_2017
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- 4A_ISBE Annual Approval 2017
- 4A_McNair APR 2017-18
- 4A_Peace Corps Prep partner schools
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- 4A_Philosophy Program Self-Study 2017
- 4A_Philosophy Review Schedule 4.2018
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- Knox_catalog
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- Knox_catalog (page number 325)

4.B - Core Component 4.B

The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.

1. The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.
2. The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.
3. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.

Argument

A Transformed Approach to Assessment

The HLC's 2010 Assurance Report concluded, "Assessment at Knox College is in its infancy." The College has made considerable progress since then to implement new assessment processes, bolster faculty and staff understanding of the techniques and uses of assessment, and broadly inculcate a culture of assessment and reflection as cornerstones of new and existing curricular and co-curricular programs. While these advances have been far-reaching and transformative, one might conclude that assessment at Knox has reached its adolescent stage, in turn exuberant in its aspirations, showing glimpses of potential, but at times also awkward and hesitant. Assessment at Knox needs a more disciplined approach to connect its ambitions through to genuine impact.

At a practical level, a new approach to assessment has been driven by the appointment of an Associate Director of Assessment in 2009, upgraded to a full-time Director of Academic Assessment in 2011. Learning goals have been established for all programs (see [Africana Studies example](#) pp.34-35), [general education](#) (p.20-26), and the co-curriculum (see 3E). Departments and programs have adopted regular, annual assessment projects and have employed them in support of the fully functioning program review system (discussed in 4A). These important steps flowed naturally into the work of the Task Force on the Knox Educational Experience, which was active 2015-2017, and the resulting new general education curriculum adopted in 2018 (discussed below and in 3B). The former Director of Assessment departed the College for a new opportunity in October 2019. An interim director has been appointed to work with the Assessment Subcommittee, and the Associate Director of Institutional Research will sustain assessment initiatives through the re-accreditation process. A new director will be appointed early in 2020.

Assessment has been tied to many elements of the institutional mission. Our commitment to "traditional and integrative" perspectives has been a driving force behind assessments of student learning in areas such as writing and the First Year Experience (discussed below). Our focus on fundamental questions of human experience are explored in our new Elements requirement with its design around learning goals and assessment pathways. Our emphasis on student independent research has been assessed through the Honors program and summer research assessments. In the co-curriculum, we have been able to assess how a community of diverse backgrounds and perspectives positively impacts the cultivation of skills for conversations across difference.

Assessment has also been critical to our response to the changing context of higher education. For example, our summer bridge program for entering students (discussed in more detail in 4C) emerged in response to concerns over first-term academic success and persistence, especially given the increase in first-generation and Pell-eligible students who research indicates may have been underserved by existing orientation programs.

Assessment Practices

Knox College articulates learning goals for the following components of the curriculum: General Education (The First Year Experience, Elements, Civic Engagement, and Active/Immersive Learning) and [Specialization](#) (p.27). The co-curriculum has additional learning goals that are developed and assessed by the Division of Student Development.

Faculty are integral to assessment at Knox College. First, oversight of academic assessment is the responsibility of the Curriculum Committee Assessment Sub-Committee. The primary responsibilities of the sub-committee are articulated in [Faculty Regulations](#) (p.31). Additionally, the faculty First-Year Preceptorial (FP) Steering Committee provides oversight of the assessment process for FP and faculty members serve as the readers for the FP writing assessment. Departmental faculty are responsible for designing, implementing, and evaluating departmental level assessments, with support from the director of assessment. The Academic Affairs assessment calendar provides an overview of these [activities](#).

General Education

As noted elsewhere, Knox faculty adopted a new curriculum in the spring of 2018 and began implementing it in the fall of 2018. The curriculum is centered on [five goals](#) (p.20), which reflect the articulated [aspirations for Knox College graduates](#) (p.20). The development of the new curriculum began in 2015 with the establishment of the Task Force on the Knox Educational Experience. The task force began with the articulation of learning goals for the components of the new graduation requirements. These goals have remained central to the development and implementation of the curriculum.

The First Year Experience (FYE) is a joint effort of Academic Affairs and Student Development. The main academic component of the FYE is First-Year Preceptorial (FP), with [learning goals](#) focused on writing and academic integrity. The writing component is [assessed annually](#) by a [rubric-based reading](#) of the total written work of approximately 20% of FP students. Additionally, both faculty and students are surveyed at the end of the academic year regarding their experiences with writing instruction. For most years, academic integrity assessment has utilized a pre-and post-test, as well as indirect assessments of students' perceptions of instruction in academic integrity. These assessment outcomes are used by the FP Steering Committee and FP faculty to decide on changes to the course for the following year. Co-curricular components of the FYE, including [new student orientation](#), the [residential curriculum](#) and [living-learning communities](#) are also assessed.

The process by which courses are designated as satisfying one of the [Elements](#) (p. 22) requirements begins with this query: "Describe what students in the course will do that enables them to fulfill this learning goal. In your description, identify the kinds of assignments and activities in which students

will be engaged." The Elements [course designation process](#) thus aligns learning goals with course practices and allows evidence for assessment to be drawn from the actual work of students. The Curriculum Committee reviews all [submissions](#).

Departmental/Program Assessment

In addition to the process outlined above, the Director of Assessment and the Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs collaborate to ensure that assessment is embedded in the program review process for each major. The assessments expected from departments include 1) review of program learning outcomes, 2) assessment of Elements courses, and 3) assessment of writing and oral communication within the major. Within the [proposed update](#) to the program review process, departments develop a six-year assessment plan and report on the plan in the required annual assessment planning reports. This new process is being piloted by the first three departments entering their second program review cycle. In this way, the College is intentionally embedding assessment within the program review process and thereby strengthening both.

These assessment activities are designed to encourage departments to target issues of importance within major and minor curricula and pursue improvements based on assessment data. Departments are given latitude to tailor their assessment efforts in ways that are meaningful and appropriate for their disciplines and students (discussed further below). Each year, departments are asked to provide their assessment plans, their assessment outcomes from the previous year, any changes implemented as a function of their assessments, and any additional information. Departments also take this opportunity to review and update their program learning goals.

Co-Curricular Assessment

Students' co-curricular education, delivered primarily through the Division of Student Development, is centered around five overarching learning goals (healthy sense of self, value-based decision making, develop and sustain meaningful relationships, value and respect for differences, and commitment to community). Each unit within Student Development has identified department-level learning outcomes in service to these five goals. These learning outcomes serve as the foundation for program delivery and resource allocation. The Student Development curriculum map, which was initially developed in [2016](#) and updated in [2019](#), identifies how learning outcomes are delivered across departments.

Every major program delivered through the co-curriculum is [assessed annually](#) so that staff may evaluate and improve program effectiveness. Knox also regularly participates in the [National Survey of Student Engagement and the CIRP Senior Survey](#)—indirect measures of student learning—as a means to evaluate the extent to which students are achieving both curricular and co-curricular learning outcomes.

Uses of Assessment to Inform Current Practices

Assessment activities have played a critical role in promoting changes to educational policy, aided new program design, and guided the work of the faculty development program. Some examples of

the impact of assessment work follow.

- Departmental assessments: The system of annual [departmental assessments](#) has paid dividends in multiple local contexts. For example, with the support of an NSF grant in STEM education, the College's COAST (Creating Opportunities and Access in Science and Technology) Program, multiple departments explored retention for underrepresented groups and persistence to a STEM degree and beyond. The NSF complimented Knox on its [successful completion](#) of this grant. Chemistry, economics, educational studies, history, neuroscience, physics, and theatre [departmental reports for 2019](#) indicate a variety of examples of changes resulting from assessment activities, with frequent attention to introductory courses.
- Writing: A detailed [assessment of writing instruction in 2013-2014](#) identified that most students did encounter writing instruction regularly throughout the Knox curriculum and also showed definite gains in overall writing proficiency over the four years. The assessment, however, showed that the multiple exposures to writing instruction did not always provide for coherent and embedded instruction specific to disciplinary programs. In the new curriculum of 2018, rather than recording multiple instances of writing instruction as evidence of achievement, departments and programs were required to define new learning goals and definite pathways for writing instruction *within* major program requirements.
- First-Year Preceptorial: Given its centrality in the first-year student educational experience, the course is the object of extensive annual [assessment activities](#) which drive planning for the next year's program. Information from the assessment, for example, shapes the design of the [annual FP workshop](#) for instructors, which has frequently focused on writing instruction. In addition to these annual activities, FP assessment has led to specific programmatic decisions:
 - International Students: Prior to 2015, a longstanding policy permitted international students to delay enrollment in FP until the second year, particularly in cases of students with lesser facility with English. A special [assessment of international student performance](#) showed that delaying enrollment in FP delivered no gains in academic performance in FP. The policy adopted in 2015 now ensures placement of all first-term first-year students in FP.
 - Academic Integrity: in 2010, awareness of plagiarism and the bases for integrity in academic work were added to the learning goals for FP. Implementation of this new learning goal included a pre- and post-test of students' understanding of academic integrity. Feedback from this [assessment](#) resulted, over a few years of experimentation, in a more coherent academic integrity program for the course (see 2E).
- Center for Teaching and Learning and Usage among Students in Academic Difficulty: A four-year survey of usage of CTL services among students failing to meet standards for satisfactory academic progress showed that these students tended to under-utilize academic support services, with under-utilization more serious the more dire the level of academic probation. See the [summary of the CTL utilization assessment](#). Recognizing that no single solution will capture every student, the associate deans enlist faculty in their roles as instructors, advisors, and informal mentors to promote support services and de-stigmatize this assistance. All summer bridge programs pay special attention to familiarizing students with academic support services. First-Year Preceptorial instructors are encouraged to invite CTL staff to meet with their sections; some enlist dedicated CTL writing tutors to work exclusively with their sections. The First Year Experience, initiated in 2017, promotes CTL and other support services in its programming.

The Future of Assessment

Important work on the assessment front remains. A few cases of departmental resistance still occur, suggesting that while institutional culture has shifted, assessment has not been fully incorporated into standard practice. The full-time Director of Academic Assessment was able to familiarize departments with the techniques of assessment, support departments and programs seeking to benefit from them, and markedly advance assessment as an idea. However, additional progress is needed before we can say with confidence that we have closed the loop from data to curricular decision-making.

Some important next steps include:

- Greater faculty oversight and definition of the assessment agenda. A new Assessment Subcommittee of the Curriculum Committee has been established, but it has mostly deferred to priorities established by administrators. Direct faculty leadership of the assessment agenda is required.
- Faculty development and program review alignment. Faculty development should focus on building competence and confidence with assessment to enhance program review and growth of the departmental curricula. Program review self-study and departmental assessment must continue to grow into greater alignment.
- Assessment to guide the general education program. The new Elements were crafted with [learning goals and a vision of their assessment in mind](#), but the first assessment must still be implemented. This will be an important step in curricular assessment. The predecessor to Elements was a distribution requirement that obligated students to study in all four divisions of the College but without clear learning goals.
- Assessment of high-impact practices/experiential learning. Assessment of student participation in experiential learning activities guided discussion of these ideas in the recent curriculum reform but without clear focus on how best to assess immersive and active learning. We know that these pedagogies will command greater institutional resources, but we need to be confident that these investments show gains in student learning and persistence to graduation.

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- Knox_catalog (page number 27)
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4.C - Core Component 4.C

The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

1. The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence, and completion that are ambitious but attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations, and educational offerings.
2. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs.
3. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs reflect good practice. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)

Argument

In 2015, as an [HLC Quality Initiative](#), the College embarked on a comprehensive retention and completion plan focused on upholding Knox College's long-standing mission to "increase access to all qualified students of varied backgrounds, races and conditions, regardless of financial means" by improving retention and completion rates. The Quality Initiative was well aligned with the Knox 2018 Strategic Plan, which called for "a comprehensive retention plan to better address the academic, wellness, and social needs of our students." Knox has a richly diverse student body comprised of roughly 40% non-white U.S. citizens or residents and a fast-growing population of low-income and/or first-generation students; while, whenever possible, programs within the initiative were designed to improve the retention and completion of all students, some programs were strategically designed to meet the needs of these specific, high-risk sub-populations.

The plan was ambitious; the College's first-to-second year retention rate and graduation rates were already above the average for private, non-profit, four-year institutions. Nonetheless, it called for an increase in first-to-second year retention from 82.9% to 92%, an increase in the four-year graduation rate from 71% to 75%, and an increase in the five-year graduation rate from 75% to 85%.

Assessment was completed at the level of each individual initiative, as well as by examining campus-wide retention and completion rates over time. Many initiatives had positive results. For example, the [Student Preparation and Readiness for Knox \(SPARK\) Summer Bridge Program](#) for first-generation and other TRIO-eligible students demonstrated first-to-second year retention rates higher than those of eligible non-participants and higher than the overall College first-to-second year retention rate for each cohort across three cohorts (2015-2018), as well as a four-year graduation rate for the 2015 cohort that was higher than SPARK-eligible non-participants and higher than the overall 2015 full time, first time (FFFT) entering class.

The College's first-to-second year [retention rate](#) improved over the first two years of the Quality Initiative from 82.9% to 87.3%, and retention for underrepresented students mirrored that of majority

students, which had not been the case in prior years. While there was a drop in retention in the third year of the Quality Initiative (2017-2018) to 81%, there remained no significant difference between the retention rate of underrepresented and that of majority students. However, as the FFFT retention rate for 2018-2019 remained lower than expected at 81.2%, it is clear that first-year retention is a critical area of focus for the College at this time. Similarly, [completion rates](#) dropped over the course of the Quality Initiative, though we did see an improvement in the four-year completion rate of the most recent graduating class and a narrowing of the completion gap between racially underrepresented students and non-underrepresented students and between TRIO-eligible students and non-eligible students.

Over the past three years, the College has demonstrated strategic utilization of data to inform programmatic changes and enhancements. Through required exit interviews with the Associate Dean of the College, supplemented by information from the Academic Standing Committee and relevant faculty and staff, the College collects data regarding each student who withdraws or takes a leave of absence. This data is regularly analyzed for patterns by gender, race/ethnicity, first generation status and other identity groups, as well as reason for leaving. These data are shared with the Admission, Retention and Placement committee (comprised of faculty, administrators, and students) each term so that improvements may be made to curricular and co-curricular offerings, though record-keeping for this group is an area in need of improvement. The SPARK Summer Bridge Program is an example of a data-driven initiative spearheaded by this group. Retention data is also shared each term with the Board of Trustees.

In the summer of 2016, the College engaged in a [comprehensive analysis of student attrition data](#) for students who withdrew or took a leave between fall 2011 and spring 2016. We analyzed their demographic information, what they were involved in, and why they left, looking for patterns and opportunities for targeted interventions and adjustments to our programs and services. These data were shared with a wide array of campus stakeholders including the Admission, Retention and Placement Committee, the faculty as a whole, Student Development staff, and the Board of Trustees. The analysis led the College to initiate several new retention- and completion-focused programs and interventions. For example:

- Students of color were disproportionately represented among those who indicated they left the College for mental health reasons. As a result, Counseling Services significantly increased outreach to students of color, and did work around de-stigmatizing mental health concerns within our student communities of color. The percentage of students of color seen in counseling has grown significantly, and students of color are no longer overly represented in our attrition population for mental health reasons.
- Students who participated in a summer bridge program (SPARK or TRIO) were retained at a higher rate than their eligible peers who did not participate. While these programs are opt-in, and so the possibility of selection bias exists, their success merits reaching the largest number of students possible. For this reason, the Athletic Director adjusted the fall training schedule so incoming student-athletes could also participate in summer bridge programs. Additionally, because both our own data and relevant literature indicate a need to more intentionally facilitate all first-year students' academic transition into college, the SPARK curriculum is serving as a foundation for the College's newly developed [First-Year Oriented Experience \(FOX\) courses](#), which are being piloted this academic year. These courses complement existing supplemental instruction courses offered alongside introductory science sequences.

As a result of two years of FFFT retention hovering around 81% in 2017-18 and 2018-19, a similar

comprehensive analysis of attrition data was conducted in [Fall 2019](#). Several opportunities for intervention were identified, some of which have already been implemented. These include:

- Ensuring that front-line staff such as facilities, dining services, and information technology have a clear way to submit concerns regarding a student.
- Evaluating the impact of the current academic calendar on retention and exploring alternative models.
- Expanding Counseling Services' outreach to male students.

Knox College uses IPEDS definitions of retention and completion rates and its methodology for tracking and reporting. This methodology fits Knox's student profile in two key ways: 1) Knox has fewer than 1% of our entering class enrolling as part-time students and/or not degree-seeking, so the cohort definition is appropriate, and 2) as all of our degrees are baccalaureate level, completion rates are calculated on four-, five-, and six-year time frames; since our teacher preparation program is typically a five-year program due to the student teaching requirement, the five- and six-year rates are our most valid completion measures.

Sources

- 4C_Attrition_data_analysis_Fall2019
- 4C_Attrition_data_analysis_May2017
- 4C_Fall_to_Fall_Retention
- 4C_FOX_course_pilot_outcomes
- 4C_Graduation_Rates
- 4C_HLC Quality Initiative Report
- 4C_SPARK_Retention_and_Completion

4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

Summary

Since our most recent institutional accreditation review, Knox has demonstrated its commitment to delivering a high quality educational experience through the assessment of student learning and success. Noteworthy areas of improvement include the creation and implementation of a system of regular program review for all academic departments and programs, the shift to a co-curriculum grounded in concrete learning goals with concomitant assessment practices, and the enhanced use of retention and completion data for strategic program improvement. After the 2009 reaccreditation, Knox implemented a systematic process for program review. However, work remains to close the loop and ensure that the assessment results systematically drive improvements in the academic program.

Strengths:

- Over the past decade, the College has implemented a system of regular review for all its academic departments. After our 2009 reaccreditation, Knox implemented an academic assessment process, and data are collected and disseminated in a systematic manner. We are currently evaluating the review process and making refinements as we launch into the second review cycle to utilize assessment data to drive improvements.
- Each area of the new Knox Educational Experience—the First Year Experience, Elements, and major and minor curricula—were developed based on specific learning goals that lend themselves to concrete assessment.
- Comprehensive analysis of student persistence data and retention programming outcomes have led to strategic, data-driven interventions and programmatic changes.

Areas for Improvement:

- Assessment and evaluation data are not always used systematically to inform substantive change and improvement in teaching and learning methods.
- Faculty leadership in assessment can become more robust, with the Assessment Subcommittee seeking a more active role in defining the assessment agenda and greater ownership of assessment across the faculty.
- We are developing systems for better collecting and incorporating robust graduate outcome data into a feedback loop for meaningful programmatic change.

Sources

There are no sources.

5 - Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

The institution's resources, structures, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. The institution plans for the future.

5.A - Core Component 5.A

The institution's resource base supports its current educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

1. The institution has the fiscal and human resources and physical and technological infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.
2. The institution's resource allocation process ensures that its educational purposes are not adversely affected by elective resource allocations to other areas or disbursement of revenue to a superordinate entity.
3. The goals incorporated into mission statements or elaborations of mission statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources, and opportunities.
4. The institution's staff in all areas are appropriately qualified and trained.
5. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring expense.

Argument

Although the College has long experienced budget constraints of various degrees, Knox has always risen to those challenges, ensuring that our fiscal resources are sufficient to support operations as demonstrated by the Composite Financial Index (CFI), the Department of Education Financial Responsibility Ratio, and bank loan ratios (including both the liquidity ratio and the debt service coverage ratio). See [ratios charts](#) showing these data.

The Vice President for Finance and Administrative Services is charged with overseeing the fiscal, human, and capital resources of the College and working with the relevant campus constituencies and the Board of Trustees Finance Committee. The Audit Subcommittee of the Board of Trustees Finance Committee is charged with reviewing and approving the [annual audit of the College's finances](#) at the October meeting. The annual audit report is provided to the banks with whom the College has a relationship, as well as to consortial partners in the Associated Colleges of the Midwest, the Associated Colleges of Illinois, and any regulatory bodies as required. Knox audit reports have been characterized by clean opinions every year since the last reaccreditation. They also reveal a progressive growth in both assets and net assets.

Since 2012, the College's banker has been PNC. PNC currently provides Knox with the following: a letter of credit on two bond issues (Series 1996 and Series 1999); a term loan that has helped finance the recently-completed A-core renovation of the Umbeck Science-Mathematics Center; and an operating line of credit for cyclical cash flow needs. While the operating line of credit is renewed

annually (as is common for such facilities), the letter of credit does not expire until November 2021. During the year ended June 30, 2006, Knox entered into two interest rate swap agreements. The purpose of the agreements is to effectively fix the variable rates on both the Series 1996 and Series 1999 bonds (fixed at 3.556% and 3.524% respectively). While interest rates have remained historically low, the swaps provide Knox with a hedge against future potential increases in interest rates.

Fiscal Resources

Like most private, nonprofit institutions, the College derives its operating revenues primarily from three sources: student fees (including tuition, room and board, and other fees, net of financial aid), annual giving to the Knox Fund, and an annual endowment draw authorized by the Board of Trustees. For the most recently completed fiscal year, student fees accounted for roughly 75% of operating revenues, with annual giving and the total endowment support contributing 6% and 15%, respectively.

Endowment

The College's endowment market value has increased significantly since 2009, from \$57.5 million in FY09 to \$170.2 million in FY19. The [growth](#) has been the result of significant donor contributions through the Above & Beyond Initiatives fundraising campaign, coupled with investment performance.

The annual budget support provided by the endowment is based on the Knox College [Endowment Philosophy and Methodology policy](#) (approved on February 14, 1998). As specified on page 2 of the policy, the approved spending level is based on a twelve-quarter market value average. This calculation is presented to the Board at each February meeting for approval. The resultant dollar calculation is then incorporated into the budget planning model. See [Board resolutions for 2010-2019](#).

For some years now, the Board has approved an annual budget that, at the front end, presents an operating deficit. In this approved budget, the *budgeted* endowment support (described in the preceding paragraph) is included. The administration is then expected to reduce the deficit to zero by a combination of cost adjustments, expenditure of reserves, application of unrestricted bequests (technically a form of quasi-endowment utilization), or an additional back end endowment draw by the end of the fiscal year. See [June 2019 Board Resolution](#). The effective (or all-in) endowment draw for the past five years is shown on the [Endowment Spending Analysis](#) table. Due to its growth, the dollars coming from the endowment have increased even as the effective percentage support has remained relatively constant. Nonetheless, the College recognizes that the regular, budgeted draw is notably less than is currently required to support the operating budget, and that the support coming from the endowment is excessive relative to reasonable assumptions concerning long-term market returns on the underlying endowment investments. Over the long-term, the College should not draw on the endowment more than it is taking in. A path towards a more sustainable regular draw -- while a priority under all recent strategic plans -- has become an even more significant priority in the recent years, as described below.

Net Tuition Revenue

While the endowment has become increasingly important in the fiscal operations of the college, the leadership recognizes that tuition dependence in an era of enrollment challenges places significant strain on the annual operating budget. From FY09 to FY14, net tuition revenue grew slightly, from just under \$23.8 million to just over \$24.8 million. Starting in FY15, increases in the discount rate and declines in enrollment produced a drop in net revenue that has necessitated an increase in the endowment draw and continual review of budgeted expenditures in search of savings (see [charts](#) on net tuition and fee revenue and discount rate). Beginning in 2014, the College undertook a number of temporary cost-cutting measures to reduce the deficit, which included a one-year halving of the institutional contribution to TIAA and a draw from the Budget Contingency Reserve (a portion of the endowment designated by the Board as a “rainy day” fund). By FY19, these challenges became more severe, depleting the Budget Contingency Reserve and other reserve funds. As a result, the College is currently engaged in a more significant and longer-term right-sizing of its operating expenses in order to bring revenues and expenses into greater alignment and lower the effective endowment draw. This effort is led by the Senior Staff and includes consultation with the [Institutional Planning and Priorities Council \(IPPC\)](#), comprising members of Senior Staff, three representatives of Staff Council (including one member of the bargaining unit), four faculty members who are also members of the Faculty Committee on Budget and Financial Priorities (CBFP), and two students (selected by Student Senate). (See IPPC [minutes and presentations](#).) The proposals implemented to date and currently under consideration have been communicated to the campus in [open forums](#) as well as at other meetings.

Fundraising

Over the last 10 years, Knox College has seen [excellent growth in fundraising](#). During this period, annual total fundraising (cash only, not including pledges) grew from an average of \$12.2 million the first four years to an average of \$16 million in the last six. Annual fund operating gifts (Knox Fund) grew 80 percent over the decade at the same time that Knox has experienced the trend shared by the majority of colleges—more dollars from fewer donors.

Facing significant need for capital improvements on the campus as well as funds for student learning opportunities and services, the College engaged Grenzebach Glier & Associates (GG&A) in 2012 to undertake a traditional fundraising campaign feasibility study. The firm had worked for the College since its last capital campaign in the mid-'90s. A campaign advisory committee was formed consisting of members of the Board of Trustees as well as alumni from various decades and current and former parents. The committee worked for over a year, providing feedback on fundraising initiatives that they believed would be of interest to donors. The feasibility study also included confidential interviews conducted by GG&A with top donors. The [resulting report](#) and follow-up discussion with GG&A encouraged the College to approach fundraising over the next decade in an agile and innovative manner different from the traditional capital campaign model.

At the June 2013 Board meeting, the Board previewed the feasibility report suggesting a three-phase, themed fundraising effort focused on priority projects/initiatives that would bring cash to Knox and continue the recent fundraising momentum that had been generated by the renovation of Alumni Hall, a project underway during the feasibility study. That \$12.7 million project became Phase I of

what was called [Above & Beyond: Initiatives for Knox](#), and brought to life a building that had been shuttered for nearly 30 years. Alumni Hall is now the “gateway” between the Knox campus and the wider world, housing Admission, four centers for student experiential learning (community service, research, off-campus/global study, and career success), and Alumni Relations, now Alumni Engagement.

The primary difference between the new fundraising initiatives and a traditional capital campaign was that only cash and realized bequests were counted (e.g., planned gifts would only be counted once realized). This has not stopped the marketing and acquisition of planned commitments to the College, but these commitments aren’t counted toward the Initiatives until realized. (During Knox’s previous capital campaign, Knox Now, during the '90s and into the early 2000s, more than 65 percent of the \$125+ million raised came in the form of planned gifts, many of which have yet to be realized by the College.) Another difference was the absence of a quiet phase—while donors know the projected cost of a capital project or the amount needed for an endowed fund, only the Board of Trustees has been aware of the overall goal for a phase and progress toward its realization. The phased model accelerates the acquisition and celebration of gifts, compared to more traditional campaigns.

[Phase II](#) of the Initiatives began July 1, 2012, and ended June 30, 2019. The Initiatives aligned with the Knox 2018 Strategic Plan, focusing on capital needs; endowment for student experiences, faculty compensation and academic programs; and the annual fund. The (internal) Phase II goal was \$85.3 million. That goal was exceeded with \$97.2 million raised, 114% of the goal. Combined with Alumni Hall, \$110 million has been raised between Phases I and II. As is typical, donor wishes did not always align precisely with the College’s priorities, but the overall amount raised has been transformational in its impact at the College. Planning for the third phase is currently underway to correspond with the priorities of the Knox 2022 Strategic Plan.

Human Resources

Human Resources, part of the Finance and Administrative Services area, is charged with oversight and operations of all personnel matters, sharing some responsibilities for faculty personnel matters with the Provost’s office and the Faculty Personnel Committee. The office is led by the Associate Vice President for Human resources, who reports to the Vice President for Finance and Administrative Services.

In fall 2019, the College employed 268 full-time and 82 part-time exempt and non-exempt staff personnel. The student to staff ratio is 5 to 1 (see [Knox data](#) as well as [comparative IPEDS data](#) from the Associated Colleges of the Midwest). These data show Knox approximately in the middle of our comparison group, with some of the variances readily explainable (e.g., dining service workers are Knox employees while the management of the operation is outsourced to Bon Appetit). As part of the College’s strategic human resources planning, in 2018 the College benchmarked staff salaries (see [summary presentation](#)) for both exempt and nonexempt employees against data from the Colleges and Universities Professional Association (CUPA), the Associated Colleges of the Midwest, or the Midwest Conference athletics salary survey. See 5D for additional information. The exercise showed that generally, staff salaries are close to or slightly below the median for baccalaureate institutions. The College will continue to review salaries and compensation in recognition that in today’s labor market, competitive compensation is a requirement.

As of fall 2019, the College employed 123 full-time and 13 part-time instructional faculty members.

Information on faculty credentials and review policies can be found in 3C. Faculty salaries are benchmarked annually against the ACM comparison group, using AAUP data. The results of that exercise over the past two years show a significant erosion of the College's competitive standing. As a result, the College has intensified its prioritization of faculty salaries in the Knox 2022 iteration of our strategic plan, and the Provost is now working with key faculty committees to [identify priorities and strategies for improvement](#).

Requests for new faculty must be accompanied by a solid rationale for the position, which is balanced against enrollment data from the Registrar's Office and Institutional Research. Staff vacancies are also carefully reviewed to determine whether or not the position must be refilled. In 2017, the College initiated an enhanced [phased retirement program](#) for faculty that standardized the terms of phased retirements that had previously been negotiated individually. In the fall of 2019, Knox for the first time offered an [early retirement plan for staff](#). Ten employees participated in the program, and those positions will be reviewed to determine whether or not they need to be replaced.

Physical Resources

The Vice President for Finance and Administrative Services and a Director of Facilities monitor campus physical infrastructure. The 85-acre main campus in Galesburg provides a broad array of facilities including classrooms, library, indoor and outdoor athletic facilities, faculty and staff offices, dining hall, student residence halls, etc. In addition to the main campus, the College owns the Green Oaks Biological Field Station, 700 acres located 20 miles from campus in Victoria, Illinois. The property consists of forest, grassland, and aquatic habitat and is the site for Green Oaks Term, an interdisciplinary immersive learning experience. It is also used for classroom activities, retreats, and recreation by faculty, staff, and students. Green Oaks is the second oldest prairie grass restoration project in the nation.

In the last decade, the College has undertaken ambitious capital projects through the Above & Beyond Initiatives aimed at transforming its historic campus into a 21st century environment for teaching and learning, following the Knox 2018 Strategic Plan. Given the College's resource constraints, some of the larger projects have been undertaken in phases, with clear attention to sequencing and return on investment, and typically financed with donor funds. These have included:

- [Alumni Hall](#): A complete renovation and reopening of this facility financed by an 18-month accelerated \$12,700,000 fundraising effort. The building is LEED Gold certified.
- [Whitcomb Art Center](#): This \$9,800,000 [award-winning](#) new center was completed and opened in January 2017. Designed to provide a contemporary environment for studio arts and art history, the building also contains several spaces that are used for campus events and is LEED Platinum certified. The building was entirely donor funded.
- [Underground Steam and Condensate Line](#): Phase I of a two year project to replace the underground steam and condensate lines was completed this summer. When phase II is finished, a substantial amount of deferred maintenance will have been addressed and considerable utility cost savings will be achieved. Funded through a draw from the endowment.
- [Umbeck Science and Mathematics Center \(SMC\)](#): A phased comprehensive remodel is currently in process, with substantial completion of phase I on budget and on schedule for January 2020. The [first phase renovation](#) consisted of a \$13,000,000 investment in technologically-advanced mechanical systems, a modern learning commons/library and five new technologically advanced classrooms. Design work for phase II is currently underway. The

building is the oldest unrenovated science building among the Associated Colleges of the Midwest, and transformation of this building is seen as key to the College's capacity to recruit and retain students and faculty in the STEM fields. The building will also house on its roof an outdoor observatory including a classroom and a domed telescope to enhance the recently expanded astronomy curriculum in the Physics Department and offer opportunities for viewing to the Galesburg community.

- HOPE Center: The acquisition and \$1,000,000 renovation of an historic church was funded entirely by donors. See 1A for more information about the HOPE Center.

In addition, [multiple smaller projects](#) totaling more than \$5 million have been accomplished with donor funding and/or capital project funds from the operating budget. While individually not large in scope, together these projects have had a substantial impact on the student and faculty experience and contributed to the College's competitiveness for enrollments.

Campus facilities are maintained by a staff that includes maintenance, grounds, and custodial workers. Additionally, while dining service management is outsourced to Bon Appetit, the food service workers themselves are employees of the College. Both the facilities staff and the food service workers have been represented by SEIU Local 73 since 1994. [Contracts](#) have varied in length from two to three years and have been renegotiated without a work stoppage of any kind since the formal recognition of the union at Knox. Several team members on the maintenance crew are skilled in the trades (including electrical, plumbing).

Resource allocations from the operating budget to capital projects and deferred maintenance have been constrained over the past decade, but the College has sought to increase the amount allocated each year. In FY10, the amount allocated was \$400,000, an amount that was increased to \$750,000 in FY18. Recent budget challenges have caused the College once again to shift reliance for even some routine capital projects from the operating budget to fundraising. As a result, the FY20 budget allocation for capital projects was \$360,000.

Decisions on annual capital projects are made by Senior Staff operating as a whole with the College's strategic plan as a guide to priorities. Larger capital projects are typically identified under the strategic plan and then the Advancement Office is charged with matching the need to available donors. Projects are brought to Senior Staff through the Vice President for Finance after consultation with the Director of Facilities, and other items are added to the list by members of the Senior Staff for consideration. Faculty committees and IPPC are also typically consulted on priorities for funding. The President makes final decisions, but typically a consensus has developed during discussion by Senior Staff and other bodies that were consulted, which guides her thinking.

Technological Resources

The Vice President for Information Technology Services is the College's chief information officer and oversees the technology infrastructure as well as operations. The faculty [Instructional Support Committee](#) (pp. 30-31) and the Information Systems Council (5C) provide input when developing appropriate policies, projects, and technology solutions. These groups have broad representation consisting of students, faculty, and staff. Through diligent monitoring of technology trends, the College has expanded the range and scope of technology services over the past decade. For instance, the College moved to a Google Education platform; partnered with Lake Forest College for mutual disaster recovery efforts (see [MOU](#)); replaced a 25-year-old PBX phone system with VOIP;

strengthened information security training (including two-factor authentication adoption); updated many departmental core systems, including Career Center (Handshake), Advancement (Jenzabar JX, Graduway, Reeher), Admission (Slate), HR (BambooHR, Interfolio Faculty Search); experimented and implemented thin clients and virtual desktops; was an early adopter of campus-wide WiFi; and has been an active participant in the [Higher Education System and Services Consortium](#).

Resource Allocation: Capital and Operating Budgets

Capital projects are guided by a number of plans, policies, and procedures, chiefly the College's strategic plan and the fundraising plan (Above and Beyond) that supports the strategic plan. The College utilizes three documents that together serve as a comprehensive Master Plan: the [Land Use Plan](#) (1996), the [Landscape Master Plan](#) (1991), and the [Property Acquisition Map](#) that identifies properties the Board sees as appropriate for acquisitions (amended from time to time). There is widespread recognition that these documents are dated, and the Knox 2018 Strategic Plan called for a comprehensive master planning process within the next five years. Given the uncertainty about the College's optimal size, changes in the demographics and physical condition of the surrounding area, planning efforts underway in the greater Galesburg community, and the cost of a master planning effort in terms of both funding and time, this process has been delayed. We believe the College needs to have an updated Master Plan and anticipate identifying the resources to undertake this effort in the next two to three years.

The annual operating budget is informed by several constituent groups including Senior Staff, the Institutional Planning and Priorities Committee (IPPC) and the faculty-elected Committee on Budget and Financial Priorities, and the Board of Trustees (via the Committee on Finance and the Budget Subcommittee). See [Board packets](#) prepared for the Board Finance Committee, [minutes](#) from the Board Finance Committee meetings, and [memos](#) prepared for the Board Committee on Finance and Senior Staff about budget development for the fiscal year. The participation from, and accountability to, these constituent groups allows for the allocation of budgeted funds not to drift from established strategic plan goals and institutional priorities. As detailed in 5C, Senior Staff developed preliminary cost estimates and possible funding mechanisms for proposed initiatives before the Board approved the Knox 2018 Strategic Plan. As implementation of the plan proceeded, these estimates have been refined, affecting a range of activities including grant-writing, donor cultivation and solicitation, and annual budget allocations. A parallel anticipated document and process will be undertaken for the next strategic plan iteration, Knox 2022.

Each member of Senior Staff has been assigned strategic priorities from the College's strategic plan and reports at each Board meeting on progress in those areas as detailed in 5C. The President and the Board of Trustees review these [Board reports](#) and monitor progress through their assigned committees and the full Board discussion.

Staff Qualifications

Faculty members are hired through a national search; the process of appointment, evaluation and promotion of faculty members is described in 3C. Staff members are hired through local, regional, or national searches. Before any staff position is approved for hiring, the hiring manager must complete a [Job Description Questionnaire](#) that describes the appropriate experience, education, and training

required for the position. The JDQ is reviewed by the Associate Vice President for Human Resources to ensure consistency and equity across positions, and job postings are also reviewed for accuracy. Preliminary screening of all applicants ensures that those who do not have the requisite qualifications do not advance in the process. Typically for positions of director and above, hiring/search committees are used to ensure quality of the process, and individuals meet with several groups during the interview (see sample [itinerary](#)). For positions of vice president and above, it is standard practice to use a professional search consultant (see [examples of contracts](#) with search firms) to ensure that a pool of high-quality candidates has been developed prior to engagement with an internal hiring committee.

Knox College performs [background and reference checks](#) on every employee hired. A copy of any required licenses or certifications is required during orientation and updated upon expiration. HR tracks licensure and training requirements for each position through the BambooHR software program.

Each position offer is contingent upon the employee completing discrimination and harassment training, along with DCFS Mandated Reporter training. Job-specific training is handled at the department level. Managers complete [HR101 training](#) to familiarize them with Knox's policies, as well as with applicable federal and state laws.

The College seeks to provide professional development opportunities to all staff, but budget constraints do limit what can be provided. In recent years, supervisors have been encouraged to take advantage of webinars and online training along with training provided by College staff. The College also does not have a consistent or central process for staff performance reviews, although such reviews do take place across the administrative staff at varying levels of efficacy, skill, and timing. Evaluation of employees in the collective bargaining unit is conducted according to the terms of the contract. Professional development for faculty is more systematic, and involves periodic sabbaticals and development funds administered through the Provost's Office and the Committee on Faculty Resources. The process of appointment, evaluation, and promotion of faculty members is also more systematic than that for staff, as described in 3C.

Budgeting and Monitoring Expenses

The Vice President for Finance and Administrative Services is responsible for preparing the College's annual budget, for producing budget models and projections, and has broad responsibility for monitoring the College's budget status and resources. These responsibilities include extensive interaction with both the President and Senior Staff. The budgeting process is additionally informed by the IPPC (see above), which meets monthly when classes are in session. The Vice President for Finance and Administrative Services also works with, and reports to, both the Finance Committee and the Budget Subcommittee of the Board of Trustees (see minutes from Finance Committee meetings linked above). The participation of these constituent groups allows for the interaction necessary to ensure that the resources of the College are being applied to the strategic initiatives and priorities of the College.

Within Academic Affairs, the Provost meets with the Dean's Council and department chairs to monitor budgets and review changes in policies or procedures that affect the delivery of the educational program. As the College has long operated in a resource-constrained environment, these more granular discussions have typically revolved around prioritization and cost savings. The Provost

and elected faculty leadership are currently reassessing the effectiveness of faculty governance in identifying needed investments and setting priorities. To that end, the faculty Executive Committee has established an ad hoc Coordinating Committee charged with guiding faculty committees in identifying innovations, priorities, and investments to secure the long-term health of the College (see [draft description](#) (p. 9)). That group began its work in December 2019.

The timetable for development of the annual operating budget lies with the Vice President for Finance and Administrative Services. Informed by the groups above, a preliminary fiscal year operating budget is prepared and presented to the Board of Trustees at the February meeting (see [budget discussions 2018-2019](#)). This preliminary budget identifies a framework of the administration's assumptions concerning fall enrollment projections and retention, unrestricted contribution income, and the anticipated endowment draw to be budgeted. An initial analysis of operating expenses, based on current fiscal year projections, and planned capital projects is also incorporated into this preliminary budget. Sensitivity analysis ([budget webinar](#), [forecasting model](#)) for forecasting varying enrollment and discount assumptions/scenarios is also incorporated into the budget development process. The models currently being used project three years ahead of the current fiscal year.

After the February Board meeting, a final operating budget (see previous paragraph) for the upcoming fiscal year is prepared and presented to the Board of Trustees for approval at the June meeting. Final assessment of actual results versus budget is presented at the October meeting.

Several internal controls are in place for expense (budget) monitoring. These include the following:

1. [Internally prepared \(unaudited\) financial statements](#) generated quarterly for the College's bank (PNC).
2. [Financial reports, analysis and commentary](#) prepared for each Board meeting. Information is published not only for the Committee on Finance but for the broader Board membership via the Board portal (OnBoard by Passageways)
3. The employment of a full-time financial analyst (reporting directly to the CFO) whose primary responsibilities include budget monitoring and ad hoc financial analysis as directed. The analyst prepares a [set of monthly reports](#) for review by the VP for Finance and Administrative Services.
4. The budget monitoring menu suite in the College's enterprise business system (Jenzabar CX), which allows budget managers real-time access to activity (see [screenshot](#) - budget review) in their approved cost centers.

Finally, in recognizing the importance of transparency in the College's financial matters, Senior Staff schedules post Board forums for the campus community after each Board meeting, and these are provided as evidence above. Additional budget forums (above) are scheduled as needed. As noted in Criterion 2, faculty and student members of Board committees and faculty observers also attend portions of the Board meeting and have access to portions of the Board Book. The president also reports on the budget during regular monthly faculty meetings and [shares her written report](#) as a campus email with all faculty and staff.

Sources

- faculty regulations
- faculty regulations (page number 30)
- 5A_10 Years of Knox Fundraising
- 5A_5 Years Financial Statements
- 5A_ABBY Goals and Results
- 5A_ABBY webpage
- 5A_ACM Student to Staff Ratio charts
- 5A_Ad hoc Coord Comm
- 5A_Ad hoc Coord Comm (page number 9)
- 5A_Alumni Hall webpage
- 5A_Bamboo Screenshots
- 5A_BOT Budget Feb_2018-2019
- 5A_BOT Packets_2018-19
- 5A_Budget Memos_FY18-FY20
- 5A_Budget Webinar
- 5A_COF Minutes_2018-19
- 5A_Early Retirement Incentive program
- 5A_Employee Handbook_2019
- 5A_Endowment
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- 5A_SMC_ABBY webpage
- 5A_Tuition Revenue_Discount Rate
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- 5A_WAC awards website
- 5A_WAC website

5.B - Core Component 5.B

The institution's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission.

1. The governing board is knowledgeable about the institution; it provides oversight of the institution's financial and academic policies and practices and meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.
2. The institution has and employs policies and procedures to engage its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students—in the institution's governance.
3. Administration, faculty, staff, and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes through effective structures for contribution and collaborative effort.

Argument

The College's [governance and administrative structures](#) are designed to facilitate leadership, provide clear lines of authority, designate responsibility for oversight, and engage the relevant constituencies to meet the College's mission. The Board of Trustees delegates day-to-day management and operation of the College to the administration and rely on the faculty to establish policies and deal with matters pertaining to the academic program.

The President's cabinet, known as the Senior Staff, consists of seven vice presidents who oversee functional areas (Academic Affairs, Admission and Financial Aid, Advancement, Communications, Finance and Administrative Services, Information Technology Services, and Student Development). All vice presidents report directly to the president, who, in turn, reports to the Board of Trustees. The President and Senior Staff meet weekly as a group and have developed a strong collaborative culture that recognizes the connections and dependencies across all functional areas. Senior Staff members are responsible for establishing and assessing goals for their functional area's routine operations, and they provide strategic direction and prepare [reports](#) that are provided to the Board of Trustees three times a year.

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees is deeply committed to the College and provides guidance and oversight to the administration as appropriate through its committees (see 2C for information about committees). The chairs of all seven committees comprise the Board's Executive Committee, which holds a monthly conference call to receive a briefing from the President and conducts business as permitted by the [Bylaws](#). Committees meet at all three Board meetings, either separately or together with one or more other committees and can hold conference calls between meetings. Each trustee is assigned to at least two committees, and the vice presidents serve as staff for the appropriate Board committees.

Each Board committee reports to the full Board on committee highlights and actions and offers for consideration any resolutions that require full Board approval. For the past four years, the Executive Committee has held a retreat each August to develop work plans for the committees and for the full

Board (see 2C). These draft work plans are approved at the October committee meetings. New trustees receive a comprehensive orientation at their first meeting that includes a robust discussion of the Board's fiduciary responsibilities and duties.

The Academic Affairs Committee of the Board (see 2C) meets with the Provost, faculty, and student representatives to discuss the College's academic program as it relates to the Board's fiduciary responsibilities (e.g., academic program offerings and opportunities, faculty and staff size, and compensation). This committee reviews candidates for tenure/promotion and honorary degree candidates and makes recommendations to the full Board for their approval.

Engaging internal constituencies

The College engages and values the participation of all internal constituencies in the governance of the institution. As noted in 2C, Board committees are augmented by students and faculty trustees who are appointed in accordance with [section 6.3 of the College Bylaws](#) (p. 14). The vice presidents whose areas of responsibility align with the committee charge along with relevant staff members provide updates on proposed and ongoing strategic initiatives and projects and items of business in accordance with the Bylaws. Each meeting is a balance between presentation and open discussion. The diverse membership of these committees ensures that all internal constituencies are represented and have an opportunity to participate in the governance of the institution at the Board level.

As noted above, day-to-day management and operation of the College is delegated to the President and the Senior Staff, who meet regularly and work collaboratively to accomplish the mission. The President and Senior Staff are members and/or participate regularly on campus committees that act in an advisory capacity in setting policy, establishing institutional priorities, and planning and executing initiatives in support of the strategic plan and mission of the College. Several of these bodies, their composition, and role in the College's governance are described in 5C. While the education and development of our students is the primary objective of the work of the College, it is worth noting that our students are also active participants as employees of the institution in providing essential services. Approximately 600 students are employed each term at the College, providing or helping to provide key services to the College community -- tutoring, providing technical support at the help desk and computers, preparation of meals, maintenance of the grounds and facilities, etc. Knox is currently exploring how we can better intentionally align and develop student knowledge and skills in their roles as student workers.

Setting academic requirements, policy, and processes

As described above and in 5C, students, faculty, staff and administration have representation on numerous Board, faculty, administrative, and advisory committees that directly or indirectly provide input that influences academic requirements, policy, and processes. As noted in the Bylaws, Article VII Section 7.3.b Faculty Responsibilities:

The faculty shall have the responsibility for regulation of educational policy concerned in the requirements of any degree in course authorized by the Board.

The faculty committee structure is the mechanism through which the faculty exercise their

responsibilities. The [Executive Committee](#) (pp. 29-30) holds general responsibility for the educational program, manages all standing committees, and plays an important role in setting the agenda for general faculty meetings. The composition of this important committee shows the high value placed on collaborative leadership: five elected faculty, two students selected by the Student Senate, and the Provost and the Vice President for Student Development *ex officio*. With the exception of two other elected committees, Personnel (p. 30) and Budget & Financial Priorities (p. 30), all standing committees include representation from on-campus constituencies. In addition to faculty, committees include students and relevant staff with expertise in the area covered by the committee's charge. Broad representation ensures that the work, deliberations, and recommendations from these committees are performed in a collaborative environment and that there are conduits of information back to campus constituencies they represent.

Faculty assignments to standing committees are made by the faculty members of the Executive Committee (referred to as "FASCom") in consultation with the Provost. Standing committees are chaired by a faculty member or, in the case of Campus Diversity Committee and the Student Life Committee, co-chaired by a faculty and a staff member.

As detailed in 3A, principal responsibility for setting academic requirements, policies and process resides with the full faculty through its monthly meetings, though the Executive Committee and the Curriculum Committee play important roles in interpreting, implementing and evaluating those policies.

Sources

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5.C - Core Component 5.C

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.

1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities.
2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting.
3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.
4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity. Institutional plans anticipate the possible impact of fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue, such as enrollment, the economy, and state support.
5. Institutional planning anticipates emerging factors, such as technology, demographic shifts, and globalization.

Argument

At the time of the last reaccreditation, the College was guided by a strategic plan adopted by the Board of Trustees in [October 2007](#). The plan had three pillars: Nurture Academic Excellence, Strengthen Institutional Self-Confidence, and Chart a Course Toward Financial Impregnability. As described in 1A and 5A, the 2007 plan was followed in October 2014 by Knox 2018, the result of a systematic and integrated planning process engaging more than 120 participants. The next iteration of strategic planning at Knox is in process at this time and represents a shift in philosophy to a more continuous, ongoing planning model described below.

For more than a decade, allocation of resources at Knox has supported progress toward its strategic goals by means of assessment, evaluation, planning, and budgeting. The linkages across these activities are not always robust. In particular, and not surprisingly, since the last comprehensive accreditation review, Knox has experienced multiple transitions in Senior Staff, beginning with the anticipated retirement of the long-serving chief academic and financial officers who were present in 2009. Since then, turnover in these positions has accelerated at Knox, as it has across higher education, and unexpected transitions have introduced discontinuities over the decade. However, the President and Senior Staff have worked hard to mitigate any disruption.

Knox 2018 was originally intended to conclude at the end of academic year 2018-19, with a [new planning process](#) scheduled for spring 2019 that would bridge the gap to the College's next strategic plan. However, the President and Senior Staff decided at the time not to reprise the traditional planning process that would terminate at a specific date in the future. Rather, a consensus emerged that the goals of the existing plan could continue to serve the College well if there was refocus and refinement of initiatives. Given the past decade's improvement in our capacities for ongoing data collection and measurement across the campus (as described in 4B and 5D), we believe that we can continue to progress toward our larger strategic goals through an ongoing, agile planning process characterized by continual evaluation and adjustment. (This also mirrors our earlier decision to substitute ongoing, project-based capital fundraising for a traditional capital campaign.) This new version of the strategic plan in draft form — now titled [Knox 2022](#)—was presented to various campus constituencies starting in spring 2019 and then to the Board at its October meeting (see 1D).

The next step will be to refine and communicate this new iteration of planning and to link it to an accompanying fundraising Phase III of Above and Beyond Initiatives. The final affirmation of this new approach to planning is scheduled for the February Board meeting.

As noted in Criteria 3 and 4, the institution has made significant improvements in its assessment of educational programs, both curricular and co-curricular, and the information gleaned from these assessments have been used to drive improvements and to ensure that the College is making progress in meeting the goals of the strategic plan.

For instance, the Knox 2018 Strategic Plan called for a renewal of academic programs, based on the working group's review of the Knox curriculum and contemporary trends in higher education. The then-chief academic officer implemented the call by creating the Task Force on the Knox Educational Experience (3B) to implement the Knox 2018 initiative to "Build on existing programs in experiential and immersion learning to create expanded opportunities to learn by doing across the curriculum, to acquire tangible skills for lifelong learning, and to prepare to enter and contribute to the 21st-century society and workforce." In re-envisioning the curriculum, the Task Force examined a wide array of evaluative and assessment materials, both from Knox and from other institutions. Once the Task Force's work was complete, the Provost worked with the appropriate individuals in academics (including the Director of Assessment) to create and implement the new program learning goals in order to ensure that assessment would be ongoing and would provide robust guidance in determining whether the new curriculum had achieved its goals. In addition, earlier assessment results led the College to create its Quality Initiative (see 4C) to improve retention and completion rates for our diverse student body, a project that was aligned with both Knox's mission and the Knox 2018 priority to "Establish ourselves as a national leader in providing curricular and co-curricular programs . . . that leverage the educational potential of our culturally rich and diverse campus community."

Since then, the College has sought to more systematically link assessment to the budget and to planning. The key entity in this linkage is the Senior Staff, who, in collaboration with individuals in their functional areas, determine budgeting needs to accomplish the priorities of the strategic plan and the initiatives assigned to them and their areas. Other committees such as the Institutional Planning and Priorities Council (IPPC) (see 5A for more information), identify and develop new planning initiatives, monitor and coordinate budgets, and recommend funding priorities. Phase II of the [Above and Beyond fundraising plan](#) (see 5A for more information) supported the Knox 2018 Strategic Plan and its priorities. Phase III, being developed now, will support Knox 2022 priorities. Although the Senior Staff is the key entity, planning processes at Knox are typically inclusive, a key tenet of our culture, and the College considers the perspectives of both internal and external constituent groups when making significant plans for the future.

Knox has a number of internal groupings that participate in planning processes. Committees at Knox include ad hoc groups that form organically to address or study an issue or problem; ad hoc groups given a charge by the administration to address a particular issue; and standing committees. At other times Senior Staff functions as the planning group, as is the case with risk management: in June 2018, Senior Staff provided a report to the Board of Trustees identifying the top risks facing the College as well as identified mitigation plans and their status. This update can be viewed in [this document](#). The President reports to the Executive Committee of the Board on any significant change in risk assessments or mitigation strategies.

Sometimes ad hoc groups become institutionalized as standing groups. For instance, in June 2015, a group of key system users across administrative offices was formalized as the Information System

Council (ISC). The Council's activities are to discuss new feature development of administrative information systems and software, optimization of workflows that span multiple operating units, and governance and usage of shared data. [Recent projects](#) in the last few years included implementation of Jenzabar JX Advancement system, regular upgrades to Enterprise System of Record Jenzabar CX, revised addressing standards in the system of record, and maintaining preferred name for transgendered students.

The membership of standing committees rotates regularly and is (depending upon the committee) elected or appointed. Typically, standing committees are tasked with representing a particular constituency, interest, or overseeing a function.

- The [faculty committee structure](#) consists of both appointed and elected standing committees. Senior and mid-level administrators are *ex-officio* members of many committees.
- [Staff Council](#) is a standing committee, and its [members](#) are elected to three-year terms. The Chairperson of the council meets regularly with the President of the College to share concerns and provide guidance on issues affecting members of the staff.
- Knox has an active student government organization, [Knox Student Senate](#). Student senators are elected each year by the student body and are members of committees of the Board of Trustees, actively serve on faculty and College committees, and routinely advise the administration on issues impacting the student experience at Knox.

Even when a group is not formally charged with planning, however, Knox strives to involve the campus community when responding to institutional challenges. For example, Knox's current budget challenge has been shared widely with the campus, from open forums (see 5A) to [emails](#). The President sent out an [email inviting cost-reduction ideas](#), and many departments held brainstorming meetings to discuss ideas within that area. Through a [submission form](#), employees submitted a total of 269 ideas, and these were [compiled and categorized](#) by the Communications Office. Of those, a number have already been implemented while many others remain under review; this information will be shared with the campus community.

In accordance with the College motto, *Veritas*, Knox strives for its planning processes to be transparent and inclusive, and the examples above show some of our efforts in that area. However, we have been less successful in involving external constituents in planning processes, although there have been notable exceptions such as the Knox 2018 strategic planning process described above and the campaign advisory board for Above & Beyond fundraising noted in 5A. As part of Knox 2022, Goal 2 (“Engage our diverse, vibrant campus community”), the College plans to involve the Galesburg community through the creation of a Galesburg community advisory board to provide counsel and feedback on campus/community matters and enhance relationships with our community partners.

Planning for the Future

These are clearly turbulent times for higher education and planning for an uncertain and rapidly changing future has become an increasingly complex challenge, especially for a small institution like Knox where the leadership must divide its time between strategic focus on the future and daily operational challenges. Nonetheless, the College works hard to anticipate demographic changes, shifts in global economic forces, changing technologies, and policy changes at the state and federal levels.

College enrollment in the United States has declined for eight consecutive years, and Illinois is among the states with the greatest loss of students (see 1A), with effects borne by nearly every Illinois institution. Knox's enrollment was certainly affected; in 2015, 50% of Knox's entering class were from the state of Illinois, and in 2019, this percentage had shrunk to 37% (Knox Admission and Financial Aid). Fortunately, Knox long ago began diversifying its recruitment efforts, both in growth areas in the United States and abroad; in addition, Knox also undertook concerted efforts to enroll underrepresented students of talent and promise. As described in 3D and 3E, Knox has given our diverse student population resources to help them succeed, including expansion of offerings in intercultural life, disability services, and academic support. Curriculum development has shifted to be more responsive to the needs of our changing student demographics. For example, as described in our August QIR report, the College created First-Year Oriented Experience (FOX) courses (see 3E) and living-learning communities.

We closely monitor prospective student interests and seek to align our curriculum with emerging areas. In 2018, Knox added the [bachelor of science degree](#) in nine science disciplines in addition to the bachelor of arts degrees already offered. This addition was [approved by the HLC](#) in 2017. The College also added a [business and management major](#) and a plan to [expand the current journalism minor](#) into a strategic communications & journalism major is also under consideration.

Working with our enrollment consultants, Knox has utilized predictive enrollment models that anticipate demographic shifts and identify the best zip codes and potential feeder schools for recruitment. Several times each year, the consultants provide Knox with [snapshots of our admitted students' pool](#) to help us refine financial aid packages. These data, reflecting the changing income distribution in the United States, are especially important since low- and middle-income families face challenges in college affordability. These trends in family income, coupled with increasing competition for a smaller prospective student pool, have driven the College's discount rate up, and led to the continuing budget challenges described above.

One area in which the College has been effective in planning for and embracing opportunities over the last decade is innovation in the technology sector. Knox performs a comprehensive technology assessment every five years followed by an upgrade of the campus network, server and storage infrastructure. This formal process allows the College to plan its technology purchases and ensures that financial resources are allocated for this purpose. Since 2009, when this process formally began, the network has undergone three substantial upgrades. The recurring upgrade cycle implemented in 2008-2009, along with mitigation strategies and data collection, have allowed the College to plan and execute major upgrades and make incremental changes to ensure high quality network services. Faculty, staff, and students can rely on the network to provide access to resources for research, teaching, and study. Our technology assessment has played a key role in unlocking the creativity of our student service and administrative organizations to embrace best practice and deploy best of breed cloud-based and on-premises software and systems to improve operations and better serve our students. In total, Knox has deployed more than 50 cloud and on-premises based solutions over the last 10 years.

Upgrading the College technology infrastructure on a defined schedule ensures that the infrastructure is nimble and agile, eligible for vendor maintenance and support, and standards compliant. The College has been able to successfully support the rapid growth in volume and diversity of equipment attached to the campus network while also achieving cost savings.

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5.D - Core Component 5.D

The institution works systematically to improve its performance.

1. The institution develops and documents evidence of performance in its operations.
2. The institution learns from its operational experience and applies that learning to improve its institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability, overall and in its component parts.

Argument

To advance institutional effectiveness, the College endeavors to systematically collect and utilize evidence of performance in all of its areas of operation. Many operational areas report and review evidence collected internally on a regular schedule, such as admission, budgeting, financial aid, campus safety, and fundraising. These areas have well-defined metrics that permit fine-tuning of tactics on a daily, weekly, monthly, or annual basis. Examples of these regularly scheduled processes include the annual financial audit, daily reporting of applications and deposits in enrollment, annual cybersecurity audits, and website accessibility audits. This section focuses on assessment outside of the educational experience; evidence on assessment of curricular and co-curricular programs is covered in 4B.

In addition, the College conducts periodic external evaluations and/or compliance reviews that include benchmarking against comparison peers. While these don't necessarily occur along a regular schedule, the practice of seeking external evaluations is well-established at Knox, and most operational areas have benefited from this type of review over the past decade. Most operations are evaluated when a senior leader determines that it would be advantageous, often when there is a transition in personnel, with the results shared as appropriate. Among the areas in which external reviews have been undertaken are athletics (see [program review](#), [sports sponsorship](#), [marketing](#)); [Title IX compliance](#); [energy utilization](#); [faculty governance](#); and [compensation](#) (also see summary of benchmarking study in 5A). Two areas have undertaken ongoing and extensive evaluation, employing a wide variety of metrics: advancement and admissions/financial each. Each of these areas have adopted significant changes in response to their evaluations, including business processes, strategy and tactics, and staff organization, and they are treated in more detail below.

The data gathered through surveys and reports provides evidence to shape the College's process evolution with frequent references back to the strategic and departmental plans for overall directional guidance. Faculty and staff learn from their operational experience and continue to increase institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability according to the strategic plan. The Senior Staff meet weekly as a group to report on their areas and collaboratively suggest ways to resolve issues in a way that reflects our mission, values, plans, and data. They also proactively bring areas of academic and operational concern forward to the President in weekly or biweekly one-on-one meetings. The leadership also bring these reports forward through the Board committee structure, since the trustees review evidence of performance and plans to address evolving issues.

Two examples of how evidence of performance has driven significant change are examined in detail below.

Advancement

The Advancement operation utilizes annual metrics in [fundraising, giving participation, and trustee giving](#) benchmarked against 25 institutions identified by the College and the Board as being the College's peer institutions. Comparisons are based on a 10-year average of the institutions for total and for alumni private giving. In the total private gift support data review, Knox ranks below the median in the most recent review in fall of 2019 (\$13.7 million for Knox compared to \$17.7 million for the median of all institutions). Yet when looking at only support from alumni, Knox rises above the median (\$8.4 million for Knox and \$7 million for the median of all the institutions). Knox alumni are passionate about the College; for the sixth consecutive year, Knox College ranks among the top colleges producing "happy and successful alumni," as measured in *Forbes* magazine's [2019 "Grateful Graduate Index."](#) This index ranks institutions by examining the percentage of alumni who make donations to their colleges and the total amount of those donations, adjusted for enrollment.

In trustee giving, Knox is at \$2.2 million against a median of \$2.8 million. In alumni giving participation, Knox ranks ninth of 25 with 28.9% participation among Knox graduates. This data is shared annually with new trustees during trustee orientation and reviewed by the Advancement Office.

Given the critical importance of alumni giving, the Advancement office has sought a deeper dive into alumni attitudes, undertaking two alumni attitudinal surveys since the last reaccreditation, the [first in 2011](#) and the [second in October 2019](#). The first covered all alumni (grad and non-grad) and current and former parents; the latter surveyed only graduates of the College. Both times the survey assessed perceptions about Knox overall, gauged involvement with Knox and how they would like to engage, and evaluated communications from the College as well as overall feelings about philanthropy and donor stewardship.

The first attitudinal study produced a benchmark by which the Advancement operation could evaluate its performance, as there was no history of a previous study. Its use was primarily for adapting donor relations activities and communications tactics, as the office was not ready at that time to provide the level of alumni engagement requested. Since that time, retirements of both the directors of alumni relations and annual giving have allowed the two teams to merge into an Alumni Engagement operation. Thus, the most recent survey results are being used for a significant refocusing of alumni engagement on areas of greatest interest and need, including career services, mentoring, and admission, strategic and focused alumni events, as well as to refine current donor recognition practices.

The Engagement team has segmented the alumni population by era since graduation into first decade, second decade, mid-career, and 50 years out and beyond. The team is using the data gained from the October 2019 alumni attitude survey (see above) that showed that alumni feel very positively (75%) about the school and very loyal (60%), but much smaller numbers of respondents feel connected (25%), with 27% feeling low levels of connection. While positivity and loyalty are key prerequisites for giving, connection is a critical indicator of gift potential, and as such, maintaining and fostering feelings of connection will be essential to maximize future participation. Using this data, the engagement team will develop engagement strategies and metrics for each group as well as refine and segment the fundraising message and vehicle to most appeal to each audience.

In addition to the changes in Alumni Engagement, the retirement of a long-serving Advancement

Services Director led to an [external review](#) of that area within Advancement. This review also took place during the transition and implementation from Jenzabar's CX product to their more current JX product for Advancement. From the review, a number of changes have occurred, including:

- The creation of a data analyst position that has improved reporting, consistency of data, and also offered more flexibility to implement updates directly to the JX system as IT is focused College-wide;
- Integration of donor relations within Advancement Services where it is commonly housed; previously it had reported to the VP for Advancement;
- Collapsing of the various teams under the Director into one Advancement Services team with all five members reporting directly to the Director;
- Implementation of [39 process changes](#) that have eliminated duplicative processes, increased work productivity, improved work process flow, and created consistency of data entry format across College departments.

Admission and Financial Aid

Admission and Financial Aid are areas in which metrics and external reviews have driven significant changes in operations leading to greater effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability. In recognition of the demographic changes for the Midwest, a stagnation in household income nationwide, and changing communication preferences, the Admission and Financial Aid team works assiduously to evolve their methods for recruiting each incoming class.

Very significant changes in this area began as a result of two studies commissioned by the College in 2012 and 2013—a comprehensive [marketing and pricing study](#) by national consultants Art and Science Group and an [operational review](#) by a well-known retired chief enrollment officer, William Shain. These studies guided the development of a new positioning platform and key messages (see summary of [studies and messaging principles](#) as well as an exhaustive overhaul of the website to focus on prospective students and their families developed in collaboration with third party vendor Brooklyn United. The new website, available at *www.knox.edu*, has an entirely new suite of admission publications and communications through a collaboration with third party vendor Generation. Examples are available at *www.knox.edu/pubs*.

This work was facilitated by the newly reorganized and integrated Communications Office, bringing together staffing in the predecessor unit (Public Relations) and other staff from Information Technology Services and Advancement to serve two core institutional clients, Admission and Advancement. The review by Shain focused attention on everything from the timing of financial aid delivery to expanding relationships with independent educational consultants to opportunities to expand collaboration in the recruitment of student-athletes. The importance of timely, targeted communications and a more student-centered admission experience also led to the implementation of the Slate CRM system in 2013.

The work in Admission and Financial Aid is also guided by external consultants. We commissioned an [effectiveness review](#) from Financial Aid Services in 2012. We also have an ongoing relationship with Human Capital Research, which assists with predictive analytics at each stage of the admission and financial aid funnel. These analyses (see [High School Feeder Power Score](#) and [High School Feeder List](#)) inform the targeting of initial search name purchases, identify feeder high schools and as well as high schools for market development, and inform the prioritization of outreach by admission

counselors to inquiries and admitted students. The primary focus of the Human Capital Research work is scholarship and financial aid packaging, including the development of our packaging regimen, outgoing monitoring and data analysis through the award cycle (see [snapshot summary](#) for fall), and an [annual review of performance](#).

Change driven by metrics derived from the Human Capital Research annual review and other forms of monitoring continues to this day. For instance, Admission launched new targeted digital advertising over the summer and fall of 2018 to drive more traffic to the Knox website and raise the College's overall visibility in the market. [Efforts included](#) retargeting campaigns (digital ads prompted by visits to the Knox website), ads targeted at Admission search lists and feeder high schools, including our first video ads, and search engine marketing (SEM). Our efforts to promote our academic programs through new communications, digital ads, targeted search engine campaigns, and other efforts contributed to a 33% increase in applicants interested in STEM fields for the fall 2019 class and 39% for students interested in business.

Investment in staff resources for international recruitment made possible through the [Innovate Knox Fund](#) has resulted in the addition of a second international recruiter. This has allowed us to be much more engaged with our international market and provide personal, timely communications with interested students. As a result, international student applications and the number of new international students for fall 2019 increased 35% and made up 20% of the entering class.

Prospective students now have three ways to apply for admission to Knox: the Coalition Application, the Common Application, and the Knox College Application. To encourage applications from local students, we developed the [Knox Early College program](#). It offers high-achieving students from local high schools the opportunity to take one class at Knox for credit each term during the senior year of high school. Students receive a scholarship to offset the cost of tuition and, if they successfully complete the courses, they are guaranteed admission and a scholarship to attend Knox after high school.

Additional Admission initiatives implemented in recent years include:

- Snapchat Q&A to allow admitted students to ask questions of current students
- VIP Phonecast for parents of admitted students to talk with the president and senior institutional leaders
- “Take the Bus to Knox” for admitted students from Chicago
- Fly-in program that subsidized the travel costs of admitted students from greater distances who had not visited campus and hadn’t planned to visit
- Greater use of text messaging with prospective students and parents
- Email campaigns by Knox faculty to prospective and admitted students interested in their academic programs.

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5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

The institution's resources, structures, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. The institution plans for the future.

Summary

Knox College has a remarkable record of achieving significant results with modest resources, deploying these resources to support the mission and maintain and adapt the educational program to be relevant today and into the future. The governance, leadership, and administrative structures are transparent and seek to be inclusive of all constituencies of the Knox community. However, annual operating budget deficits are on an unsustainable trajectory, resulting in a growing reliance on the endowment to close the deficit each year. The College must systematically develop and execute new strategies to increase revenues, improve retention, and control costs to reverse this trend while engaging the entire community in support of our mission.

Strengths:

- The College has a healthy balance sheet, has experienced strong endowment growth and excellent fundraising support, especially in support of endowed priorities and capital projects.
- The College has a well-defined budget development process that engages campus constituencies and provides the Board of Trustees with the information and context required to exercise their fiduciary responsibilities.
- The College has established procedures for monitoring the budget and making adjustments during the fiscal year.
- The College has a culture of collaborative decision making that is vested in the various advisory and decision-making bodies of the College.
- A culture of assessment is strengthening as its value is recognized and used to improve our educational programs, fundraising, and recruitment.

Areas for Improvement:

- It is imperative that the College find a way to align revenues and operating costs to reduce dependency on the endowment to fund annual operating expenditures.
- Progress in development and implementing new programs and other additional sources of revenue should accelerate so that deficit elimination is not solely dependent upon cost reductions.
- In the coming years, the College should undertake a comprehensive facilities master plan.
- The College needs to develop a formal and systematic staff evaluation and development program to ensure our workforce has the necessary skills to adopt emerging best practices and

new technologies to improve productivity.

- The College must improve its knowledge of outcomes tracking of alumni so that we can strengthen our case for the effectiveness and quality of a Knox education that supports both revenue generating functions - Admission and Advancement.

Sources

There are no sources.