Introduction

Columbia College welcomes the Higher Learning Commission. The college Mission ("Columbia College improves the lives of diverse undergraduate and graduate learners through exemplary teaching") tracks HLC’s Mission ("Serving the common good by assuring and advancing the quality of higher education") in important ways.

The college welcomes HLC’s process. We have used the self-study process in the way intended: critical, constructive self-reflection with the goal of improving the student experience.

The college welcomes HLC’s criteria. In 2005 we made the Criteria and Core Components our own: we have used them explicitly as the framework for the institutional strategic plan.

Institutional and departmental planning have occurred simultaneously with preparation for reaccreditation; in fact, they are one and the same activity. The benefits of using HLC reaccreditation Criteria and Core Components for strategic planning are many:

- They focus decisively and explicitly on higher education.
- They use language familiar to higher education stakeholders.
- They give clear prompts for description and evaluation of achievements, goals and challenges.
- They give examples of evidence that can be gathered to demonstrate achievement and progress.
- They permit retrospective and prospective analyses of organizational effectiveness.
- They provide strong guidance for departmental planning activities.

Transformational Plan[1]

Other institutions have connected strategic planning with the self-study (most recently Indiana Southern University); however, "coordinate," "interact," and "inform" have been the action verbs to describe these connections. Simply put, Columbia College’s strategic plan is its self-study, and Columbia College’s self-study is its strategic plan.

"Two Paths, One Goal" 2011 HLC Meeting Presentation[2]

The Essence of Columbia College

Columbia College is 161 years old. From its founding it has been a risk-taking institution that has educated underserved populations. It was founded in 1851 as a women's college because the University of Missouri (in the same town) did not enroll females at that time. It became a two-year junior college in 1913 when to do so was a bold and progressive move. It changed its name and mission profoundly in 1970 by becoming coeducational and returning to being a baccalaureate degree-granting institution. In 1972 it became a pioneer in teaching adult learners at extended sites and, in 1975, in the evening program on the home campus.

In 2000 it entered aggressively into online education. Beginning with ten online classes and 180 students in October 2000, it now offers 897 classes, enrolling 12,774 students (January, 2012 session). Whatever the student body, whatever the venue, whatever the delivery method,
whatever the major, the mission core has been the same for eight-score years: quality teaching and learning. A stubborn cleaving unto this essential aim has allowed the college to weather difficult times more than once. Recently, however, the college has prospered.

Columbia College has made significant progress in major categories of institutional effectiveness since 2002.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1</th>
<th>Key Indicators, 2001-2002 to 2011-2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2001-2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total enrollment (fall student headcount)</td>
<td>8,564</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day</td>
<td>857</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenue</td>
<td>$30,500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget</td>
<td>$30,500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budgeted full-time faculty positions</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty with terminal degrees</td>
<td>43 (86%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjunct faculty</td>
<td>860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average full-time faculty salary</td>
<td>$42,164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average adjunct faculty/3-hr. undergraduate course salary (range)</td>
<td>$1,425 – 1,675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total staff</td>
<td>328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationwide locations</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endowment</td>
<td>$7,300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value of physical plant</td>
<td>$18,070,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average ACT of Day students</td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional aid</td>
<td>$2,273,502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Associates degrees offered</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Bachelors degrees offered</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Masters degrees offered</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of full degrees offered online (masters)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of students taking Major Field Tests</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average MFT percentile</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of beds available for residential students</td>
<td>326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Square footage of facilities on main campus</td>
<td>361,180</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Growth at the college has been more than quantitative. It is reflected in a sense of professionalism, quality of endeavor and optimism about the future.

The reaccreditation/strategic planning process has been a valuable vehicle for introspection and implementing positive change in institutional effectiveness. It has allowed the college to revisit its heritage, to describe and analyze its present and to project realistically yet boldly a positive future. In some ways the process is best expressed by T.S. Eliot:

We shall not cease from explorations  
And the end of all our exploring  
Will be to arrive where we started  
And know the place for the first time.

**Institutional History and Profile**

Columbia College was founded in 1851 as a women’s institution in covenant with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). It was the first women’s college west of the Mississippi River to be chartered by a state legislature (*Articles of Incorporation, 1998 05 01* (unofficial)[3]).

In 1970, faced with declining enrollments and resources, it returned to its roots as a four-year institution, became coeducational and changed its name to Columbia College. In 1972 it organized its Adult Higher Education (AHE) for adult learners and began offering degree completion programs at military bases. In 1975 it created an Evening Program at the Main campus.

In 1996 the college offered its first graduate degree. In 2000 it began offering web-based distance learning.

**Major Developments since 2002**

- Strategic planning process for each department and at institutional level, coterminous with reaccreditation activity
- Eight new Nationwide locations
- Budget surpluses
- Employee raises every year
- New student commons building
- Major renovations to Missouri Hall and fitness center
- Comprehensive fundraising campaign emphasizing science
- Massive investment in technology
- Purchase of apartment complex and conversion to residential space
- Purchase of old Columbia post office and conversion into classrooms and administrative offices
- Creation of a “one-stop shop” for student services (registration, payments, etc.)
• Putting most processes online
• Creation of a division of graduate studies
• Creation of a division of enrollment management
• Major upgrade of staff professional development
• Implementation of a sustainability initiative

**National Recognitions since 2002**

• Ranked in Top Tier of *U.S. News and World Report* Midwest Bachelors, then Masters, institutions every year
• Recognized in GetEducated.com for educational value
• Recognized in Princeton Review
• Recipient of several CASE awards
• Recognized as a Top Ten Military-friendly institution
• Silver LEED certification for Missouri Hall renovations
• Numerous NAIA Scholar-Athletes

**Accreditation History**

Columbia College was first accredited by the North Central Association of College and Schools in 1918 and has been continuously accredited since 1923. Its most recent accreditation visit was in 2002, at which time it received reaccreditation for ten years with a progress report required.

Since 2002 the college has had five engagements with HLC: two school-requested focused visits, two staff reports and the required site visit.

**Focused Visits[4]**

Summaries of the visit reports and institutional responses will be addressed below.

**Goals of the Self-Study**

There are three goals:

1. To engage the entire college community in evaluation of and reflection on the purposes and future of the institution.
2. To provide evidence that the five criteria have been met so the college will receive an unconditional ten-year reaccreditation.
3. To write the self-study report and update the strategic plan.

In 2005, the college board of trustees approved a plan to use HLC reaccreditation Criteria and Core Components as the college’s strategic planning template. All subsequent institutional planning has been driven by the imperatives of the Five Criteria. The strategic plan (called the Transformational Plan) has been updated twice and the list of Key Goals has been updated.
three times, most recently in September 2011. In the five Criteria chapters that follow, Key Goals that are addressed are shaded for emphasis.

**Key Goals, Columbia College, 2011**[5]

In addition, in 2009-2010 all departments of the college engaged in a strategic planning process guided by the institutional plan.

The self-study steering committee was appointed in February 2010 and is comprised of five pairs of criterion committee co-chairs, one for each criterion. One co-chair is a full-time faculty member and the other is a member of administrative council (the president’s cabinet). The executive vice president and dean for academic affairs (EVPDA) chairs the steering committee and is the self-study coordinator. He is supported by his executive assistant, administrative assistant, and the institutional research analyst. In addition to the co-chairs, each criterion committee is comprised of a member of the board of trustees, one additional full-time faculty member, a minimum of two staff members, one alumnus/alumna who is also a college employee and one student. The criterion committees were assembled in spring 2010 and given the charge by the self-study coordinator. During summer 2010 the academic affairs office began assembling and organizing resources for the committees. In fall 2010 they met regularly to gather data, interview, analyze and develop draft reports of the self-study chapters.

In spring 2011 the committees were charged with deepening their narratives by answering four questions about each Core Component:

- What did we learn?
- Why did it happen?
- What does it mean?
- What should we do about it?

**Steering Committee Roster**[6]

During that summer the coordinator reviewed and edited drafts, submitted them to the steering committee for review and assembled the pre-visit team, comprised of veteran HLC Consultants/Evaluators. Faculty, staff and students were kept informed of accreditation preparations through a website (https://ccxtrx1.ccis.edu/review.htm) and two all-employee videoconferences *(WEB ADDRESS FOR PODCAST HERE)*.

Following a March 2012 pre-visit, the steering committee incorporated the pre-visit team’s recommendations into the final self-study report. Preparations were made for the October 1-3 team visit.

**Progress on Issues Raised by HLC Visit Team and Staff, 2002-2012**

The 2002 Comprehensive Visit Team noted that:

- The college’s assessment program needs further development and better coherence. Some areas are conducting effective assessment efforts, but the program
needs additional administrative support and faculty commitment in order to be truly comprehensive. The program needs a clear feedback loop in order for assessment results to be useful. The college’s master syllabi need to contain clear, measurable outcomes as well as course objectives. (p.9)

And recommended that:

- The college file a progress report on assessment of student learning. The report should present the college’s intended and publicly stated learner outcomes and assessment measures for all undergraduate and graduate programs (day, evening, distance education, and Extended Studies Division); evidence of assessment results from all programs; and evidence that assessment is being used to enhance educational effectiveness. (p. 10)

Over a two-year period the college full-time faculty wrote or rewrote course objectives and measurable learning outcomes for more than 700 undergraduate and graduate courses in the Master Syllabus revision process. All revised Master Syllabi were approved through faculty governance. Master Syllabi[7]

The faculty and board approved in 2004 an assessment plan that addressed assessment of general education and degree programs using standardized tests (Assessment, Plan Update, Academic Affairs, 2010[8]).

HLC staff approved the Program Report that described these measures. The plan was successfully implemented. (Report, Staff Analysis of Institutional Report, 2008[4])

In 2007 the college began assessing academic outcomes in all venues, including online, prompting a revision of policies, procedures and practices. The assessment plan was updated by the Academic Assessment Committee to reflect the changes, and the revised plan was approved by the faculty and the board (Assessment, Plan Update, Academic Affairs, 2010[8]).

In 2003 the college requested a focused visit to offer undergraduate programs online. The team recommended the college have the authority to do this with the provision that the 2005 Progress Report on assessment explicitly address assessment of general education in online programs. It also recommended more faculty oversight of online policy and procedure. The college responded by creating a way to administer the standardized test it used to assess general education online students. It required online students in senior capstone classes to come to Nationwide locations to take both the general education standardized test and the Major Field Test in their discipline. While many students received waivers due to distance from a location, there was a sufficient number of test-takers to get valid results.

AP Report, 2007
Assessment, Academic, Columbia College, 2009[8]
Assessment, ETSPP Report, Academic Affairs, 2010[8]
Full-time faculty were more heavily involved in online policy and procedure, especially after a new director of the online campus was appointed. The EVPDA formed an online advisory committee, comprised of full-time faculty and adjuncts who teach online and online staff. It meets twice a semester. Also, full-time faculty have the right to enter any ongoing online course in their area of expertise to review it for content, presentation and rigor. About 40 percent of the full-time faculty teach online for the college; and most online courses have been developed and/or redeveloped by full-time faculty, who get “first refusal” to develop any online course.

In 2006 the college requested a focused visit to offer its three graduate programs online. The team recommended approval but had concerns about assessment. Authority was granted and a Progress Report was required to provide evidence that:

- A comprehensive assessment plan has been developed and implemented which includes graduate level programs, extended sites, and distance education;
- Accountability for the college’s assessment plan and process includes graduate-level programs and is directed and maintained within the scope and authority of the college’s chief academic officer; and
- Assessment has been effectively integrated into graduate level program reviews focused on the outcomes of student learning with formative and summative evaluation components in balance. (p. 9 of team report)

The college submitted a Progress Report in 2008 which was accepted by HLC staff. In it were described:

- The creation of a graduate dean’s office and the hiring of a person to perform that role
- The enrichment of the assessment plan to include formative and summative assessments of graduate programs
- The creation of an assessment metric for the MBA.

The assessment metric was not successful. The methodology turned out to be flawed and the person hired to be dean and design and implement the metric did not work out and was terminated after less than a year and a half on the job. MBA Assessment is in good shape, however:

- A new dean has been hired; he is actively monitoring graduate assessment.
- An on-campus meeting of graduate instructors, full-time and adjunct, has been held and assessment was on the agenda.
- The MBA MFT has been administered for several years and full-time faculty have reviewed the date and made recommendations about the curriculum.
Executive Summary of Findings

Strengths

- The institutional mission/values/vision statement is recent, succinct, understandable, and well-promulgated.
- Diversity is embraced and celebrated.
- Governance works effectively.
- Integrity is a key institutional strength.
- The College has a model financial aid fraud detection and remediation process.

Opportunities/Challenges

- Many departmental mission statements are underdeveloped or poorly publicized.
- The department strategic planning process is strong but new and untested.
- Minority presence on the full-time faculty remains small.
- Staff governance is underdeveloped.

Criterion Two

Strengths

- The unified strategic planning/HLC reaccreditation process is synergistic.
- The strategic academic program expansion initiatives rationalizes new program development.
- Generation and stewardship of financial resources facilitate implementation of key planning goals.
- Full-time faculty salaries are the second-highest among Missouri private liberal arts institutions, enhancing faculty recruitment and retention.
- Technology has been significantly expanded and effectively leveraged.
- Physical plants are well-maintained, with little deferred maintenance.
- The College has no debt.
- The College adjusts its organizational structure as necessary to address growth, complexity and efficiency.
- The College invests heavily to integrate AHE instructors and staff.
- The College has a comprehensive and effective program review process.

Opportunities/Challenges

- A culture of philanthropy that generates major gifts is in its infancy.
- New processes and incentives should halt and reverse Day students enrollment declines (17 percent since 2008).
- The quality of academic advising is uneven.
- Constant demand for currency and sophistication of technology, especially instructional technology, continues to grow.
- Declining military tuition assistance will impact enrollments.
- For-profit institutions will continue to pose a threat.
Criterion Three

Strengths

- The College’s academic assessment plan is a model for institutions using standardized tests.
- Full-time faculty professional development is well-supported.
- Faculty integration conferences help maintain instructional quality and consistency.
- Academic support services are well-utilized and seen as helpful by students.
- Grade inflation, never an issue in the Day campus, has been brought under control in all venues.
- The College’s conservative fiscal and investment activities have allowed it to remain debt-free and to create a significant cash reserve/quasi-endowment.

Opportunities/Challenges

- As with most institutions, assessment feedback loops and mechanisms are uneven.
- Motivating students to perform at a high level on a no-stakes assessment test remains a challenge.
- Opinion persists among some full-time faculty that some AHE adjunct instructors are underqualified.
- Day student retention and graduation rates are well below that of peer institutions.
- Effective student course placement in AHE is uneven.
- The college needs to stay abreast of, if not ahead of, new instructional technology and continue to pilot emerging technologies.
- The college is landlocked and must be creative about how it adds necessary new physical plant square footage.

Criterion Four

Strengths

- Employees “get” the mission: teaching and learning.
- The first 55 percent of full-time faculty evaluations is teaching.
- Student academic success is recognized in many ways.
- All bachelors degree students must complete a course in ethics.
- Master syllabi with clear course objectives and measurable learning outcomes maintain academic quality and consistency because their implementation is monitored in all venues.

Opportunities/Challenges

- Faculty ability to obtain grants should improve with the addition of a grants coordinator in 2012.
- It is time to take a close look at general education.
- Undergraduate research should grow when the new science building opens in 2013.
- New study abroad courses and incentives need development.
- Internship regularization and expansion is promising.
- The development of a true graduate culture needs to continue.
• Several non-MFT review tests remain under development.
• A culture of assessment is strong in several venues and programs, weak in others.

Criterion Five

Strengths

• The College has historically educated underserved populations and continues to do so.
• External groups seek out the College for services and partnerships.
• The College has an especially strong relationship with the U.S. Military.

Opportunities/Challenges

• Because of the college’s scope and complexity and because of external mandates imposed, it may be missing partnership opportunities due to time and staffing limitations.
• Creativity will be required to compensate for declining military tuition assistance.
• Local community awareness of the Day campus is weak but increasing.
• Liberal arts majors are less well-prepared for employment than pre-professional majors.
Criterion One: Mission and Integrity

The organization operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the Board, administrators, faculty, staff and students.

Core Component 1A- The organization’s mission documents are clear and articulate publicly the college’s commitments.

The mission of Columbia College is documented in this statement approved in 2009 by the Board of Trustees:

Columbia College improves the lives of diverse undergraduate and graduate learners through exemplary teaching. The liberal arts and sciences and professional programs of the College embrace and profess these values:

- Student-centrism
- Life long learning
- Ethics and citizenship
- Flexibility and innovation
- Quality and improvement
- Civility and respect
- Environmental and fiscal stewardship.

Vision: A Model Institution.

This statement of Mission, Values and Vision is an all-encompassing guide. The vision of being a model institution establishes a standard to which all can subscribe. The values serve as parameters of a model institution and the mission statement provides the overarching goal. The mission is clear and well-articulated both internally and externally. Through a college-wide, mission-driven strategic planning process, the leadership has promoted a successful collaborative effort to fulfill the mission.

At the core of the institution’s mission documents can be found the college’s Mission Statement, above, revised in 2009 and approved by the Board of Trustees on May 1, 2009. Working in tandem with and more directly guiding the focus of the institution is the Transformational Plan[1] which articulates the goals and priorities for the institution. Emanating from the Mission Statement and Transformational Plan are strategic plans for each administrative unit of the institution, with goals within the strategic plans linked back to the Transformational Plan and core components of the Higher Learning Commission. The Mission Statement, Transformational Plan and departmental strategic plans provide a solid and consistent view of the college’s commitment to its students and other constituents (Strategic Plans[10]).

The revision of the Mission Statement occurred as the result of a “Visioning” meeting President Dr. Brouder held with his Administrative Council in January, 2008. The meeting was a free association by all participants regarding the future of the college. After a frank review it was determined that the timing was right for an update of the mission statement. In August 2008, a task force, with representation from all constituencies of the institution, was appointed by Dr. Brouder with an assignment to recommend a new mission statement for the institution. To
accomplish the task, the task force utilized Core Component 1 from the Higher Learning Commission as a guide. Current mission statements from each department were gathered and reviewed. In March of 2009 the task force completed its work of revising the Mission Statement and had a draft of a Mission, Values and Vision statement. This draft was submitted to the various governance groups; Faculty Association, Staff Association, Student Government Association and the Alumni Association for feedback. On May 1, 2009 the new mission statement was approved by the Board of Trustees.

The current institutional mission statement defines constituencies as undergraduate and graduate students and implies service to society. It articulates the college’s commitment to students and the greater community. The mission statement is available to the public, via the college website. It is included in most college publications and is printed on the back of all business cards. In keeping with public articulation, each update of the college Master Plan is presented for public review and feedback with the neighborhood association and filed with the City of Columbia (Master Plan[11]). A Community Leadership Briefing is held periodically to communicate the college’s mission and commitment to community leaders.

The mission statement documents the fundamental commitment to continuous improvement and lifelong learning. This is further supported in the Transformational Plan goal for each major assessing outcomes with a Major Field Test to show average scores above the national mean. Measurable learning outcomes have been established for each course taught at the college and these outcomes can be reviewed on the master syllabi for each course on the college website. Faculty are required also to include this information on their course syllabi.

The college regularly evaluates and revises mission documents. The Transformational Plan is reviewed regularly, most recently in 2011, with the key goals evaluated and updated annually. Strategic planning has been completed by all administrative council areas and is aligned with the Transformational Plan. All administrative council units have mission statements and the strategic planning documents further detail the College’s specific goals and commitments to carry out its mission (Key Goals, Columbia College, 2011[5]).

Evaluation of Core Component 1A

While the institution has made great strides with its planning process in recent years there now must be a focus on a formalized review of strategic plans by administrative area. There follows a need to make the plans available to internal and external constituencies. All units of the college participate in program reviews every five years. The level of involvement, from members outside the department under review, should be increased. Departmental self-study reports could be made available to internal constituencies for comment as part of the program review process and review team reports could be circulated. A review of Mission Statements for individual units could also be built into the program review thus formalizing the review process. While the college mission statement is visible, many of the individual departmental mission statements need to be included in the various publications and on websites.

[3] Articles of Incorporation, 1998 05 01 (unofficial)
[4] Focused Visits
[5] Key Goals
[6] HLC Steering Committee, 2010 11 09
Syllabi, INCC 123 Master, Academic Affairs, 2004
Assessments
Catalog, Graduate, Academic Affairs, 2011
Strategic Plans
Main Campus Master Plan (Five Year), Administrative Services, 2009

Agendas
AHE Newsletters
Bylaws, Board of Trustees, 2010 01
Calendar, Academics (August 2011 -July 2012), Academic Affairs,
Constitution, Faculty, Faculty Association, 2008
Faculty Review by Department Chair Form, Faculty Association
Minutes
Notes Dean AA
Organizational Charts
Program Reviews
Reports
Reports
Core Component 1B - In its mission documents, the organization recognizes the diversity of its learners, other constituencies, and the greater society it serves.

Diversity of Learners

The Mission Statement explicitly acknowledges the diversity of the undergraduate and graduate learners that it serves. This recognition is echoed in many departmental mission statements[1]. Three are sampled below:

The AHE Mission Statement:

To deliver high quality undergraduate and graduate education responsive to diverse populations.

The Financial Aid Office Mission Statement:

The Financial Aid Office supports the mission of Columbia College and Enrollment Management Division by effectively and efficiently facilitating the review, processing and identification of federal, state, private and institutional financial aid resources for a diverse student body in support of achieving their educational goals.

The Student Records and Transcripts Mission Statement:

Student Records and Transcripts protects and maintains the academic records of the College, manages authorized access to those records, and provides a diverse group of students with the enrollment services necessary to attain their educational goals.

The value of “flexibility and innovation” should also be considered in the context of diversity. Flexibility and innovation are important because of the history of serving diverse populations.

Further evidence that the college recognizes the diversity of learners can be found in the College’s key goal 1.3 that “good fit” will be the focus with regard to recruitment and retention. Some students are a good fit, some students are not, especially those who are not academically prepared for college-level work.

Finally, the college recognizes the obvious distinction in graduate and undergraduate learners. These two groups can be easily differentiated in some obvious ways, but the college is working to enrich the graduate culture. To this end a stand-alone division of Graduate Studies was created in 2011 in fulfillment of Key Goal 3.2[2].

Diversity of Other Constituencies

In its mission documents, the college recognizes both the need for diversity and the existence of diversity in other constituencies it serves such as current employees, potential employees, potential students, and current and future employers of our students. A key goal of the Academic Affairs office indicates the need for employee diversity at the Main Campus. The Transformational Plan includes goals to expand diversity among students and faculty. In particular, the college recognizes the benefit of recruiting deployed and returning military personnel as well as international students. Examples in departmental mission statements include
Admissions Office Mission Statement:

The Admissions Office seeks to recruit a diverse student population who can be academically successful and complete their educational objectives at Columbia College.

Veterans Service Center Mission Statement:

To provide a support network to facilitate the transition of veterans, military service members and dependents to Columbia College and to understand and address their unique student support needs while they are at Columbia College.

An AHE Priority One Goal:

Continue to expand outreach to diverse external constituencies such as military, law enforcement, academic and other governmental and corporate entities.

The college has an official nondiscrimination statement. It is included in job listings and all undergraduate and graduate catalogs:

Columbia College does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of any status or condition protected by applicable federal or state law including race, religion, gender, nationality, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, marital status, veteran status or disability, in the administration of its educational policies, admission, financial assistance, employment, educational programs or activities.

Diversity among full-time faculty shows a male to female breakdown of 53.7 percent to 46.27 percent which is slightly higher than the gender breakdown among adjunct faculty (male at 57.8% and female at 42.2%). A concern for the institution is the lack of ethnic diversity among full-time faculty with 86% of that group reported as white. While 33% of adjunct faculty reported as white, 62% of adjuncts and 42% of staff declined to report ethnicity, as shown in the most recent IPEDS report. Thus, it is hard to accurately quantify the situation.

Diversity of Greater Society

The college recognizes the diversity of the greater society it serves. This understanding is certainly evidenced in the activities of the college and can be found in some of the references given in the section above. The undergraduate catalog also includes several indications that the college recognizes the diversity of the world around it and seeks to prepare its students to work within a multicultural society.

The catalog includes a description of the Multicultural Degree Requirement which applies to all undergraduates. According to this requirement:

[S]tudents must complete a course which explores other cultures or cultivates an appreciation of cultural diversity. [30]

It is interesting to note that a proposal to remove this requirement was made in 2009. The rationale behind the proposal was that the vast majority of students were able to meet the requirement simply by completing core courses in their majors. However, the faculty voted down the proposal. In fact, the requirement was given a higher profile within the undergraduate
degree requirements in order to emphasize the importance the College places on cultural diversity.

The goals of the undergraduate general education program are also given in the undergraduate catalog. With respect to diversity there is the goal to: Foster and develop a sense of the power of diversity and cultural pluralism. [25]

Finally, students seeking a Bachelor of Arts degree must complete a language and cultural awareness requirement.

**Evaluation of Core Component 1B**

The mission documents cited above make it clear that the college recognizes the diversity of learners, other constituencies and the greater society it serves. There are many facts which support the College’s commitment to diversity. For example, of the 35 AHE Nationwide Directors, 15 are women and four are African American. The magazine *Diverse Issues in Higher Education* has ranked Columbia College in the top 100 Colleges and Universities in the country graduating minorities, mainly African Americans but also Native Americans for the last ten years[3]. Indeed, about 30% of all of our students are minorities. However, the college’s basic strategies to address diversity could feature more prominently in mission documents.

[1] ProgramReviews
[2] KeyGoals
Core Component 1C - Understanding of and support for the mission pervade the organization.

Columbia College publishes its mission both electronically and in print to its constituencies through several venues, including the website, external and internal publications, faculty and staff handbooks, and the graduate and undergraduate catalogs. The mission-values-vision statement is printed on the back of all employee business cards. New staff member training specifically includes information about the mission statement and frequent program reviews consistently validate understanding of and support for the mission statement.

The Transformational Plan and the recent strategic planning process clearly demonstrate that the goals and priorities are mission-driven. The planning process itself helps to educate members of the college community about the mission. Institutionalization of the values set forth in the mission statement are demonstrated in its internal understanding and support for these values, its strategic decisions and budgeting priorities, administrative and academic goals, and the organization’s consistent articulation of the mission.

Understanding and Support of Mission Values

The Mission Statement embraces the values of student-centrism, life-long learning, ethics and citizenship, flexibility and innovation, quality and improvement, civility and respect, and environmental and fiscal stewardship. Support for, and understanding of these values is evident in many ways. The college internalizes the value of life-long learning by encouraging both faculty and staff to seek further training through employee educational grants and professional development monies and opportunities. On campus opportunities for professional development, sponsored mainly by Technology Services and the Customer Service committee, have increased in recent years and many of the programs are available online. Professional development is an expectation for faculty, who are evaluated annually based on this and other criteria.

The Columbia College Alumni Association (CCAA) and the office of Alumni Relations sponsored events such as the Women in Business luncheon, held in Fall 2011, and the Master Artist Series, held during Reunion Weekend 2011, have life-long learning as a main goal. The Alumni Office is in the process of increasing awareness of the Warranted Degree Program which offers one free in-seat undergraduate course to students who have completed a degree at Columbia College, have no outstanding college fees and are not in default on federal loans. The Alumni Association also encourages graduates to take advantage of other programs on campus as well, such as the Schiffman Ethics in Society Lecture Series.

The value “ethics and citizenship” is manifest in numerous activities such as:

- Observation of Constitution Day
- Voter registration drives
- Tunnel of Oppression
- Schiffman Ethics in Society Lecture Series
- Alternative spring break during which students do service projects
- NAIA Champions of Character program
- Partners in Education relationship with Field Elementary School (until 2010, when Field School closed)
• Hosting the annual Women’s Intersport Network Award Luncheon
• United Way Day of Caring.
• Military Appreciation Day.

Strategic Decisions and Budgeting Priorities are Mission-Driven

The list of key goals and its transformational plan are each a clear reflection of the mission statement. As the institution plans for its future growth and operates its daily affairs, the values expressed in the mission statement are evident. New degree programs are evaluated against the mission, reinforced in the recently adopted Strategic Academic Degree Program Expansion Initiative[1]. The value of “flexibility and innovation” is evident in the development of the Online Campus, the push for next-generation technologies, the commitment to build a state of the art science facility, the development of a strategic plan for program expansion, and initiatives to create a major gift culture.

An increased dedication to and awareness of environmental stewardship is evident. There is a college-wide Sustainability Committee[2] comprised of faculty, students and staff who operate with an annual budget to help fund and sustain college environmental initiatives and work in coordination with faculty supported student organizations. Specific efforts include LEED certification of Missouri Hall, a tray-less initiative in the cafeteria to reduce food waste, and the key goal to implement document imagining.

Other key goals support the value of exemplary academic quality, including a commitment to improve academic advising, the creation of a stand-alone school of graduate studies, and the push to score above the national mean in Major Field Tests that assess the strength of degree programs.

Administrative and Academic Goals are Mission-Driven.

Both the administrative and academic objectives derive from the values set forth in its mission. The value of student-centrism pervades the college, which is reinforced by departmental mission statements and services. For example:

Enrollment Management Mission Statement:

Enrollment Management supports the mission of the college with student centric services and through strategic enrollment planning.

The values of ethics and citizenship, civility and respect are apparent in many of the programs in which faculty, staff and students are encouraged to participate. Full-time employees can request time off, with pay, to participate in the United Way Day of Caring or for American Red Cross blood and platelet donations. Fundraising efforts for United Way and the American Cancer Society, through the active Relay for Life team, further underscore the campus-wide commitment to citizenship.

Community involvement and service are encouraged through the annual evaluation process for faculty. Nonsupervisory staff are evaluated annually on integrity, which includes a component for showing respect to others. Supervisory staff are evaluated on teamwork and partnering as one component of the annual evaluation. Showing civility and respect to everyone is specifically
All baccalaureate degrees require a three-hour ethics course. To graduate from the Honors program, students must complete both a significant community service project as well as an additional course in ethics. Student organizations must complete service projects in order to receive funding from the Student Government Association.

The value quality and improvement can be seen through the assessment culture, regularized program reviews of all college units, hiring of consultants where needed, annual faculty and staff evaluations, and the suggestion boxes around campus.

Evidence of support can be found in the college’s 2009 application to be named a Fortune Magazine 100 Best Places to Work. Faculty and staff were extensively surveyed and a lengthy institutional data survey was submitted. The scores were very high, sufficiently high to objectively rank the college in the ranks of 100 Best Places to Work. Inquiries to the ranking company were met with vague responses and invitations to participate in costly workshops to learn how to improve one’s scores. The College’s scores were already high enough to meet their standard, so we declined to play their expensive and redundant game and proudly reported that we were an unofficial 100 Best Places to Work. (Memo, Fortune 500 Company, Academic Affairs, 2010)[5]

The Mission is Articulated Consistently within the Organization

Departmental mission statements are a clear reflection of the college’s commitment to its mission and stated values. For example:

Student Affairs Mission Statement:

The Department of Student Affairs provides programs and services that encourage the development of an inclusive, involved and educated community. Student success is fostered by a commitment to provide opportunities and support services that promote individual growth, leadership and character development, academic achievement, having fun and building positive lifelong relationships.

Residential Life Mission Statement:

Residential Life advances the residential character of campus and the success of students by focusing on life-changing learning, ready engagement in the diverse community and intentional leadership by example.

As is evident in these and other departmental mission statements, the college’s values and mission are expressed through its individual departments’ services. Faculty, staff, and student handbooks address numerous requirements for ethical behavior at the college.

Evaluation of Core Component 1C

Extensive support for and understanding of the college’s mission are prevalent among the faculty, staff and student body. There is a culture of commitment within the college to the values expressed in the mission, reinforced and supported by departmental mission statements and numerous opportunities for personal and professional development. However, understanding of
and support for the mission among college employees may tend to be concentrated more at specific levels of administration and within certain departments of the college, rather than pervasive at all levels and units. The mission could be a more prominent component of new employee orientation. The mission statement could also be displayed, even etched, on the wall in key locations on the campuses.

[3] Form, Employee Performance Evaluation, Non-Supervisory Staff, 2012 02 16
[4] Form, Employee Performance Evaluation, Supervisory Staff, 2012 02 16
Core Component 1D - The organization's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the organization to fulfill its mission.

Columbia College’s Governance and Administrative Structures

The Board of Trustees is the governing body of Columbia College. The Board delegates to the President the responsibility for the curriculum, finances, and personnel of the College. The Board also grants authority to the President to enter into binding contracts on behalf of the institution. The Board retains final approval over many policies as specified in the Bylaws of Columbia College[1]:

No faculty handbook, employee handbook, student handbook or other publication of the College that sets out and describes the rights, obligations, and benefits accruing to the employees of Columbia College shall bind Columbia College unless first reviewed and approved by the Board of Trustees of Columbia College or by its Executive Committee.

The Board organizes itself into active committees that attend to and report on every detail of operations. Administrative Council members staff committees of the Board and attend Board meetings[2]. During these and other meetings, Council members are able to gain valuable feedback and insights from Board members. Each Administrative Council member provides a written report in advance of each Board meeting. Faculty representatives to the Board of Trustees submit a report to faculty after each Board meeting.

The focus of the Board is on carrying out the mission of the college. The Board sees to it that the appropriate resources for instruction, administrative and support expenditures are balanced, planned for, and realistically achieved. The Board controls quality of curriculum insofar as it is the final authority on major curriculum changes, additions or eliminations. The Board also controls quality by awarding tenure and promoting only those faculty held to high standard as defined largely by excellence in teaching.

The President delegates authority to his Administrative Council members. In turn, Administrative Council members rely upon department chairs to carry out their defined responsibilities[3]. As mentioned above, the mission is well-understood at the departmental and administrative levels and must be addressed during departmental program reviews and strategic planning. People within these governance structures are appropriately qualified. The college has a well-established practice of using search committees consisting of students, faculty, and staff to identify candidates for both academic and administrative positions and to make hiring recommendations. The administrative structure of the college is reorganized as appropriate. Recently, a stand alone division of graduate studies was created to demonstrate the commitment to graduate education. (Key Goals, Columbia College, 2011 -Key Goal 3.2[4])

Faculty Governance

The faculty is charged with directly maintaining the curriculum and defining academic policies. Faculty and shared governance is simple and transparent compared to many institutions. (Faculty Governance Chart, 2012[5]) Proposals emanate from departments or other faculty committees or senior academic officers. There exist several committees with responsibilities for various aspects of the curriculum such as the Committee on Academic Policies, Graduate Council, the Academic Assessment Committee, the Academic Honors and Awards Committee,
and the Honors Council. Committee members include a mix of faculty, staff and administration. Students are also included in some cases. The Constitution of the Faculty Association[6], the Faculty Handbook (Handbook, Faculty, Faculty Association, 2008[6]) and the yearly calendar[7] published by the Office of Academic Affairs detail committee membership and responsibilities. Changes to academic policies do not need to originate in an academic department and will also proceed to committee. Successful proposals come from committee to the Faculty Association for recommendation. All faculty actions are recommendations subject to Board of Trustees approval.

Staff Governance

The Columbia College Staff Association was formed in 2005 by the President of the College. All full-time employees of the College whose primary responsibility does not include teaching are members of the Staff Association and are eligible to participate in the Association. The Association provides a cohesive voice for the staff for expressing interests, concerns and positions on matters related to staff. The Staff Association Advisory Council (SAAC) serves as a liaison between the Staff Association and senior administration. Some of the accomplishments of the staff association:

- Provided input and changes to the new employee training.
- Were pivotal in changing the employee Educational Grant (EEG) and Graduate Educational Grant (GEG) policies.
- Provided professional development funding for a staff member whose department may not have had available funds.
- Sponsored a Biggest Loser contest which introduced many staff to the newly remodeled fitness center.
- Sponsored a recognition program for staff and an annual Christmas bazaar on campus.

By its very existence it has allowed many staff to have leadership roles they would not have had otherwise.

Effective Communication and Collaborative Processes

Effective communication is vital to the success of any organization and the leadership has clearly made it a priority. Each academic year kicks off with the Fall Faculty Conference (Handbook, Faculty Fall Conference, Academic Affairs, 2011[6]). At this meeting, administrators, faculty and staff join together to prepare for the coming school year. Each academic and administrative department prepares a written report and the collection of reports is distributed at the meeting. Ample time is allotted for questions and answers. The College Calendar[7] is distributed each fall to faculty and staff. This calendar marks dates of committee meetings, deadlines for annual evaluation, sabbatical leave application and reporting, and tenure and promotion process, Board of Trustees meetings and important student events on campus. There is an online calendar, Cougarlink, for main campus events. Campus community members can add events to the calendar. Publications, such as Connections and the AHE location newsletters[8], as well as the College website provide additional opportunities to communicate with various constituencies. Each month the EVP/DAA sends a Note from the Dean[9] to all full-time faculty.
Regular meetings are established to keep the channels of communication open. Administrative Council meets monthly as does the Faculty Association, Academic Council, and Academic Department Chairs. The President and EVP/DAA attend faculty meetings to report and take questions. The Administrators of AHE have a weekly meeting. AHE directors meet biannually at the home campus (Agenda, Directors Conference, AHE, 2011 04[10] and Agenda, Directors Conference, AHE, 2011 09[10]). Academic Advisors from AHE locations meet annually at the home campus for a training and development conference (Agenda, Advisors Conference, AHE, 2011 01[10] and Agenda, Advisors Conference, AHE, 2011 08[10]). Faculty Integration Conferences bring AHE faculty together with home campus faculty on a regular basis (Agendas, FIC, Bus Admin, AHE, 2011, Agendas, FIC, CIS and MIS, AHE 2010, Agendas, FIC, CJAD and HUMS, AHE, 2011, Agendas, FIC, EDUC, AHE, 2011 and Agendas, FIC, Graduate Program, AHE, 2011[10]).

Numerous committees bring faculty, staff, and administrators together regularly. Committee minutes [2] are widely distributed via email and are maintained through the Academic Affairs Office. Student participation on college committees has increased. Students are members of committees such as First Year Experience, Honors Council, Study Abroad, HLC subgroups, search committees, and Sustainability.

Forums for Faculty Decision Making

Faculty members are involved in decision making at the College at many levels:

- **Budget:** Budgets for academic departments are prepared by chairs. Faculty representatives to the Board of Trustees discuss and vote on the college budget each year.
- **Faculty Experts:** Faculty determine requirements for degree programs and keep master syllabi updated for each course. The newly revised Academic Freedom policy affirms the fact that the choice of instructional method is left to the individual faculty member.
- **Search committees:** Faculty serve on, and typically chair, search committees for faculty and senior administrative positions. Faculty review applications, make recommendations for interviews, interview candidates, and contribute to final recommendations for hires.
- **Tenure Review and Promotion:** Review of candidates for tenure or promotion begins at the departmental level. A faculty panel representing all divisions also reviews these candidates and makes a final recommendation to the administration.
- **Faculty Development:** Several opportunities for faculty development, including course release time and financial compensation, are administered primarily by the faculty.
- **Academic policies:** Faculty can initiate a change to academic policies as well as to program and graduation requirements. Faculty discuss and recommend changes in these areas as part of faculty committees and ultimately the Faculty Association.

Accountability and Evaluation

The college is committed to quality and improvement. As a result, processes are in place to evaluate all components of the College on a regular basis. Both faculty and staff members undergo annual reviews by department chairs or campus directors (Form, Self Evaluation and Report, Academic Affairs, 2010[11]). Department chairs are evaluated by the designated Administrative Council member. Each faculty member is able to review his or her department
chair as part of this process. Members of Administration Council, including the EVP/DAA, are evaluated annually by the President. Faculty members are invited to complete an evaluation form for the EVP/DAA as part of his annual review (Form Evaluation, Academic Dean, Faculty Association). Additionally, yearly evaluations of the President by faculty are sent to the Chair of the Board of Trustees (Form, Evaluation, President, Faculty Association). Academic and administrative departments undergo program reviews by external evaluators every five years. As mentioned earlier, many evaluation criteria are linked directly to the mission of the college.

Evaluation of Core Component 1D

With its many alternative locations and growing Online Campus, the college is a complex organization. Faculty members working full-time in the traditional day program are charged with maintaining the integrity of the curriculum but at the same time must produce a curriculum that can be effectively delivered in an unfamiliar environment. Among the faculty, the level of commitment to AHE is variable. Faculty integration conferences are helpful in educating faculty about other facets of the college but more sustained communication and education is needed. While a recent survey found that the majority of faculty is satisfied with the governance system, written comments indicated several misunderstandings. A valid complaint is that many standard operating procedures are not documented anywhere, which can lead to the impression that administrative decisions are arbitrary. A department, possibly Human Resources, might be tasked with making sure updates in any Administrative Council area are communicated and documented for further reference. Departments could be asked to create a set of standard operating procedures as part of their five-year program review.

[1] Bylaws, Board of Trustees, 2010 01
[3] Organizational Charts
[4] Key Goals
[6] Handbooks
[7] Calendar, Academics (August 2011 -July 2012), Academic Affairs,
[8] AHE Newsletters
[9] Notes Dean AA
[10] Agendas
[12] Faculty Review by Department Chair Form, Faculty Association
[13] Program Reviews
AHE Newsletters
Catalog, Graduate, Academic Affairs, 2011
Constitution, Faculty, Faculty Association, 2008
Handbooks
Core Component 1E - The organization upholds and protects its integrity.

Financial Integrity

Columbia College is fiscally responsible and currently has no debt. Its fiscal responsibility contributes to the College’s overall integrity by allowing the designation of more resources to key college projects. These resources assist in promoting the mission of the College as a whole. This is evident by the Accountants’ Report and Financial Statements[1]. The Board of Trustees sees detailed financial statements and conducts annual external audits. External evaluators are used to assign the value of college assets. It follows rules and regulations related to properties that it rents, such as the buildings housing AHE locations. It maintains integrity by adhering to leases or other legal documents regarding any building used by the college[2].

The college complies with regulations related to Federal Financial Aid awards. As a private post-secondary institution, it understands the importance of Federal Financial Aid awards to the students. It maintains accurate financial aid records to preserve the integrity of the institution. It has a signed Program Participation Agreement with the United States Department of Education. The agreement[3] expires on March 31, 2014. This is evident by faculty maintaining daily attendance records and by celebrating Constitution Day. The college works with the City of Columbia to communicate its plans and has a copy of its Master Plan[4] on file with the city.

Of Note: Sleuthing Pays Off: Exposing and Remediating Financial Aid Fraud

In the summer and fall of 2010, Online Education and the Business Office separately began noticing unusual activity originating from students, mostly from the Alabama area. Online education began to notice an increase in the student failure and drop-out rate in certain types of courses. The Business Office began to notice an increase in fraudulent payments and unusual student communications. In November 2010 key individuals from these departments met to consider if there was any connection among the unusual activities. A group of potentially suspicious students was identified.

Upon further research, the college observed that when the records of each individual student was reviewed (demographic, academic, financial aid and financial information), nothing was unusual. However, when all of the information was considered as group, a very distinct pattern of potential fraud in the financial aid program emerged. Attributes common among the group that led to our suspicions include, but are not limited to:

- Similar academic performance patterns
- Similar online courses
- Similar fraudulent payment patterns
- All bank accounts used for payments were fraudulent, however all accounts used for refunds were valid
- Suspicious timing when online payments were made
- Similar geographical area
- Similar financial institutions
- Common addresses used among the group
- Common phone numbers
- Common IP addresses
Multiple endorsements on checks

Twenty-six individuals were initially identified, all from the Huntsville, Alabama area. The individuals were purported to be working together to fraudulently obtain Title IV financial aid, without the intent of obtaining an education. The group received financial aid totaling approximately $184,000, refunds totaling $124,000, and presented fraudulent payments totaling over $78,000. This group was reported to the OIG, and eventually, to the FBI and IRS for investigation.

In spring, 2011 the college began to notice similar patterns reemerge in Alabama and also from Greenville, Mississippi. In July, 2011 the college, through internal auditing processes observed that the level of this type of activity was escalating. The college devoted resources to more fully investigate and identify students potentially obtaining financial aid with a fraudulent intent. In August, 2011 the college identified and dropped 77 students resulting from this investigation.

The college has continued to devote resources to this issue, and is reviewing internal processes with the intent to help identify flags that may be indicators of this type of activity. In October, 2011 the Department of Education issued Dear Colleague Letter 11-17 that addresses this problem. The college is following guidance provided in that communication.

Through December, 2011 the college estimates it has avoided current and future losses totaling $813,000 through the efforts to identify and mitigate this problem.

Employee Integrity

The college has a number of policies in place to assure employees are treated with integrity. It has and uses a non-discrimination statement. The college understands the importance of diversity in all areas of education. The nondiscrimination statement, which has recently been updated, appears in public announcements and publications. It works to prevent and inform employees about sexual harassment. All college employees must complete training on sexual harassment each year. The training is available online from within eServices. It has established a grievance process and procedure. It provides guidelines to handle the grievances appropriately. The staff grievance process is outlined in the Staff Handbook, available online to all staff members. Likewise, the faculty grievance process is outlined in the Faculty Handbook (Handbook, Faculty, Faculty Association, 2008). [6]

The college has increased centralization of many processes to ensure increased accountability for its resources. Examples of this may be found in the centralization in the accounting area of payment plans and e-registration. All employees now book travel and report expenses in a standardized manner through a centralized gateway. This provides an additional layer of review of institutional expenditures. Marketing for the institution has also been centralized and use of data analysis and other marketing tools have increased our ability for target marketing. Many functions in the Human Resources department have also been centralized. Those would include background checks for all individuals recommended for hire, enrollment in benefit packages and all applications for student employment. Two processes in place for the main campus that HR hopes to incorporate into the nationwide campuses are an orientation on the first day of employment for each new employee and exit interviews for all employees (Key Goals, Columbia College, 2011 - Key Goal 7.4[7]).
Student Integrity

Columbia College acknowledges the importance for a student to select the right college. To better assist students and parents, the College believes it is necessary to provide as much information as possible to prospective students. The institution encourages prospective students to schedule campus tours and meetings to discuss any questions or to learn more about the College. Providing as much information as possible up front to the prospect reflects the integrity of the College. Students have access to online transfer equivalency guides maintained by the Evaluations department.

In the last two years, more than 2,500 students have been denied reenrollment due to their failure to provide official transcripts from institutions previously attended. More than $1.5 million in tuition was not collected in exchange for maintaining the integrity of the college admission and registration processes.

Columbia College makes its requirements for students clear. Students are expected to adhere to the Student Code of Conduct. A priority of the College is to provide a respectful learning environment for all students, alumni, and employees. The implementation of the Student Code of Conduct enables the institution to protect the integrity of the students and employees. The code ensures that the learning community is one characterized by mutual respect, civility, and good citizenship. The student Code of Conduct is available in the College catalog and Student Handbook (Handbook, Student Affairs, 2011-2012[6]). Additionally, an alcohol policy has been established to promote responsible use of alcohol on campus. The Alcohol Policy is distributed annually to students and employees. As part of Freshman Orientation, there is an educational component related to alcohol use and day students take an alcohol self-assessment in the INCC 111 class called e-chug which encourages responsible drinking.

The college understands the importance of a fair learning environment for all students. Students with documented disabilities are provided reasonable accommodations which are overseen by the Disabilities Services Coordinator. A complete ADA Manual was published in 2010 (Handbook, DisabilityServices, Student Affairs, 2011). [5] The Disabilities Advisory Board hears student grievances related to disability accommodations and keeps the College community aware of changes regarding implementation of ADA legislation. Faculty members are required to put information about ADA procedures on course syllabi. More detailed information is printed in the college catalogs. The Online Campus, as part of all new course developments and redevelopments, reviews content materials to ensure that appropriate visual ADA requirements are present. For all required course videos, transcription is provided. The Online Campus is fully supportive of providing reasonable accommodations and assistance for those determined to have ADA issues, as approved through the campus ADA representative. The Online Campus has supported specific ADA conference and training sessions for specified ADA course development staff.

Student privacy is a top priority. The college acknowledges the sensitivity of academic records and takes all necessary steps to protect the information. Education about FERPA and how to comply with its regulations has increased significantly in the past years. When retrieving data from the college database, employees must acknowledge a FERPA reminder screen. Training about FERPA is available in an online video from within eServices. The strong commitment to FERPA is discussed with new parents and students as part of orientation each year. The college has also improved its processes to verify student identity. Students must present a government issued ID in order to create a Columbia College ID card and must present ID when

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requesting copies of records, such as official transcripts. The Registrar ensures that student transcripts are complete and accurate. New security measures have been adopted to authenticate transcripts. The new security measure includes security paper and redaction of the use of a social security number. The college only uses the last four numbers of the social security number to identify a student. It has also implemented a new electronic transcript which has added a layer of protection.

The college has developed many avenues for students to provide feedback or request a hearing on a particular decision. These opportunities contribute to the value of civility and respect at the institution by acknowledging all parties in a given situation and allowing them to be heard. The student appeal process is outlined in the Student Handbook and undergraduate/graduate catalogs. Grade, financial aid, and disciplinary appeals are handled by the Campus Hearing Board. Students have the opportunity to evaluate both their instructors and advisors on a regular basis. Online students also evaluate staff performance with the end of course evaluation. The ACT Student Satisfaction Survey is administered every other year to Day students. A Residence Hall Satisfaction Survey is administered to residential students every year.

Academic Integrity

To address the national rise in academic dishonesty in 2010 a faculty-staff Academic Integrity Task Force comprised of full-time faculty, a campus judicial officer from student affairs, students, and AHE staff was assembled. It has made several recommendations, including development of a document defining levels of academic misconduct violation and recommended sanctions (Minutes, Academic Integrity Task Force, 2010-2011[8]).

Grade inflation is a widespread problem in American higher education. It is not a problem at Columbia College. Rigor and high academic standards are universal expectations. Full-time faculty teaching is evaluated in part on appropriate levels of rigor and academic expectations. The average GPA at the college has declined over the last ten years (Reports, UG Day GPA Trends, IR, 2008 06[9]).

The college complies with regulations for special student groups such as athletes and international students. The College follows established federal protocols for international students. Examples of meeting this include requiring international students to have health insurance and complete SEVIS registration and tracking. The college’s athletic department adheres to NAIA conference rules. It understands the importance for athletes to do well athletically, but academically as well. The balancing of athletics and academics contributes to the integrity of the institution. A staff member in the Athletic Department has responsibility for compliance with NAIA conference eligibility requirements for athletes. The Athletic Department conscientiously monitors the academic progress of its student athletes.

Integrity for the Campus Community

In all its operations, the college has processes in place to balance the interests and concerns of the entire campus community, and emphasizes the ethical behavior of individuals associated with it at all times. For example, a public Ethics Code for Computer Users has been developed and is posted on the website (Policy, Computer Use, Technology Services, 2011 01[10]). The college has attorneys on retainer to evaluate policies and practices as necessary. All publications and press releases are monitored for accuracy. Print, television and internet advertisements are screened for completeness and truthfulness. Crime Statistics Brochures
are produced annually and made available to the public as required by federal law. The college encourages members of the campus community to be active in crime prevention through education, by asking questions and reporting crime when it occurs.

Integrity with External Constituencies

The college works with other institutions in the community contributing to the overall success of students. It has established a cooperative cross enrollment agreement with University of Missouri and Stephens College and follows agreement guidelines. It has articulation agreements with various community colleges. It works with these other institutions to provide an easy transition for students, and fulfills its obligations as set forth in the articulation and 2+2 agreements that it signs with community colleges. The college is open to considering requests for new programs or new AHE locations, for example, from employers and the military. It appreciates its relationships with the military and employers. It is a priority to find the best ways to support these relationships. A strategic degree program expansion policy has recently been adopted to provide a process for conceptualizing, developing, and vetting new degree programs (Reports, Degree program Changes, Academic Affairs, 2011[9]).

The college remains committed to following regulations and guidelines in all areas of operation. It adheres to requirements established by outside agencies and maintains partnerships with integrity.

The college has signed 17 Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with the military to operate academic programs on military bases and is committed to providing quality education to those serving in the military (MIVER Reports[13]). The college seeks state approval and/or license to operate academic programs at in various states and understands the importance of being in compliance in all states in which it has a presence. The proactive approach adds to the integrity of the entire institution. The Director of Compliance for AHE files license renewals once or twice a year for the college to operate in various states[14].

Data Integrity

The college has devoted considerable resources in the last five years to improving data integrity. The staff of Institutional Research (IR) has grown from one to six in order to accommodate the increased demand for data from internal and external sources. The quality of reports produced by IR has improved substantially. Reports include more complete statistical information and definitions of populations have been standardized. Currently, IR has undertaken the massive job of creating a data warehouse. As this project proceeds, many enhancements to the data creation and collection process will be made. Reports of general interest are now available at the IR website (Key Goals, Columbia College, 2011 - Key Goal 5.3[7]).

Image Integrity

In September 2011, the college debuted its new brand in partial fulfillment of Key Goal 6.1[7]. The brand launch culminated a process begun early in 2010 to develop and enhance the image and reputation of the College in both Missouri and beyond. All constituents of the college were surveyed, including current, former and prospective students, faculty, alumni and staff at many college locations. The developed brand encompasses message statements and a new logo and colors so that the brand can be consistently articulated.
Aesthetic Integrity

The Main Campus is beautiful: well-maintained inside and out, and professionally landscaped in all seasons.

Professional Integrity

Meetings at the college start on time, as scheduled. Punctuality is a courtesy and sign of respect for faculty, staff, students, and guests to campus. Faculty who are reported to start or dismiss classes late are reprimanded if they are multiple offenders.

Evaluation of Core Component 1E

The evidence above shows the college is committed to upholding and protecting its integrity. It has made great strides in the past ten years to improve compliance and make more information about the college accessible to internal and external constituencies. ADA compliance is a key example. It is working to be compliant with federal privacy laws pertaining to student access to electronic records and with regulations for verifying the identity of students completing online coursework. The college constantly works to improve consistency, accessibility, and accountability.

[1] Audit Reports, Columbia College, 2010
[2] Lease Agreements
[4] Main Campus Master Plan (Five Year), Administrative Services, 2009
[5] Handbooks
[6] Handbooks
[7] Key Goals
[8] Minutes
[9] Reports
[10] Policies
[13] MIVER
[14] State Approvals
Criterion Two: Preparing for the Future

The organization’s allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

Core Component 2A- The organization realistically prepares for a future shaped by multiple societal and economic trends.

Of Note: Strategic Planning: A New Approach – Using HLC Accreditation Criteria

In 2000, Columbia College used a strategic planning model that was not specific to higher education. The college’s Administrative Council revisited the plan in 2005 and found substantial progress had been made and the college had achieved or was actively working on 85% of the goals. Later that year, the Board of Trustees approved the creation of a new strategic plan using HLC accreditation criteria as the planning template.

2010 Presentation at HLC Annual Meeting[1]

Members of the 2005 transformational planning group ranked the initial proposed goals. Administrative Council adopted eleven of the proposed goals as key goals. The eleven key goals covered the following broad classifications: facilities, construct a new science building and renovate Missouri Hall; curriculum, offer more degree programs and improve assessment; outreach and service, expand adult learning opportunities and the career planning service; resources, grow the endowment; status, explore changing the status of the institution to “university”, and technology, implement document imaging and enhance classroom and office technology (Key Goals, Columbia College, 2005[2]).

In fall 2007 all college stakeholders were invited to comment on a draft of an updated plan. The feedback was reviewed by Administrative Council after which a final plan was released in early 2008 with 15 key goals showing the relationship to the Higher Learning Commission’s core components. Several of the key goals identified in 2005 were continued in the updated 2008 key goals. Other 2005 goals had been achieved by 2008. The remaining key goals were modified and incorporated into the 2008 goals (Key Goals, Columbia College, 2008[2]).

During the 2009-10 school year, all college departments wrote a strategic plan. Each administrative council member was responsible for completing applicable portions of the strategic plan. Thus, the effort involved almost every college employee. Many of these priority goals generated by this process were integrated into the transformational plan[3].

Administrative council then identified and ranked fifteen key goals in the transformational plan. These goals focused on areas such as marketing, enrollment management, academic programs and degrees, student services, facility enhancements, technological advancements, and alumni relations. The transformational plan was updated in 2011 (Key Goals, Columbia College, 2011[2]).

The college strategic plan is a living, dynamic document.

Student Services and Support

Several enhancements have been made in the area of student services and support. The primary student services of student records, financial aid, transfer credit evaluation, and student
account billing were all consolidated into one location with the renovation of Missouri Hall in 2006 (Key Goals, Columbia College, 2011 Key Goal 7.2[2]). A call center was established to service all students, regardless of venue or location. The call center responds to over 50,000 calls annually, while a parallel walk-in service supports students from the Boone County area, including those in the Online Campus.

Career Services has increased the number of staff and website presence in order to expand its services to nationwide and online students and to provide more assistance with resume writing, job interview skills, and job placement (Key Goals, Columbia College, 2011 Key Goal 7.1[2]).

In May 2009, a Veterans Service Center was opened to better serve the college’s growing population of military learners (Key Goals, Columbia College, 2011 Key Goal 7.2[2]). Approximately 30% of all Columbia College students are active or retired military or family members, and half of the college’s satellite locations are hosted on military installations. The Center is a gateway for veterans’ academic needs. Student veterans are able to certify VA benefits, take advantage of career services, and obtain assistance on the evaluation of traditional and non-traditional transfer credit.

In June 2010, the admissions review and admittance of graduate students was centralized to the Admissions Office, taking that responsibility from the individual site locations. This move standardized the entire process and resulted in a clean process for admitting students across the country. It also alleviated the need for this function to be staffed and trained at the 35 locations supporting graduate students (Key Goals, Columbia College, 2011 Key Goal 7.2[2]).

Considerable efforts have been made in the area of crisis preparedness and response. Guidelines have been prepared and distributed and a campus-wide emergency notification system has been installed[4]. The system includes speaker notification through the phone system, key fobs for faculty and staff to carry with them, and electronic notification “ticker” displays placed in strategic locations on campus. The college has undertaken the responsibility to test the system periodically throughout the year. The crisis response team meets regularly to review the emergency notification system crisis response plan and to discuss local, state, and national trends and incidents.

The college adheres to a Master Plan for the expansion and acquisition of facilities to support the actual and planned growth of students, faculty and staff. Within the last 3 years, properties purchased near the main campus have been renovated to provide locker room facilities for the men’s soccer team; rehearsal, teaching and administrative building for the music program; relocation of the TRIO program; testing center for CLEP, DSST and proctored examinations; and an administrative and staff facility for the Online Education Center. Continued student growth resulted in the need for additional space and in 2010, the acquisition of the Federal Building in downtown Columbia was completed. Renovations were completed in 2011 and the Nursing Education Center, the Online Education Center and the Document Imaging Center were all moved to the new facility (Key Goals, Columbia College, 2011 Key Goal 4.1[2]).

The growth of day campus students has increased the need for on-campus housing and sports opportunities. Apartments located close to campus were purchased and suites were built in the basement of Hughes Hall to provide different styles of campus living to upperclassmen (Key Goals, Columbia College, 2011 Key Goal 4.2[2]). Students must apply with Residential Life to live in these upgraded student-living spaces. The athletic facilities have been extensively upgraded and renovated including the expansion of the fitness center. Sports offerings have expanded with the addition of five new varsity sports in fall 2012 and the growth of intramurals.
On-campus eating choices have also expanded. The cafeteria in Dulany Hall was remodeled in 2009 to address acoustical and patron-flow concerns. The Cougar Café in the Atkins-Holman Student Commons is also available for students, faculty and staff, providing another location for on-campus eating (Key Goals, Columbia College, Key Goal 4.3[2]).

A new science building is in the preconstruction stage to update and increase the number of lab spaces on campus. This facility will provide space for the growth of the science and nursing programs.

**Academic Programs and Degrees**

Academic programs and degrees have shown growth and change through the years. Several committees are in place to provide oversight of the academic programs including the curriculum and academic policies committee and graduate council. These committees have faculty and staff representation from across the college and ad hoc committees are created as needed to discuss and recommend solutions to specific topics.

Changes have been made in several academic areas. The college implemented a foreign language/foreign cultures requirement in all Bachelor of Arts degrees. A new online graduate degree, the Master of Arts in Military Studies, was first available in August 2011.

The college has undertaken the challenge to ascertain if the academic degrees offered are current and marketable[5].

In 2010, the college contracted with Eduventures to conduct a program audit to see if the degrees offered are needed by employers, wanted by students, and if other degrees should be offered. Additionally, the Marketing Department initiated a "Strategic Academic Program Expansion" initiative [5] in 2011 to allow all constituents to recommend new or modified degree offerings. Proposals for new programs are submitted by mid-March each year, with the process ending about 15 months later with the new program or programs introduced with the new fall sessions. Other academic changes to be explored are the feasibility of implementing continuing education units, developing additional study abroad opportunities, and adding programs that will increase male enrollment (Key Goals, Columbia College, Key Goals 1.1, 1.4[2]).

By offering academic programs and degrees at the nationwide and online campuses, students are able to learn at a location of and in a method of their choosing. An online course management system, Desire2Learn, has been deployed and is supported providing rigorous, flexible, accessible, and reliable learning opportunities for students regardless of their location or schedule. Twenty complete degree programs are now available online[6].

For faculty providing face-to-face instruction, training and support is available to those wishing to enhance their course materials with a web site and online supplements. Technology and network enhancements have been made to classrooms across the college to ensure current and applicable hardware and software is available to faculty. To ensure high quality online and face-to-face instruction, faculty are recruited and retained, a compensation study for faculty will be developed. Providing competitive salaries will also help the faculty become diversified.

In July 2011, the Division of Graduate Studies was established to centralize the support for the program, curriculum and students (Key Goals, Columbia College, 2011, Key Goal 3.2[2]). The stand-alone graduate unit focuses attention, responsibility, and authority over graduate
programs in a single office, creating increased consistency between locations and modes of delivery. It establishes clearer lines of responsibility for curriculum development, curriculum review, and administrative policies.

**Enrollment Management**

Due to the growth in student enrollment the college created an enrollment management division in September 2008. The assistant vice president for enrollment management is on administrative council and reports to the president. Departments within the enrollment management division are: admissions, evaluations, financial aid, registration and financial services and student records & transcripts.

Early successes of the division include the formalization of the institutional and endowed aid selection and distribution processes; the establishment of the veterans services committee and the Veterans Service Center; the improvement and reduction in processing times for student services such as transfer credit evaluations, financial aid verification and submission of transcripts to outside agencies; the improvement in the call-answer rate within the call center from 68% to over 80%; the centralization of all graduate admission processes to the main campus; and the increased faculty participation in specific recruiting events.

A strategic enrollment plan (Strategic Plan, Enrollment Management, 2011[3]) for the college was developed in 2010 to ensure the enrollment and fiscal health of the college. The careful watching of college-wide enrollments and national trends is maintained and enrollment reports are distributed on a regular basis. The faculty-staff Strategic Enrollment Council oversees these activities. The day student body will be diversified and the recruitment for international students will be expanded through this monitoring to reach the day campus’ goal of 1,250 day students (Key Goals, Columbia College, 2011 Key Goal 1.2[2]).

Enrollment management staffs have embraced technology enhancements. Systems for customer relationship management and digital records management have been implemented. The digital records management system was rolled out to all nationwide campuses in 2011. These systems improve communication between staff and students and allow for more effective and efficient processing of student records at all campuses.

While AHE enrollments continue to grow, traditional Day student enrollments have declined 17 percent from a peak of 1180 in 2008. There are several causes, mostly internal, for the decline. There have been four Directors of Admission during this period and much counselor turnover. A key ACT prospect list was not purchased two consecutive years.

Prospects for improvement are bright, however, recently new technology has been installed. Most important, new freshmen in 2012 will have a five year tuition guarantee. If they remain continuously enrolled, their tuition will not increase for up to five years. The college is optimistic that Day enrollments will resume their increases toward the goal of 1,250.

**Technological Advances**

A robust and reliable technology program is important to any higher education institution. The college’s reliance on up-to-date technology is even more imperative with the nationwide and online campuses. Significant strides have been made to improve the selection of and access to technology for all campuses.
An administrative council level chief information officer was hired in 2006 which has led to growth in the Technology Services department staff and a significant increase in funds to support academic and administrative technology needs. College-wide strategic planning for technologies is an on-going process to make sure the regular replacement of current technologies and the purchase of new technologies is included in yearly budgets. A comprehensive disaster-recovery plan[7] has been undertaken to safeguard and provide redundancy for all critical college operations including online and administrative computer operations through a reciprocal arrangement with Maryville University in St. Louis. The college has also started investigating data warehousing and data technologies to support the administrative computer systems.

Classroom facilities at the main and nationwide campuses have been upgraded with more and newer computers, data projectors and digital whiteboards. A model classroom has been built at the main campus that features the latest in electronic and computer equipment, tiered seating, and unprecedented network and group connectivity for students and faculty. Computer labs across the college have been built or remodeled to improve access, environment, and provide state-of-the-art equipment.

The Online Campus Academic Programs and Instructional Technology (IT) staff has devoted a significant amount of time to the ongoing course redevelopment process. The redevelopment initiative is a result of the March 2007 AHE Program Review. The goal of redevelopment is to create courses that are less text-based and richer in multimedia content, courses that appeal to different learning styles and include opportunities for learning by inquiry, and courses that are accurate and consistent across offerings.

The method of course redevelopment is based on a best practices checklist created by Andrea Henne, Ed. D., from San Diego State Community College, and adapted for use at Columbia College. The checklist covers 7 areas of course design: Instructional Design, Navigation, Pedagogy, Accessibility and Use, Copyright, Technology and Schedule. A course is considered redeveloped once it has fulfilled 85% of the checklist requirements (Key Goals, Columbia College, 2011 Key Goal 5.2[2]).

The redevelopment process is initiated by the attendance of the course developer at a Course Developer’s Conference at the main campus. The developer then works with a team consisting of one Course Review Specialist and one Instructional Technologist over a period of months to redevelop the course. The Online Campus held nine conferences over the last three years. To date, over 130 courses have been redeveloped.

A typical redeveloped course contains a well-formed Content area that includes supplemental elements such as audio or video, interactive learning modules, and web activities. The course appeals to different types of learners by the use of not only multimedia, but also of visual elements such as course banners or images unique to the course content. Finally, a redeveloped course takes full advantage of D2L tools so that students can easily navigate the course and know which tasks must be complete and when.

Cougarmail, the college’s student email system, has been outsourced using Google applications for education, thus increasing reliability and performance while eliminating a recurring expense. The college website has been enhanced to provide increased functionality and usability including such services as online registration, grade entry, attendance tracking, and bill inquiry and payment.
Appropriate network connectivity to support current and projected instructional and service needs has been implemented and network access at many nationwide campuses has been improved. On the main campus, students, faculty and staff have access to a campus-wide wireless network. Internet access on the main campus has also increased five-fold to support the growing demands for connectivity.

New or upgraded administrative technologies have been implemented. A VOIP phone system was installed to replace an analog system. A college-wide document imaging system has been started with archival imaging and work flow phases to assist enrollment management departments to more effectively and efficiently serve students (Key Goals, Columbia College, 2011 Key Goal 5.4[2]). Technology Services also expanded the help desk to a full service “Solutions Center” with extended hours that doubled the availability of support to students, faculty and staff.

**Centralized Training**

The college is centralizing staff training and professional development. Technology Services has taken on the initial work in the area. Beginning in August 2007, staff and faculty were offered regularly scheduled training opportunities, including live training delivered in-seat or via webinar. In the beginning, new software training was the focus with some general software and instructional technology training. Two technologies, Mediasite, purchased in 2008 and Elluminate (now BlackBoard Collaborate) purchased in 2009 enabled an expansion of quality training to staff at the nationwide locations. Training topics may vary from as broad as general Microsoft Office applications to computer security or instructional technologies, more narrow topics to meet a specific need (such as a Smart Notebook in Education or Sharepoint) or new college-wide software implementations (such as Web Time Entry or Datatel Web User Interface).

By 2011, the Technology Solutions Center was offering training to all faculty and staff through a variety of venues including monthly in-seat workshops, webinars, recorded on-demand videos, lunch and learns, breakfast brain bytes, weekly technology tips, and individual appointments. In 2010, 132 classes were offered with a total of 1,282 participants (Key Goals, Columbia College, Key Goal 7.3[2]).

The centralized training continued as Technology Services offered an Instructional Technology Immersion Seminar to faculty last summer as a pilot program. The seminar was a three-day intensive hands-on-training on available instructional technology resources. For on-going support for faculty, Technology Services offers monthly round table discussions on instructional technologies. After a successful seminar, it was determined this will be a yearly offering to selected faculty[8].

Training offerings will continue to change and grow to meet the needs of the college. In the future, expanding instructional technology offerings to all faculty and leveraging technologies in each office will be a focus of training efforts provided by Division of Technology Services.

In addition to the efforts of Technology Services, the Human Resources Office has begun the standardization of initial training provided to new employees. Start dates for new employees have been established as the first Monday of a pay period and all new employees spend their first couple of days with HR completing necessary paperwork, ordering administrative essentials (name tags, office keys, email addresses, etc.), becoming familiarized with the campus and meeting the key administrators. This new process has taken this responsibility from the initial
offices and made the processes more effective and efficient (Key Goals, Columbia College, 2011 Key Goal 7.3, 7.4[2]).

**Development and Capital Campaigns**

The Development Office has made significant strides over the last four years to develop a culture of affinity and philanthropy with students, staff, faculty and alumni. The *Tradition Meets Tomorrow Science Initiative*, as of August 31, 2011, has raised $3,553,596.72, of which $220,511.80 is for endowment (Key Goals, Columbia College, 2011 Key Goal 6.4[2]). A campaign planning study was conducted by Jerold Panas of Panas, Linzy and Partners. The college later engaged the firm of Grenzebach, Glier and Associates who conducted an updated campaign planning study and they were eventually hired as campaign counsel. The centerpiece of the science initiative is the construction and furnishing of a state of the art science building; groundbreaking for the facility is expected in April 2012 with a goal to offer the first classes in the facility during the Fall 2013 session (Key Goals, Columbia College, 2011 Key Goal 2.1[2]).

The *Destination Excellence* Campaign originally sought funding for improvement to Missouri Hall and Southwell. The scope of the campaign changed with the designation of a gift to fund the Atkins-Holman Student Commons. “Destination Excellence” did do a feasibility study and did retain campaign counsel from the same source: Clyde P. Watkins and Associates [now Ter Molen Watkins & Brandt, LLC.].

Recent capital campaigns have been a significant success and resulted in upgraded and new facilities to support student learning. For example, $2,952,241.06 was raised for the Atkins-Holman Student Commons and gifts were received from 2000 – 2005 for the project (Key Goals, Columbia College, 2011 Key Goal 2.2, 6.3[2]). Top five gift totals:

- Mabee Foundation - $1,200,000
- Tom and Linda Atkins - $600,000
- Al and Mary A. McQuinn - $500,000
- Tom and Linda Atkins - $150,000

Another $948,887.21 was raised for the Southwell Complex project and gifts were received from 1994 – 2007 for the project (Key Goals, Columbia College, 2011 KEY GOALS 2.2, 6.3[2]). Top five gift totals:

- J.W. Stafford - $514,800
- E. Desmond Lee - $100,000
- Boone Hospital - $50,000
- Boone County National Bank - $30,000
- J.B. Reynolds Foundation - $75,000

And finally, $255,891.20 was raised for the renovation of Missouri Hall and gifts were received from 1996 – 2006 for the project (Key Goals, Columbia College, Key Goals 2.2, 6.3[2]). Top seven gift totals:

- Florence Larsh - $110,000
- Tom Bass - $100,000
- Sandra Nichols - $10,000
- Penelope Braun - $10,000
Columbia College has a strong connection to its history and heritage and incorporates appropriate past connections in its future planning. This is a key component in building alumni affinity. The beauty and historical value of the main campus are maintained and enhanced through careful and thoughtful changes to buildings and traditions.

Several buildings on campus have been remodeled in small or large manners to provide a physical connection to our past as Christian College. Missouri Hall has been remodeled and its technology infrastructure updated to provide office space. Though the color scheme and furniture is reflective of today’s society, the Missouri Hall foyer and parlor were maintained and the wood from the floors were reused in an attractive manner. Small changes to buildings include refurbishing the St. Clair Hall and Launer Auditorium main entrances from modern metal doors and flooring to wood doors and tiles more appropriate to the buildings’ original construction date.

The college community works hard to carry over yesterday’s traditions to today. Some aspects of Ivy Chain, held on the main campus since 1900, are being selectively implemented at the nationwide campuses. Even the traditional commencement ceremony is becoming more technologically advanced with the installment of a large projection screen used at the main campus commencement and the creation of a virtual commencement for all college students to display their achievement to family and friends.

Columbia College maintains its historical affiliation with the Disciples of Christ church in many ways. The head pastor of the Columbia Disciples of Christ church is a board of trustees’ member and the Jane Froman Singers perform regularly at the church.

When Dr. Gerald Brouder became the 16th president, the first lady of Columbia College, Mrs. Bonnie Brouder, became interested in the stories and artifacts of Christian/Columbia College. Various items and documents were gathered from offices, attics or basements to be consolidated into one area. Library and Events and Protocol staff have been working together this past year to assess the needs and provide better access to the one-of-a-kind collection.

The alumni association has been very active in planning in recent years.

The Columbia College Alumni Association’s recent efforts have been impressive. From their goals and strategies from the Columbia College Alumni Association’s Strategic Plan (Strategic Plan, DAPR, 2010[9]), they have decided on 111 tasks to complete by 2015. As of September 2011, they have completed 63 of those tasks. These tasks originated from the main goals of the Alumni Association, which include fostering lasting relationships with students, alumni and friends, instilling pride in Columbia College, and strengthening Columbia College Alumni Association visibility and credibility.

Two of the tasks they have recently completed are the launching an alumni website and magazine, both of which occurred in September 2010. All graduates of Columbia College become members of the alumni association and have access to the website without having to sign up and it includes resources such as information about the association, benefits alumni
receive, dates of events, and how alumni can get involved. The alumni magazine was redesigned and named Affinity to encourage alumni to have a lasting affinity with the college. The Association asked alumni to write essays about their affinity to the college and winners’ essays were spotlighted in the first edition of the new magazine and they were featured on the cover (Key Goals, Columbia College, 2011 Key Goal 6.2[2]).

The Alumni Association has also been working at elevating the college’s mascot, Scooter to “celebrity status”. They have invented Scootergraphs, inviting alumni to take pictures with a cut-out Scooter, that they received in the Summer 2011 magazine, at the different places as they travel. By joining Facebook and Twitter, the Association dove into social media and is much more recognizable throughout the college and local community.

The Association has many projects in process. They are working on writing an Annual Report, which is focusing on their Year in Review that will be completed in February 2012. They are also working on a redesign of the Association’s logo. Efforts have also recently started on making a Fight Song for the College and an Alma Mater Song. The Association will work with students by sending them surveys of words they would like to see included in the song and will work with the main campus’s music director, Nollie Moore, on commissioning the piece. Moore has plans to invite alumni around the world to participate in a virtual choir for the song’s debut.

The college has also created a sustainability committee with student, faculty and staff representation to promote increased recycling by staff, faculty and students in all main campus facilities and discourage waste of office materials and energy. An environmentally responsible, sustainable resource management plan is being developed to help carry the Christian/Columbia College heritage to future generations.

**Evaluation of Core Component 2A**

While strategic planning for the institution’s future is an on-going strength, there are definitely opportunities for improvement. These opportunities include regular follow up on the strategic enrollment plan and the transformational plan; the identification and development of new academic programs; and the enhancement of the current academic programs to keep them current and relevant. The institution should develop partnerships with other institutions to provide students more opportunities, monitor technology to determine usefulness and cost effectiveness and continue developing support and services for veterans, disabled and high risk students. Additionally, we need to plan crisis intervention training opportunities for employees and students, continue managing enrollment numbers to best fit the college’s mission, organize archives to more effectively carry forward the institution’s history and heritage and grow the infinity of off-campus-students for the main campus, its history and heritage.

In the last decade, the college has taken many steps to prepare for the future. Through strong strategic planning and an updated transformational plan, the institution has taken strides to meet the demands and needs of the community while carefully maintaining and developing its economic health. The institution has strengthened development and alumni relations, created an enrollment management division and a veterans service center, enlarged career services, developed new academic programs and enhanced existing programs, created a disaster plan and sustainability committee, and updated technology.

[1] Presentation, HLC Annual Conference, Academic Affairs, 2010
[2] Key Goals
[3] Strategic Plans
[9] Strategic Plans
CORE COMPONENT 2B - The organization’s resource base supports its educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

Planning

Planning for the future is a significant responsibility, one that is taken seriously across all levels of the college. From top to bottom, strategic planning is an integral and consistent component of mission accomplishment. The key leadership components of the college are; the president, the EVP/DAA, the vice president for AHE, the chief financial officer, the dean for Student Affairs and the executive director for Administrative Services and have been in place since the mid-to-late 90’s. They have provided the impetus and vision required for successful long term planning. Their extended tenure has enabled strategic planning to progress from conception to development through fruition with a consistent focus. Essential to this effort is the active participation of the Board of Trustees and the senior institutional leadership in regular decisions involving all aspects of planning.

The college’s Transformational Plan provides the overall strategies and goals for the college and addresses the progress being made for each core component. The Transformational Plan was formally approved in 2005 and has been updated twice, in 2008 and again in 2011 with key goals. [2011 Key Goals Update][1] In 2011, the first Strategic Enrollment Plan for the college was developed to continuously realign the institution’s mission, with its changing internal and external environment, for the long-term fiscal and enrollment health of the college. This intra-departmental plan reaches across the college to ensure that strategies, ideas and proposals are vetted and prioritized to achieve optimum results. At the department level, each has their own strategic plan to identify their mission, objectives and goals for short-term and long-term success. These plans are referenced on a regular basis by the departments and they are reviewed and updated annually. Finally, each of the individual campuses (including the Evening Campus, the Online Campus and the 35 Nationwide Campuses) has their own strategic plan to guide their progress into the future; these plans are updated annually. Strategic planning at all levels is critical to the college’s ongoing efforts to align individual plans, with the college mission and Transformational Plan.

Financially, the institution is on solid ground with a positive annual growth in net assets each year since 1998. For the most recently completed fiscal year, the net assets totaled $164,554,224.

The endowment has also grown significantly since 1999 with a value that approaches $80,000,000 in 2011. Revenue and Expense Summary[2]

This strong financial foundation, along with the consistent growth of the student enrollment population, has allowed the college to invest in infrastructure renovations, facilities expansion, technology integration and upgrades, and faculty and staff growth.

The college has no debt. Department Strategic Plans[3]

A final ingredient in the ongoing pursuit of academic quality is the institution’s commitment to regular and consistent assessment. Faculty members are evaluated by students for each course instructed. Form, Instructional Evaluation, Academic Affairs, 1995[4]

The evaluation tool is regularly reviewed and updated by a task force of students, administrators and faculty, to provide the most complete assessment possible; the most recent changes to the
faculty evaluation form occurred in 2011. Degree programs are reviewed regularly by the faculty to ensure content and objectives are current and relevant. In addition to the normal assessments associated with individual classes, students and programs are assessed through end-of-program testing such as the Major Field Test (MFT) and the Educational Testing Services Proficiency Profile (ETSPP). For degree programs without an MFT, the appropriate department develops their own assessment tool. For example, the Speech Communications Program previously used the ACAT for assessing student performance, but could not rely on the results due to problems with scoring. In 2012, the department began using an in-house developed assessment exam.

Assessment, MFT Data, 2010.
Assessment, MFT Data, 2011.

The College addressed the challenge of improving the assessment process by revising, through faculty governance, more than 700 master syllabi to include course objectives and measurable learning outcomes and by generally expanding its outcomes assessment outreach to include seniors taking capstone courses in all venues (traditional residential campus, adult locations and online). All seniors enrolled in a capstone course for which there is a MFT, including online students, are required to take the test unless waived by the Dean for Academic Affairs. In 2009-10, more than 1,200 seniors took the MFT in all venues. Online students living less than one hour from nationwide locations were required to come to the location to take the test. Assessment is discussed extensively in Criterion 3.

Financial Resource Base and Fiscal Viability

In the early 1990’s, the college emerged from an extended period of financial unrest and set forth with the intent to never return to those days of financial instability. At the core of this value is the sound financial planning based on a philosophy of conservative risk management (risk adverse) and the intent to remain debt free, only allowing for short-term debt. This was true at the time of the previous accreditation in 2002 and has remained true in the interim.

The fiscal viability of the college can be seen in the growth of net assets, the endowment, and the relatively low amount of debt. The net assets have grown from $35.8M in 2002 to $164.6M in 2011. The growth has been consistent and constant over this period without a single year of decline, all the while continuing to invest in the education programs of the institution. Strong investments in technology advancements, student learning facilities, library resources and the physical plant indicate a continued commitment to the mission and the student population. Annually, a percentage of tuition revenue is allocated to a technology fund to provide the assets necessary to complete a regular computer replacement plan, to integrate “smart board” technology and state-of-the-art projection capability in the classrooms, to provide and maintain computer labs at the various locations and to upgrade the technology infrastructure necessary to operate in today’s advanced environment.

Financial ratios are used to measure financial strength, operations and viability of an institution. The institution’s financial ratios for the last 15 years show a steady pattern of growth, improvement in the financial standing of the college, viability. These ratios prove that the college has the financial capacity to support its mission. Table 2.1, Columbia College Financial Ratios, identifies these ratios for the past 5 years (2006-2010).
Table 2.1 Columbia College Financial Ratios

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RATIO</th>
<th>Target*</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary Reserve</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>1.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Reserve</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Income (operations)</td>
<td>2.00%</td>
<td>19.70%</td>
<td>21.22%</td>
<td>18.07%</td>
<td>17.31%</td>
<td>22.37%</td>
<td>26.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Income (unrestricted)</td>
<td>4.00%</td>
<td>19.00%</td>
<td>20.98%</td>
<td>17.71%</td>
<td>14.19%</td>
<td>23.65%</td>
<td>26.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Return on Net Asset</td>
<td>6.00%</td>
<td>17.99%</td>
<td>18.98%</td>
<td>13.37%</td>
<td>9.25%</td>
<td>20.32%</td>
<td>21.92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composite Financial Index</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>10.51</td>
<td>11.27</td>
<td>10.23</td>
<td>9.38</td>
<td>12.76</td>
<td>14.91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Minimum target ratio for a healthy institution

In 1999, the President, in collaboration with the Board of Trustees, created an “operating reserve” to be funded with real assets (cash or investments). Since that time, the college has steadily contributed from operating surplus into the operating reserve, to the point where this unrestricted reserve totals over $70M. This reserve is available to take the institution through short-term economic issues (e.g., reduced enrollments), institutional policy changes (e.g., to a bi-weekly payroll), regulation compliance (e.g., payment in arrears, unfunded federal mandate about ADA, online education, etc.) or to take advantage of opportunities for improvement or growth (e.g., property purchases). The college has sufficient capital (excess operating reserve) to fund new initiatives without putting at risk or impairing the core operation or mission of the college.

The Day Program discount rate has ranged from 33.3% to 38.9% since 2004, with an average of 36.7% during that period. The discount rate for 2010-11 was 36.6% and is estimated at 36.7% for 2011-12. The discount rate is a key performance indicator identified in the Strategic Enrollment Plan and reported annually. Coupled with the net tuition revenue per FTE (full-time equivalent), the discount rate assists the leadership with the monitoring of the fiscal health of the institution. The 2010 NACUBO average tuition discount rate for freshman at a small, private college with low tuition, is 48.0%. (Key Goals, Columbia College, 2011- Key Goal 1.7)[1]

In addition, according to 2010 IPEDS data, the college spends a higher percentage of its budget on instruction than do comparable not-for-profit institution in Missouri:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Columbia College</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park University</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drury University</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westminster College</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Webster University</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The resources of the college allow the quality of the faculty to be maintained at the highest levels. The average full-time faculty salaries are the second highest of all masters and bachelor’s degree private schools in Missouri. Memo, Faculty Salaries, Academic Affairs, 2011[6]
With over 60 full-time faculty members employed at the main campus, the core of all academic development is accomplished with the oversight and guidance of qualified individuals from the appropriate fields of academia. Teaching is the top priority for faculty and is only accomplished by qualified faculty; there are no teaching assistants used for instruction in the classroom. An extensive vetting process is accomplished for the hiring of all adjunct faculty, including the review and approval by the appropriate main campus academic department. Funding is provided for faculty to keep active in their disciplinary areas of expertise and for professional development.

The college maintains a policy of using operational revenue to finance operational activities; the operating surplus is used to conduct normal operations. Additionally, the college’s endowment policy prevents the use of the restricted endowment to cover operational expenses; this portion of the endowment is an educational investment in the students and is used to support scholarships, awards and the sponsoring of guest lecturers. The endowment (restricted and unrestricted) has grown significantly, from around $8M in 2002 to approximately $80M in 2011. (Key Goals, Columbia College, Key Goal 6.4[1]) The endowment is sufficiently funded to support our academic programs.

The college is risk-averse and continues to maintain a policy of not incurring any long-term debt. It has operated in a surplus position for over twenty years.

The accountability of institutional resources is being enhanced through the standardizing and centralizing of several business functions. The Marketing Department is working with consultant to build a model centralized infrastructure for the department; focus is on accounting, personnel, policy, protocol and contracts. The Technology Services Department has laid the groundwork for the centralizing of employee training, both initial and recurring. Regular courses are offered to employees on new software and systems, including novice, intermediate and advanced levels, depending on the professional development need of the staff member. The Registration and Financial Service “one stop shop” has consolidated the majority of the registration, financial aid, and accounting services provided to students, into a single location. The recent implementation of the Hobson’s Enrollment Management Technology applications of ApplyYourself and Connect has standardized the student prospect communications flow and centralized the application process and data entry into the student database system (Datatel). (Key Goals, Columbia College, 2011-Key Goal 7.4)[1]

The leadership of the institution, including the Board of Trustees, is intimately involved with the college budget and financial processes. The Finance and Audit Committee (FAC), consisting of seven trustees, reviews all proposed budgets, capital expenditures, tuition and fee rates, and other financial dealings. In addition, the FAC makes approval recommendations to the Board of Trustees. The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) prepares an annual college budget using inputs from the various departments; the budget then is submitted through the president and the FAC for final Board approval. Once approved, the CFO manages the annual budget and provides the departments with monthly updates that identify the budgeted expense, the actual expense and a comparison to the previous year for the same month and year-to-date. The departments can use these annual and monthly budget summaries to gain a historical perspective on their expenditures and plan for future submissions. The college budget year is July 1 to June 30; an annual financial audit is conducted by BKD LLP, a certified public accounting firm from Springfield, Missouri, and presented to the Board at the September session. Once approved, the audit represents a certified account of the annual statement of revenue and expense. The most recent audit was completed October 4, 2011 and presented to the Board on October 7, 2011. Audit Reports, Columbia College, 2010[7]
Supports Educational Programs

The college uses its staff and faculty effectively to support and educate our students. As student numbers and services increase, the appropriate mix of staff is added to the appropriate departments. Key performance indicators are identified and tracked on a weekly basis to ensure adequate service is provided to all students across all venues. ([Reports, KPI, Enrollment Management, 2011][8]) Staff members were added to the transfer credit evaluation process in 2008 to get the turnaround time for student evaluations down from 11-14 weeks to a department goal of 10 business days, despite a 20% growth in the number of files evaluated. For the 2008-09 academic year, the turnaround time averaged 10 business days; in 2009-10, the average was 10.4 business days and for 2010-11 the average is 8.4 business days.

Staff was added to the Financial Aid office when turnaround times were approaching 4-6 weeks; with an office goal of 2-4 weeks, the standard turnaround time for processing loans, FAFSA’s and awards is less than 10 business days and is often less than 5 business days. All this was accomplished during a period where the number of FAFSA’s received by the college increased almost 15%. Additional staff, improved training and processes have significantly improved the contact rate for the Call Center as it supports students from across the nation. The contact rate has risen from 72.6% to 82.5% in one year, despite a 9% increase in students.

Student Affairs has supplemented the professional staff with practicum students from the MU counseling program and graduate assistants from the MU graduate program. Across the board, student services are providing better service to more students than ever before.

Students across all venues have access to academic advising. Students at the main Day Campus are advised by full-time faculty members and the Evening Campus students are advised by full-time academic advisors. In 2011, a Director of Advising position was created for the Day program. The Director, a long-time member of the Academic Affairs staff, coordinates all Day student advising and advises selected students. In addition, online students have access to the Online Campus Academic Advisors, Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM – 8:00 PM CST and on Saturdays from 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM CST. Advisors provide degree audits which reflect the required courses needed to earn the degree, suggest course recommendations for upcoming sessions and serve as a general resource for students. Students attending courses at the nationwide locations receive their academic advising locally at their specific location. (Key Goals, Columbia College, 2011- Key Goal 3.1)[1]

Faculty are assigned eight courses per academic year to ensure the quality of the programs is maintained. Class sizes are limited in the course syllabus so faculty members can provide quality instruction, advising and assessment of the students. With a student-to-faculty ratio of 15:1 maintained across the college, students are able to establish personal relationships with their faculty, becoming more engaged within the classroom. With one exception, every Day class is capped at 35 students.

A significant amount of restructuring and centralization of resources and processes has occurred since the previous HLC reaccreditation visit. Due to program growth and an increase in the complexity of instruction, significant changes have occurred with the structure of the academic departments of the last 10 years. The changes are captured chronologically with the snapshots below:
Beginning in the fall of 2002, the College had eight academic departments:

- Art
- Business
- Computer and Mathematical Sciences
- Criminal Justice Administration and Social Work
- Education
- History and Social Science
- Humanities
- Science

Beginning in the fall of 2006, the College had eight academic departments:

- Art
- Business Administration \textit{(indicating a name change from the previously named Business Department)}
- Computer and Mathematical Sciences
- Criminal Justice Administration and Human Services \textit{(reflecting a name change and curricular change from Social Work to Human Services)}
- Education
- History and Social Science
- Humanities
- Science

Beginning in the fall of 2007, the College had eight academic departments

- Art
- Business Administration
- Computer and Mathematical Sciences
- Criminal Justice Administration and Human Services
- Education
- History and Social Science
- Humanities \textit{(Religion and Philosophy faculty moved to the Humanities Department from the History and Social Science Department.)}
- Science

Beginning in the fall of 2010, the College had nine academic departments:

- Art
- Business Administration
- Computer and Mathematical Sciences
- Criminal Justice Administration and Human Services
- Education
• History and Political Science (This highlights the separation of Psychology and Sociology into their own department.)
• Humanities
• Psychology and Sociology
• Science

Beginning in the fall of 2011, the College had ten academic departments:

• Art
• Business Administration
• Computer and Mathematical Sciences
• Criminal Justice Administration and Human Services
• Education
• History and Political Science
• Humanities
• Nursing (This indicates the separation of Nursing from the Science Department.)
• Psychology and Sociology
• Science

Technology Services absorbed the systems analysts. Marketing and Public Relations have split, with Public Relations moving under the Development, Alumni and Public Relations Department. A Division of Enrollment Management was created by collecting the Admissions, Student Records & Transcripts, Registration and Financial Services, Evaluations and Financial Aid departments under a single entity. The Online Campus was moved under the Division for Adult Higher Education and a Division of Graduate Studies was formally established within Academic Affairs. (Key Goals, Columbia College, 2011- Key Goal 3.2) These transitions realigned the various operations with increased management and accountability, while improving service to the student.

Direct student services (registration, financial services, accounting and others) are now front and center with the Registration and Financial Services (RFS), relieving the back office operations from general personal contact with the students. A “one stop” point for general service provides for more efficient, effective, and standardized service to the student and allows the back office operations to conduct processes and assist with special student issues. This service is provided in person, via email or over the telephone. The RFS Call Center is open and available to students 48 hours per week.

Graduate program admission was centralized in 2010 to the main campus, resulting in a standardization of acceptance processes and reduction in processing time. Moving the decision process from multiple locations has also significantly reduced the processing error rate; having one office accomplish the process repeatedly has resulted in a single, standardized method of conducting admissions.

The college continues a history of supporting faculty professional development, investing in technology and learning support services, and obtaining new or renovating existing facilities. Tenure track faculty members are eligible for sabbaticals after six years of teaching.
Funding of $850 is available to allow faculty to attend conferences and workshops associated with their discipline; up to an additional $1,000 can be received upon successful petition to a faculty committee. Summer research stipends are also available[9]. Sabbatical Recipients, Faculty 2006-11[10]

As the numbers of students grow and advancements are made in communications media, technology continues to play a more critical role than ever before in our support for, and education of, our students. Smart Board technology, internet connectivity and AV projection systems are available throughout the main campus classrooms and at many Nationwide classrooms. All the venues, to include main campus and the 35 locations nationwide, have dedicated computer labs for course instruction and individual student use. The staff offices are equipped with new computers every 3-4 years as part of the computer replacement policy. The college, through Technology Services, administers a technology fund used for recurring computer and peripheral purchases. The technology fund was initially funded by a 2% allocation of annual tuition revenue; with the exceptional growth in students over the past few years, this allocation dropped to 1% and still met all purchasing requirements.

Education support outside the classroom is an important part of teaching and learning at Columbia College. A significant investment is made in library resources (both physical and electronic), math and writing centers (main campus), tutoring, and computer laboratory resources. Students at all Columbia College locations have access to the main campus Stafford Library via the web page. All students have access to the online research and reference databases through the main campus proxy server. The Stafford Library web page provides links not only to the subscription but to a wide variety of web resources useful to academic research. Questions can be answered by trained library staff by email or phone during main campus operating hours. Additional library resources for Columbia College’s online students include various public and educational institution libraries in the surrounding areas of the students’ locations. No formal articulation agreements exist between the College and local libraries, though access is routinely granted to our students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stafford Library Materials Expenditures, Fiscal Years 2003 -2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books, CDs, DVDs, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print Periodicals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microfilm Periodicals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electronic Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Resources are used to acquire new facilities, as evidenced with recent purchases of Online Education Center, the Federal Building, the Columbia House, the Kirkman House and Cougar Village apartments. Additionally, the Atkins-Holman Student Commons was built in 2004, the Lake of the Ozark facility was built in 2005, the Koepke Fitness Center was completed in 2010 and the new Science Building is under construction. In 2008, new facilities were leased for sites...
in Kansas City (MO), Salt Lake City (UT), Gurnee (IL) and Crystal Lake (IL). On the main campus, significant renovations were accomplished with Missouri Hall, St Clair Hall, Launer Auditorium, the Athletic Center and Dulany Hall and the college recently completed a partnership project with the City of Columbia to improve the campus portion of Rangeline Street. A major renovation project is also underway at our Hancock Field location in Syracuse, NY. Since the 2002 HLC visit, new site locations have been established at Naval Station Guantanamo Bay (Cuba), Fort Drum (NY), Jacksonville (FL), Naval Weapons Station Charleston (SC), Fort Sill (OK) and San Diego (CA).

Missouri Hall has been renovated as a student service center and houses the Evening Campus, Admissions, Career Services, the Math Center, the Learning Center, Registration and Financial Services, the Ousley Family Veterans Service Center, Enrollment Management, Institutional Research, Accounting, Financial Aid, Evaluations and Data Services. The Career Services Center has doubled its staff from two to four personnel and enhanced its capability to include data collection. A new Testing Center has been established with a full-time staff and expanded hours of service. Ground has been broken for the construction of the new Science Building; this state-of-the-art facility will provide laboratories for forensic science, biology, chemistry and nursing programs.

There are a sufficient number of faculty members to carry out the administrative roles of faculty. There are currently 68 full-time faculty positions at the main campus, of which 59 are full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty. There are nearly 1,000 adjunct faculty members across all venues. The educational programs are managed by ten academic departments. The full-time faculty is contracted to a course load of four courses per semester, eight courses per academic year. Adjunct faculty are contracted on a per course basis, but limited to no more than three courses per session ... though three is extremely rare. In addition to reasonable course loads for faculty, academic quality is enhanced with smaller class sizes that allow increased instructor-to-student interaction. The largest classes at the College enroll 30-35 students, with the average class size in the 15-20 students range. The Day Campus maintains a faculty-to-student ratio of 1-to-15; teaching assistants or graduate assistants are not used to provide classroom instruction.

**Supports Plans for Maintaining and Strengthening the Quality in the Future**

The college is committed to supporting and strengthening the quality of education it provides to students across all venues. This commitment begins at the very highest level with the active involvement of the 21-member Board of Trustees, each serving a three-year term. The Board meets three times per year in January, April and September, though the majority of the board’s work is accomplished in committees designed to address specific areas of development. The committees are designated as follows: executive, finance and audit, educational policies, science initiative campaign steering, technology, student life and activities, trustee nominating and bylaws, physical plant and athletics.

The Educational Policies Committee reviews changes to curriculum and academic policy and provides recommendations for approval to the Board. A streamlined process has been established to allow for the development of a new degree program from inception to instruction in approximately 18 months[11]. Recent (since 2010) additions to the degree program inventory include new degrees under consideration:
Associate of Arts in Pre-Engineering
Bachelor of Science in Environmental Studies
Bachelor of Arts in Speech Communication
Bachelor of Science in Healthcare Management
Master of Arts in Military Studies
Master of Business Administration: Accounting Track
Master of Business Administration: Human Resources

The Physical Plant Committee is actively involved in the college’s master plan for the strategic development of facilities, providing support at the highest levels for rapid and necessary improvements. Since the last HLC visit, the execution of the master plan has resulted in many changes and additions to the main campus. These include the renovation of Missouri Hall, the addition of the Adkins-Holman Student Commons and the construction of the Science Building. Property purchases include acquisitions adjacent to the main campus (Kirkman House, Columbia House) and property in downtown Columbia (Federal Hall). These major acquisitions have allowed the college to move forward with improved student support and academic offerings.

Over the last 10 years, the college’s online program has grown into the largest individual provider of courses to Columbia College students. For the most recently completed academic year (2010-11), the college offered 3,620 course sections taught by 442 adjunct faculty, with 76,133 enrollments to 21,526 students, with an average class size of 21 students. Along with this growth of the student population and course offerings, came the necessity to provide an expansion of staff to support this growth. The purchases of the Columbia Photo property on 10th Street and the federal building on Cherry Street, allowed the college to hire staff to maintain the high level of support needed to continue online operations.

The acquisition of Federal Hall from the U.S. Department of Education provides a great example of the college capitalizing on existing financial and human resources to take advantage of a great opportunity. Though not part of the master plan, the opportunity to acquire additional physical space presented itself and the college capitalized where other organizations in the community were unable to do so. This made possible the expansion of staff to support the growing online program and the improvement in facilities to upgrade our nursing program during the transition to the new Science Building. The domino effect associated with the movement of the online and nursing programs to the Federal Building resulted in additional space available for expansion of the RFS Call Center, the Admissions Office, Financial Aid, the Office of Graduate Studies, and the Evaluations Department. Additionally, it facilitated the integration of Data Services with the web design team and the combining of previously separated offices of the Evening Program. The financial health of the college and the active participation of the Board of Trustees in its ongoing operations allowed for the quick response to this sudden opportunity.[12]

The college used strategic planning to recognize the need to restructure and reorganize as it continued with positive student population growth over the previous ten years. The Division of Enrollment Management was formed to focus on student support services and providing data driven oversight to enrollments and enrollment policies. Technology Services and Marketing became stand-alone departments and new leadership was hired to guide their growth of services and expansion of missions. The president established an objective to become data driven in future decision-making, so the Institutional Research Department was increased from one person to a staff of six. An Associate Dean for Graduate Studies was hired in 2010 and
the Division of Graduate Studies was created in 2011 to provide focused oversight to the graduate program and to promote a graduate culture within the college. Workloads are monitored across the college and data is collected and analyzed to determine the type of support provided to students both in and out of the classroom. (Key Goals, Columbia College, 2011- Key Goal 3.2)[13] As students and enrollments increase, faculty and staff are increased and facilities are acquired to ensure the infrastructure is in place to support the academic programs offered.

Faculty members are contracted to provide exemplary teaching. This is our mission and is the single biggest portion of a faculty evaluation when tenure and promotion decisions are made. The size of the full-time faculty continues to grow, as does the quality. The table below identifies the changes since the fall of 2001 with the full-time faculty.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Credentials</th>
<th>Number in Fall 2001</th>
<th>Number in Fall 2011</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate *</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>+14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MFA *</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>+3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ph.D. Candidates</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JD</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>51</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>+17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stability is a factor of quality; turnover of full-time faculty is at a very manageable rate. The current faculty has been with the college an average of 9.9 years, with 3-6 new faculty added or replaced annually. Columbia College has the second highest average salaries of all private liberal arts colleges in Missouri, behind only Webster University, which is in St. Louis and has an appreciably higher cost of living. Faculty salaries have increased substantially since 2001-2002. Average salaries for the full, associate and assistant professor are now $81,824, $63,868 and $54,611 respectively. In 2002, average salaries were approximately $47,120, $45,088 and $40,335. Salary compression by rank has been virtually eliminated.

In 2010 college faculty created, and the administration funded, a non-tenure track, full-time lecturer position. This new type of faculty rank was created in response to a clear need for consistent quality instruction at the nationwide locations, historically staffed entirely by one-course-at-a-time adjuncts.

This first lecturer position was created in science for the Lake of the Ozarks location. The goal is to better support the science prerequisites for Nursing students at that location. [As of fall 2011 this position has not been filled, due to lack of qualified applicants].

Adjunct faculty provide the core of instruction for our non-traditional programs, with a pool of nearly 2,000 adjuncts contracted regularly to provide instruction for online and in-seat programs (at any given time nearly 1,000 are teaching). The quality of our adjunct faculty is extremely high, with each vetted through the appropriate academic department and the Academic Affairs Office before a contract is awarded. While no set number is established for the adjunct faculty,
27.5% of the 2,071 are terminally degreed. Of this group, there are 153 adjunct faculty for the graduate programs; 95 (62.1%) are terminally degreed.

The college’s planning processes, coupled with its strong financial foundation, provide one of its greatest strengths, the flexibility to respond to unanticipated needs and opportunities. This has recently been demonstrated with the opportunity to purchase the Federal Building to provide extra space for expansion; requests from the Department of Defense to open new locations of education at Fort Sill, the Marine Corps Recruiting Depot and Naval Weapons Station Charleston; and the closure of the Marshfield location when student interest in the area declined. The establishment and expansion of the online programs provide much needed flexibility for offering courses to supplement in-seat programs and to teach out closed programs and terminating physical resources without abandoning the student. Flexibility is also a key component of success with providing educational services to military hosts and their servicemembers and dependents. A change in mission or world tensions can easily impact schedules, both short- and long-term. When security was escalated following the 9-11 terrorists activities, the college was able to implement plans to continue servicing students on those locked down military installations; all military campuses have plans for responding to short-term loss of hosted facilities.

The college has a system of planning that begins at the very top with the current operational plan[14] and is carried down through the various levels with each department having their own plan specifically tied to the college’s primary plan. It is this top-down approach to strategic planning that leads to the college’s history of successfully achieving its established goals. The Transformational Plan was first approved by the Board of Trustees in 2005 and it has, subsequently, gone through two updates (in 2008 and 2011). Progress on the goals identified in the plan is regularly reported to the Board and updates are provided as goals are completed and new goals established.

The 2005 Transformational Plan identified 11 key goals [Key Goals, Columbia College, 2005][1] for the college; five of those goals were accomplished:

1. Missouri Hall will be renovated. The completion of the renovation project occurred in 2006 and the Hall was reopened to house all student support services, including Admissions, Registration and Financial Services, Student Records & Transcripts, Evaluations, Financial Aid, Finance & Accounting, and the Math and Writing Centers. Additionally, the facility hosts the Evening Campus, Institutional Research and Data Services.
2. The endowment will grow. This was an open ended goal, but it has been accomplished. In 2005, the endowment was valued at approximately $18M; by the end of 2011 that number had reached $80M. (Key Goals, Columbia College, 2011: Key Goal 6.4)[1]
3. The College will receive broad scope license to offer masters degrees that will permit expansion opportunities to adult learners. Graduate programs are offered in-seat at many of the locations and all graduate programs are offered online.
4. Technology in all phases of teaching and service will be enhanced. While enhancements to technology will be an ongoing process, enough was accomplished since 2005 to warrant inclusion in the completed category. Almost all of the classrooms on the main campus have Smart board technology, internet access (direct and wireless) and projectors. These capabilities have also been delivered to many of the nationwide locations, especially those at new or renovated locations. Many of the student services,
including registration, financial aid, and accounting, have established an online capability to provide a better service to the student.

5. Changing the status of the institution to “university” will be studied. This issue was reviewed and a decision was made to not change to “university” at this time.

The 2008 update to the Transformational Plan resulted in a new list of 15 approved goals for the college [Key Goals, Columbia College 2008], [1] including the continuation of growing the endowment and enhancing technology. Three of the goals have been completed and are monitoring and maintained as regular programs.

1. A cohesive, coordinated and effective marketing and enrollment management plan will be developed to include every venue of the college. Marketing was established as its own department in 2009 and developed a comprehensive marketing plan. In 2009, a Strategic Enrollment Council was formed with the primary task of producing the college’s first Strategic Enrollment Plan. The plan was completed in 2010 and is now being implemented.

2. Priority technology enhancements will include document imaging. By the fall of 2008, the integration and testing of the document imaging capability was completed; implementation began on October 1, 2009 and by the spring of 2011 all locations were functioning with the system. (Key Goals, Columbia College, 2011: Key Goal 5.4)[1]

3. The quality of academic coursework, programs and student services within the Online Campus will be significantly enhanced. Enhancements include but are not limited to committing to a 3-4 year redevelopment cycle for online courses, improving the online faculty training program, enhancing the frequency and quality of the course redevelopers training conferences, implementing document imaging in the online Campus, increasing hours for online student advisement and generally increasing staffing throughout the Online Campus. (Key Goals, Columbia College, 2011: Key Goal 5.2)[1]

The 2011 update to the Transformational Plan resulted in the establishment of 27 goals for the college. These goals are integrated within the Strategic Plan, Enrollment Management, 2011[3], the Strategic Plan, Marketing, 2010 [15] and the various academic and service departmental plans. Each goal supports at least core component of the Transformational Plan. Table 2.3, Key Goals, identifies these key goals as they relate to a “transformation” of the college.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2.3 Key Goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. College-wide Strategic Enrollment Culture</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1. Undergraduate and graduate degrees will be selectively added and strategically retained or eliminated (2a, 4c, 5c).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 By 2012 Day student enrollment will increase to 1,250 with increased admission and retention standards (2d).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 “Good fit” will be the focus of all venues with regard to recruitment and retention (5c).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 New markets will be created and existing markets will be expanded (2a).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 1. Business Development
1.5 Business development will be integrated as a fundamental component of driving college growth (5a-5d).

1.6 Every department will be accountable for actual retention reporting (2c, 3d).

1.7 The tuition discount rate will be managed at a level at or below the average for small, private, non-profit institutions (2b, 2d).

### 2. Deepened Sciences
2.1 A state of the art science facility will be built and furnished (2a, 2b, 5b).

2.2 An endowment will support facilities, staff and students (2a, 2b, 5b).

### 3. Exemplary Academic Quality
3.1 Academic advising will be improved (3c, 3d, 4d).

3.2 A stand-alone Division of Graduate Studies will be created (1d, 2a, 2b, 3c, 3d).

3.3 Each major that assesses outcomes using the MFT will show average scores above the national mean (3a, 4c).

### 4. Enhanced Facilities
4.1 Necessary property will be acquired. (2b)

4.2 Alternative housing to accommodate Day students will be purchased or built. (2a, 2c)

4.3 Space planning and acquisition and/or construction will be coordinated with and account for actual and planned staff and faculty growth (2b, 3d).

### 5. Next-generation Technology
5.1 The website will be improved. (5b)

5.2 Online content will be enhanced. (2a, 2b)

5.3 Accurate, consistent, accessible data will be developed, collected and reported. (1e, 2c)

5.4 Document imaging will be fully implemented (2a, 2c, 3c, 3d).

### 6. Broadened Institutional Advancement
6.1 A cross-venue brand that represents the institution’s mission and values will be developed and nurtured (5a).

6.2 Affinity will be strengthened by fostering lasting relationships with students, alumni, faculty, staff and friends of the College (5a).

6.3 A major gift culture among alumni, faculty, staff, students and friends will be created and sustained. (2b, 5b)

6.4 The endowment will grow through prudent financial management and increased philanthropic support (2b).

### 7. Enriched Services
7.1 The Career Services Center will be enhanced and expanded and will include data collection (2b, 5b).

7.2 Student services will be integrated across all venues (2b, 3c).
7.3 A centralized staff training and development program will be established (2a, 2b).

7.4 Accountability for institutional resources will be enhanced through standardized and centralized business functions including accounting, human resources, recruitment, training and marketing (1e, 2c).

Note: Numbers in parenthesis denote which Core Component of the Transformational Plan the goal supports

Even prior to the establishment of the Transformational Plan, the college exhibited a propensity for completing goals and objectives. At the turn of the century, the college embarked on a mission to enhance the option for delivering degree programs to non-traditional students through online education. The program celebrated its 10th anniversary in October 2010 and provides over 700 courses per 8-week session to over 20,000 students annually. Other planning successes have included the construction and standup of the Lake of the Ozarks location, the offering of all graduate programs online, the renovation of Missouri Hall, the building of the Student Commons, the expansion of the fitness center, and the aesthetic and traffic-flow upgrade of Rangeline, a city street that runs through campus (this upgrade was done in partnership with the city). Solid planning and budgeting has resulted in continued success in the accomplishment of the college’s goals and objectives.

Specialized committees of select Board members are formed to provide focused oversight and guidance to critical areas of planning. For example, the Physical Plant Committee reviews renovation proposals (e.g., Missouri Hall and St Clair Hall) and expansion plans (e.g., Columbia Photo Building and Kirkman House) for the college facilities. The committees are supported and staffed by the appropriate administrative offices (e.g., Technology Services supports the Technology Committee) creating an integrated effort between the committee and the department. The committees provide status reports and recommendations to the Trustees at each Board Meeting, thus ensuring the Board is intimately involved with the significant planning efforts of the college. All funding for specific planning is reviewed by the Finance and Audit Committee, with recommendations made to the complete Board for final decisions. Once approved, funding is included in the appropriate departmental budgets and the plans are executed as approved and funded.

Regular review, renovation and upgrade of its physical infrastructure are key processes of support provided to all locations. Columbia College locations take one of three forms: (1) facility owned by the college, (2) facility leased by the college, or (3) facility provided by a host (military installation or community college). All owned facilities are located in Missouri and include the Columbia main campus and locations at Jefferson City, Rolla, Lake of the Ozarks and St. Louis. The on-site responsibility for the primary review of the facility is the executive director of Administrative Services for the main campus and the specific director at each of the other locations. Additionally, in 2011 a new position was created within Administrative Services, Director of Facilities. One of the first duties of this new position was to create a systematic method for “building condition assessment” that is qualified and quantified. The leased facilities are regularly inspected and maintained by the property manager or landlord. The executive director of Administrative Services visits the leased facility during the build out and for the final inspection before acceptance of the property. Regular inspection and maintenance of the facility is incorporated into each lease agreement. The majority of our hosted locations are on military installations; inspections are regulated and conducted within federal guidelines with respect to fire, health, safety and structure. The remaining locations are hosted by state supported community colleges and are regulated by the state. Directors at these locations can identify infrastructure issues to the host for resolution.
In addition to the physical structure, the college ensures each location has the proper technology infrastructure in place to support academic operations. The Technology Services staff visit and inspect our locations every four years to replace all computers and inspect other on-site hardware. The staff is also involved in the opening of new locations, to include the installation of all hardware and the set-up of all new computers and peripherals.

**Faculty Recruitment Process**

All full-time faculty positions are approved by the EVP/DAA and President and are budgeted. New or vacant positions are filled through a public advertising process with calls for application in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and disciplinary outlets and newsletters.

Applications are evaluated by the hiring committee. This committee consists of the chair of department, two or three other department members, one outside faculty member from another department, and one student in the targeted discipline.

After committee review and selection of top-tier candidates, the EVP/DAA approves the list of candidates for phone interviews. Upon completion of the phone interviews, invited candidates arrive for an on-campus interview. During said process, candidates meet with committee members as well as the entire academic department. During the course of the entire interview, candidates will give a sample teaching demonstration and meet with the EVP/DAA and the President of the College. Based on a consensus of the Committee, the EVP/DAA and the President, an offer is made to the successful candidate.

**Staff Recruitment Process**

In regards to staff recruitment, employment opportunities are posted on the college website, the job board physically located on campus, and possibly a local newspaper.

Similar to the faculty process, a committee is formed containing the supervisor of the open position and other department members. On occasion a member of Human Resources is placed on the panel.

Candidates for the position are selected by the panel. First interviews are sometimes done in person and sometimes over the phone. The second interview, if there is one, is done in person. Once a candidate for the position is selected, they are offered the job. All new employees begin an orientation process on Mondays of the first week of hire. After a day-long orientation process, employees must attend other training on various topics, in their first quarter of employment with the College.

**Faculty Evaluation**

Faculty are evaluated by their students, the chair of their department, and the EVP/DAA. Student evaluations are completed in every course, every semester. The Chair evaluates untenured faculty members in their first year of service to the College, in the year of the mid-probationary review, and in their tenure year. The EVP/DAA sits in on classes and evaluates faculty members in the mid-probationary and tenure years.
Faculty are required to self-report in the form of an annual review every January. Chairs then use this and other observations to complete an annual review of the faculty member that is forwarded to the EVP/DAA.

Faculty have the opportunity to evaluate themselves each semester with a course evaluation. These evaluations are not mandatory.

**Staff Evaluations**

For staff employees of the college, the immediate supervisor conducts an annual evaluation with a standardized rubric for evaluation. **STAFF EVAL FORMS** These evaluations are placed in the employee’s file and the director of the department is able to access these reports for future use. The employee can comment on their evaluations and set goals they wish to obtain. These comments and goals are also placed in the employee’s file after the supervisor and director have a chance to see and respond to them.

Other items that might be an employee’s file are any PAWs they receive. PAWs are accolades giving to the employee by other employees and by students, on the standardized PAW form.

**Tenure and Promotion**

All tenure-track faculty members are eligible for tenure and promotion as outlined in the faculty handbook. Full-time non-tenure track faculty are evaluated per the guidelines, also outlined in the faculty handbook. Adjunct faculty undergo student evaluations every term and are evaluated for re-hire at the end of each semester. **Handbook, Faculty, Faculty Association, 2011[16]**

**Employee Recognition and Appreciation**

Nationwide location directors who have worked in the director position for at least one year are eligible for the Frazier Moon Administrator of the Year Award. A committee of representatives from Registration & Financial Services, Evaluations, Accounting, Student Records & Transcripts, Online Campus, Marketing, Human Resources and Adult Higher Education select the awardee. Some characteristics considered when selecting the Frazier Moon Administrator of the Year are quality of interaction with staff, quality of information submitted to a department, overall timeliness, responsiveness to inquiries and overall effectiveness of the entire campus staff. Frazier Moon worked for the college from 1974 to 1996 when he retired as extended studies division dean.

Employee recognition and appreciation events are also held at the Nationwide locations. Faculty/staff dinners are usually held in conjunction with graduation ceremonies. If a location does not have a commencement ceremony a faculty/staff dinner must be held annually. In April when the employee appreciation luncheon is held on the Columbia, MO, campus the nationwide locations must have an employee appreciation event at which the awards for employees working at the college for five, ten, fifteen, twenty, twenty-five years and longer must be presented. Each location must have a holiday event; the type and scope of this event varies by location based on size. Online faculty living in the area of a nationwide location are invited to that campus to participate in employee recognition and appreciation events.

Every year in April, an employee appreciation luncheon is held on the Columbia, Missouri campus. The purpose of the luncheon is to acknowledge and recognize years of service from
faculty and staff. The luncheon is attended by 450 to 500 faculty and staff, with a staff member from every location attending. It is held during spring AHE directors’ conference so they are also able to attend. At the luncheon, service year awards and a service appreciation gift are given out. For those staff and faculty members unable to attend, their service gifts and awards are shipped to their location and presented at an appropriate event. Also at the April Honors and Awards Convocation a full-time faculty member receives the Trustees Award for Teaching Excellence. The Awardee is nominated by the SGA and selected by the President of the Faculty Association, the president of the college and the EVP/DAA.

Each December, the Holiday Lighting Ceremony is held on Bass Commons at the main campus. More than 4500 white lights are illuminated along the exterior of the Columbia College campus and President Gerald Brouder says “The lights are a way for Columbia College to provide holiday cheer to those who live, work, visit or pass by campus throughout the season.” In 1995, Brouder’s wife originated the idea of holiday lights around campus and it is Dr. Brouder’s gift and thank you to faculty, staff and their families for their dedication and hard work. Attended by more than 500 people annually, there is a welcome from Human Resources, a brief lighting ceremony and the President of Student Government Association speaks and leads the countdown for turning on the lights. The Jane Froman Singers sing Christmas Carols, hors d’oeuvres are served and cookie decorating tables are set up. Also, at the lighting ceremony, Santa visits and poses for pictures. All students, faculty, staff and their family members, are invited to the event.

Fall Faculty Conference / New Faculty Orientation

The Fall Faculty Conference (FFC) is held annually on the Tuesday before the first week of fall classes. The conference is a meeting between faculty and staff about the direction the College will take each academic year. Primarily serving as a fact-sharing endeavor, the FFC serves to inform each unit of the college about the progress made over the past year as the school prepares to welcome its newest class of students. Each academic department, as well as each administrative department, provides a documented summary of key achievements for the past year and prospects for the upcoming year. This document is distributed to each participant at the conference. As well, the day-long event begins with oral reports from key administrative personnel. Afternoon sessions involve academic department meetings for further detailed work for the beginning of the academic year. Agenda, Faculty Fall Conference, Faculty Association, 2011[17]

New faculty orientation involves all new full-time faculty to the Day Campus Faculty every fall. This one day orientation precedes the Fall Faculty Conference. During new faculty orientation, faculty members are introduced to the various administrative offices that provide personnel support to faculty, including human resources. As well, faculty members are introduced to their faculty mentors—a senior faculty member that can provide personal support to each faculty member during their new tenure at the College. New Faculty Orientation, Academic Affairs, 2011[18]

Faculty Integration Conferences and AHE Advisor Workshops

To maintain consistency of instruction and professional development among the college’s many locations and delivery modes, Faculty Integration Conferences are scheduled on a regular basis and held at the main campus in Columbia. These are coordinated by the associate dean for Adult Higher Education. Department heads, main campus full-time faculty, main campus
adjunct faculty, and AHE adjunct faculty (in-seat and online) are invited and encouraged to attend. Agenda, FIC\textsuperscript{[17]}

An average of three Faculty Integration Conferences have been held each year since 1998, bringing together faculty from all locations to share knowledge on teaching improvements, plan curriculum changes, and reaffirm and reassess learning goals. Departments that have a large number of majors in a wide variety of campuses, or that have both undergraduate and graduate programs, generally have more frequent FICs than other departments; for example, the Business Department and Criminal Justice Administration/Human Services Department have held seven FICs each in the last twelve years. Cross-disciplinary FICs are also routinely held on areas such as the culminating experience course and graduate studies. The term “Integration” is a hallmark of this activity, as home campus faculty and nationwide location faculty are always placed in close cooperation with each other in order to make sure that learning objectives and pedagogical know-how are shared. In addition, some Nationwide locations take advantage of local faculty development opportunities. For example, the Kansas City location has sent faculty to the annual Kansas City Professional Development Council’s “Enhancing Teaching and Learning” conference.

Activities at Faculty Integration Conferences include discussions of proposed revisions to the curriculum and individual courses; discussions of issues of pedagogy; departmental issues; student evaluation; grading practices and outcomes assessment. AHE adjunct faculty who attend these conferences present their ideas and feedback at their local campuses when they return, at faculty meetings and informally during the normal course of business.

AHE employs full-time professional academic advisors, who receive a one-week new advisor training course on the main campus and participate in an annual academic advisor conference. Academic advisors are encouraged to further their skills by participating in state or regional National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) conferences. The college’s professional academic advising corps has a career progression system that provides increases in salary for longevity and graduate education and recognizes advisors with job titles reflecting their experience level (e.g. Advisor I, Advisor II, Senior Advisor I, Senior Advisor II). Academic advisors are the only position within the college to have a career ladder system. This reflects the recognition of the key role that academic advisors play in student success.

Additionally, a training conference for academic advisors is held at the main campus during the year. Academic advisors from all nationwide campuses meet with the associate dean for AHE, and the academic advisor coordinator/trainer. Beyond the advisor’s conference, the academic advisor coordinator/trainer keeps all academic advisors abreast of the latest curricula and faculty changes during an academic year via a Newsletter. Admin IT Training, Technology Services\textsuperscript{[19]} AHE Newsletter, Academic Advisor, 2011\textsuperscript{[20]}

Academic advisement is and has been strengthened by the continuation of these academic advising conferences. The college has instituted a Degree Audit module for the academic advisement software. This tool allows staff, as well as students via eServices, to access a student’s academic record and allow for “what if” scenarios regarding various degrees. Students are better able to understand their Degree Audit and determine what courses are still required for degree completion. An Advising Support Form has been established to enhance the entire Degree Audit program and is used by academic advisors. This form is designed to help students clearly understand the most efficient route to degree completion, along with highlighting potential opportunities for degree enhancement. (Key Goals, Columbia College, 2011- Key Goal 3.1)\textsuperscript{[1]}

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An academic advising SharePoint Portal is being developed exclusively for training and distribution of knowledge/informational publications for all locations. A number of publications have been designed to ensure academic advisors have access to the knowledge needed to correctly advise students, including documents designed to inform advisors of possible future changes to the academic curriculum, publications to provide additional detail and explanation on key academic policies. An annual State of Advising report highlights the current state of advising and provides a look at future training and development activities. An Academic Advisor’s Newsletter is provided quarterly to illustrate various advising techniques and discuss current trends and literature discussing the importance of quality and accurate advisement.

**Evaluation of Component 2B**

The institutional leadership has provided excellent support in the approval and financing of improvement opportunities over the past decade; this support needs to continue. Resources need to be continually put back into the infrastructure that supports the fiscal health of the college, especially the physical infrastructure of the Nationwide Campus. As the Department of Defense reduces the support it provides hosted campuses, the college must be ready to make up the shortfall when economically appropriate. Facilities and technology support need to continue to be upgraded systematically at all locations; the higher education environment is very competitive. Technology should be used to increase the effectiveness and efficiencies of the support and services provided to students. Both staff and technology need to expand at least at the same rate of the student population; anything less will result in a loss of competitive advantage and result, ultimately, in less than optimum support to our students and their educational goals.

**Conclusion**

Columbia College’s resource base has been steadily increasing since the mid-1990’s and continues to be the cornerstone of its strategic planning successes. New ideas for improving the quality of education and service to the students can be evaluated and implemented, when approved. The Board of Trustees is intimately involved in the planning and decision-making aspects of the institution and empowers the college’s leadership to execute its mission. The Transformational Plan, completed in 2005 and updated twice since, provides the basis for all departmental planning throughout the college. The college continues to manage its fiscal resources effectively and conservatively, without incurring any long term debt. The college is financially positioned to take advantage of opportunities and to mitigate threats. The college is also significantly invested in its human resources, ensuring regular and effective professional development opportunities are made available and providing a comprehensive arsenal of health care, retirement and education benefits.

[1] Key Goals
[2] Revenue and Expense Summary
[3] Strategic Plans
[4] Forms
[8] Reports
[13] Key Goals
[16] Handbooks
[17] Agendas
[18] New Faculty Orientation, Academic Affairs, 2011

Reports
Strategic Plans
Strategic Plans
Transformational Plan, Columbia College, 2011
Core Component 2C - The organization’s ongoing evaluation and assessment processes provide reliable evidence of organizational effectiveness that clearly informs strategies for continuous improvement.

**Evaluation and Assessment**

The college is constantly undergoing a process of evaluation and assessment of its programs and processes. These evaluations and assessments are accomplished through internal review and external; some are required to remain compliant with various federal, state and organizational regulations and others are conducted as self-assessments to ensure continuous improvement. Regardless of the motivation, the college is committed to a continual pattern: review, evaluate, assess, improve and repeat.

Internal evaluation processes involving program and departmental reviews result in changes to curriculum, staff, and procedures in appropriate organizational venues. As well, the college has identified ways in which the evaluation processes themselves can improve in the future. Through improved processes the Day student retention rates will improve. Additionally, the assessment plan and feedback loops from all venues will be enhancements to improve teaching and learning. One particular method of implementation across all venues is the academic integrity task force, charged with evaluating academic integrity at all venues and decreasing incidents of dishonesty.

The program reviews are implemented every five years for each department at the college, to include resource departments and academic departments; the reviews are mandated by the president and managed by the executive vice president (Program Review, Guidelines, Academic, 2011 04 15 and Program Review, Guidelines, Administrative, 2011 04 15[1]). Peer review teams of 2-4 members are identified from similar institutions or programs. An extensive self-study is accomplished for the department being reviewed and sent to the review team approximately 30 days prior to the visit. The team spends a full day conducting the review and provides an initial out brief to the president the next morning, followed by a comprehensive report of findings, commendations and recommendations within 30 days. The peer review report is used by the reviewed department or program to improve performance effectiveness. The reviewed department takes the report and formally responds to recommendations and findings; identifying implementation of the recommendations, corrections to the deficiencies or justifications for disagreement with particular findings (Program Review Responses and External Recommendations[1]).

Another evaluation process used by the college to assess performance is the Major Field Test (MFT). The MFT’s are “comprehensive undergraduate and MBA outcomes assessment designed to measure the critical knowledge and understanding obtained by students in a major field of study.” The college uses the MFT to assess 10 major fields of study: Biology, Business, Chemistry, Computer Science, Criminal Justice, English, Mathematics, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology and MBA. Academic quality is a key performance indicator for the enrollment health of the college and is tracked as part of the Strategic Enrollment Plan. The college MFT scores are compared to the national mean for each program (Assessment, MFT Data, 2010 and Assessment, MFT Data, 2011[2]).

The ETSPPP test is given to freshmen in the INCC 111 “freshmen experience” course and again to seniors during their senior seminar course. The results are used to evaluate degree programs and general education courses for their effectiveness (Assessment, ETSPP Report,
An extensive treatment of the college’s academic assessment plan and activities can be found in Criterion 3.

Individual course sections are assessed by the students at the end of each session through a standardized course evaluation. The evaluations are collected and tabulated by the Academic Affairs Office and the results are provided to the academic departments and individual faculty for identification of strengths and weaknesses, and possible areas of improvement are recognized.

The Academic Assessment Committee and AHE staff review the results of these assessment tools to make recommendations for change and improvement to academic programs.

Approximately six months after their graduation date, a graduate survey is sent to all students requesting feedback on their program and their post-college success. This program is administered by the Career Services Office and the results are available to all the campus departments. This feedback is provided to the faculty and used to enhance our academic programs and make our students more marketable.

Assessments are not only restricted to the departments, programs and students. The college has a well-regimented and scheduled system of feedback and evaluation on the leadership and the faculty. Each January, faculty are invited to evaluate the President, the EVP/DAA and the appropriate Departmental Chairs. These evaluation procedures are consistent and use the same thorough evaluation form each year. Allowing for confidentiality, each evaluation can be submitted without any identifying information about the reviewer. Although faculty is not made privy to the results of the evaluation, the process is open to each member annually (Form, Evaluation, President, Faculty Association and Form, Evaluation, Academic Dean, Faculty Association).

The college is also required to respond to external assessments of its programs; these reviews ensure the college continues to provide a quality product to its students.

Military Installation Voluntary Education Reviews (MIVER) are conducted every 7-10 years; these reviews are sponsored by the Department of Defense and the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps to assess the quality of voluntary education programs at selected military installations and to assist in the improvement of voluntary education programs through appropriate recommendations to institutions, installations, and military services. With 18 locations on military installations, Columbia College is involved in 2-3 MIVER visits annually. The assistant dean for Military and Federal Programs (within the Division of Adult Higher Education) is the MIVER program manager for the college. Columbia College consistently receives top marks from the Department of Defense on their MIVER visits to our locations.

With locations in 13 states, there are various levels of approval required on an annual or bi-annual basis. These state reviews, in the form of an application to operate, review curriculum, faculty, infrastructure and budgets to ensure the quality and sustainability of the programs offered to their constituents. The state approval program is managed by the Director of Compliance, Division of Adult Higher Education. Because of the online approval mandate the college is approved to operate in 48 states.

There are times when the college will go outside of the institution to have an assessment or audit conducted on a single program or overall product. This contracted service provides the
institution with a third-party assessment. This program is managed by the Executive Director for Marketing. In 2010, a program audit was conducted for the Nursing Program. The audit recommended the recovery of nursing program accreditation, the establishment of an RN to BSN program and the possible creation of a graduate-level program [6].

In addition to regional accreditation, the college also holds specialized accreditation in its Education Program [7].

**Maintenance and Analysis of Information**

In addition to well-established procedures to programmatically gather data, institutionally the College has a well-organized system in place to digitally store documents. This ability allows for speedy response to organizational information requests. The college uses Datatel as its student information system and the primary database for its student information. Beginning in 2010, prospect and applicant data is gathered through the Hobson’s suite of enrollment management tools and delivered into the Datatel system. The Alumni and Development Office uses Raiser’s Edge as their primary data storage, and collects the most recent information on graduates directly from Datatel. In 2009, the student support areas began operational use of document imaging and, with it, the electronic storage of all documents and the reduction of stored paper files. The electronic storage of student records allows all staff and faculty, both local and around the country, to have instant access to necessary student information, thus improving academic and support services to the student (Key Goals, Columbia College, 2011 Key Goal 5.3 [8]).

**Evaluation of Component 2C**

The institution has laid the foundation to accurately and effectively assess and evaluate all components of the main campus, to include students, faculty, staff, departments and processes. But the largest component of the college remains the students, staff and faculty associated with locations outside of Columbia, Missouri. This environment is fostered by the regular external reporting requirements that nominally focus on the traditional program, the 18-22 year old students, attending the residential campus, taught by full-time faculty. To move forward significantly in the areas of evaluation and assessment, the college needs to be just as strong with the monitoring of non-traditional programs. The effective evaluation and assessment of the students, staff, faculty and facilities of the “non-traditional” component of Columbia College will result in major improvements across the institution. The move in this direction has begun, as more and more emphasis is placed on identifying and analyzing the performance of this sector of the college.

**Conclusion**

The institution continues to make the evaluation and assessment of all components of the college a top priority. Regular, ongoing reviews of the departments, the faculty and the services are conducted and reviewed. At the very top, the goals of the Transformational Plan are monitored, assessed and updated. Every department, academic and service-related, are evaluated by external experts every five years. Regular surveys are conducted with the students and staff members to identify issues with curriculum, services, facilities and leadership. The Strategic Enrollment Plan not only tracks and evaluates key performance indicators internally from year-to-year, the plan also calls for the comparisons of these KPI’s to our self-identified peer group to ensure we are on track and remaining competitive within higher
education. Evaluation and assessment is a strong trait at Columbia College and there is constant effort for ongoing improvement throughout the institution.

[1] Program Reviews
[2] Assessments
[3] Forms
[4] MIVER
[5] State Approvals
[8] Key Goals
Core Component 2D - All levels of planning align with the organization’s mission, thereby enhancing its capacity to fulfill that mission.

Columbia College’s resource allocation and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate a cohesive, coordinated and effective marketing and enrollment management plan. It has been developed to include every venue of the College. The planning over the past ten years has produced organizational change in the form of new academic programs, buildings, creation of new positions, and strategic direction.

Planning

A task force composed of faculty, staff, students, alumni and administrators met in 2008-09 to formulate a new mission, values and vision statement to update one written in 1996. The Board of Trustees approved the new statement and it was effective on May 1, 2009.

The vision is intentionally succinct and describes the college as the model institution it is becoming and will become. The mission, values, and vision have guided the college’s evolution as it has developed several new undergraduate majors: Human Services, Environmental Studies, Chemistry, Biology, Philosophy and Religious Studies and, in 2011, degrees in Pre-Engineering and Healthcare Administration/Management.

The planned extension of academic offerings created the foundation for the 2009 strategic planning process by focusing explicitly on the college as a whole, rather than on its individual units. The learning outcomes central to the new plan cut across the experiences of students in all venues; whether the student is pursuing certificate programs or degree programs as either an undergraduate or graduate. There is a clear recognition that graduate programs are central to the college’s educational mission, and efforts are ongoing to enhance them academically, as well as build a strong graduate culture in all venues.

Campus improvements and upgrades have been made in conjunction with master campus plans and research aligning the college’s goals to market and consumer expectations. In the last ten years there have been several major construction projects, new buildings built, and renovations to existing buildings. Each addition or renovation was guided by appropriate facilities and budget planning and were designed to meet ever-changing student and staff needs. As the competition among public, private, and for-profit colleges’ increases, it becomes increasingly necessary for schools to offer attractive and accessible facilities to all students. An underutilized swimming pool was removed so the Atkins-Homan Student Commons could be built in its location because the day, evening, and graduate student body wanted/needed a gathering place. Improvements at the main campus include, additional computer labs, and Missouri and St. Clair Halls both underwent major renovations (Key Goals, Columbia College, 2011 Key Goals 4.1, 4.3).[1]

The college has also purchased numerous properties adjacent to or in close proximity of the main campus for future expansion in accordance with our missions. The Lake of the Ozarks building was constructed, two Chicago area locations were moved to better leased facilities (Crystal Lake and Lake County), and the Online Education Center moved to a totally renovated building (formerly Columbia Photo) and, more recently, to Federal Hall.
Program Changes

The college has initiated a variety of programmatic changes in the last decade. The college added new majors, certificates and modified existing programs, as well as adding a new graduate degree. These changes were motivated by market research and student interest, as well as the desire to further the college’s mission.

Each of these programs fit into the overall college mission. For example, the addition of the Human Service degree is consistent with the college’s mission of service to the community; it is informed by a rigorous interdisciplinary understanding of situations in which students’ vocation of service can be realized. The addition of studies in Environmental Science acknowledges the emerging emphasis on global eco-values and environmental concerns. Also, the addition of a Management Information Systems degree reaffirms the college’s commitment to offer relevant degrees that enhance graduates’ employability, and in this particular case, acknowledges the importance of keeping pace with rapid technological advances in the field of computers and technology.

Similarly, the certificate programs added to the curriculum provide educational opportunities outside the traditional four-year college experience, for students seeking specialized education in management, marketing, and human resources.

Graduate Program Changes

All graduate programs are receiving a renewed focus on rigor and relevance by senior leadership. For example, last year a well-respected and experienced leader in local K-12 education was hired as a consultant to review the MAT. He researched best practices in curriculum and delivery at numerous institutions. In addition, he interviewed MAT students, alum, staff, faculty, appropriate administrators, and made recommendations to improve to MAT. The consultants recommendations included; creation of new courses, removal of some existing courses, and “tweaks” in others (course name change, etc.). He also made recommendations on how to best market the MAT.

The MSCJ is also undergoing significant enhancements. Specifically, what was once a standard MSCJ with no options and few electives, is now evolving into a MSCJ with more courses to choose from and three student options. The three available options for the new MSCJ are; 1) General MSCJ degree; 2) MSCJ with a Law Enforcement Administration track; 3) MSCJ with a Corrections Administration track. Two new tracks, in Accounting and Human Resource Management, are currently in governance.

The MBA has been reviewed as well. Recommended changes include new courses to allow students to choose a specific emphasis, i.e., accounting, finance, international business, etc. (unavailable with the current MBA), and new prerequisite courses to better prepare students for a graduate level business degree.

A new MAMS degree was also recently added. This degree should be popular with military members as well as military or history enthusiasts. While it is a niche degree, it acknowledges our close and longstanding relationship with all military services, and should attract those individuals wanting to broaden their knowledge in this area for personal enrichment and professional development.
Evaluation of Component 2D

With a strong penchant for strategic planning, the necessary improvement opportunities have been identified and are under consideration. A standing planning committee to coordinate all College planning should be created in order to integrate assessment and planning procedures throughout the College. There will be continued efforts to increase revenue and endowment resources, and to strengthen the trust, commitment and faculty/staff morale through bilateral communication and feedback processes. As students, staff and faculty become more technologically sophisticated and dependent upon technology, it is vital to remain current with technological advances both within and outside the college. And finally, staffing and facilities needs must be assessed and resolved to accommodate planned enrollment growth in the college utilizing economies of scale.

The college creates, maintains and actively implements a 5-year master plan[3] for the physical plant of the college. Recent acquisitions have supported the plan for growth as new space is actually available. An example would be the plan for the reallocation of space in Missouri Hall where every department is getting more space; with room for growth. The reuse of the 10th Street Center and Practice Hall, and then Columbia House in turn, has added to the actual expansion of staff, faculty and student space. In 2013, the addition of the science building will provide additional space for expansion as faculty are relocated out of St. Clair Hall to the new facility and more classrooms are established for the sciences. Adding these new classrooms will allow us to mothball some current classrooms that are less than adequate, while others are used to meet the constant need for additional administrative space as the college continues to add and increase student support services.

Since FY1996-97, the college project expenditures have exceeded $49M[4], with the majority of those expenditures coming in the last 9 fiscal years. During this same period, property acquisitions have exceeded $7.5M[5]. The college is committed to the master plan and implements it so as to coincide with student, employee and mission growth.

Conclusion

Columbia College has experienced significant changes in the last ten years. Student numbers have grown significantly from 8,564 students in the fall of 2001, to 18,137 in the fall of 2011, a 111.8% increase in 11 years (or 7.1% compounded annually). The array of academic programs has broadened in scope and depth. The facilities and technology infrastructure to support students and programs has also grown to keep pace with the increase in activities college-wide, and the College is well resourced with creative and talented personnel. These significant changes have been guided by carefully conceived plans. Examples of evidence include the creation of an executive level position for Technology Services (CIO), an Assistant Vice President for Enrollment Management, an Associate Dean for Graduate Studies, additional Dean positions and restructuring in the Division of Adult Higher Education (AHE), new positions and restructuring in the office of Development, Alumni Services, and PR (DAPR), etc. Examples of infrastructure growth are abundant. That growth includes; new and more comprehensive college-wide email system (Gmail), increased levels of service and operating hours for the technology help desk, a comprehensive disaster recovery plan, a college-wide technology replacement plan/cycle to ensure state of the art computer technology is available in all venues and significant upgrades in Internet connectivity to provide more reliable access throughout the college. Student services have been enhanced too, due to the increased use of automated processes. The students now have access to new SIS technologies such as; the
ability to enroll or withdraw from classes online, order transcripts or pay bills online. Other new SIS technologies include the reengineering of a myriad of student, staff, and faculty processes.

The leadership of President Brouder and the Board of Trustees has recognized the need for change and has been taking both operational and strategic action to manage it. The use of the President’s Administrative Cabinet as a cross-functional team to oversee the operational and administrative issues has also been very effective. One of the overarching themes of the 2009 strategic planning process was to identify the college’s organizational needs (which included developing a mission statement, SWOT, and goal statements from each department) to sustain educational excellence in the competitive 21st-century world. All 35 nationwide locations are also responsible for creating annual Strategic Plans for short term and long term goals[6].

Columbia College continues to improve its capacity to fulfill its mission through careful allocation of resources and implementation of improved budget procedures. This is being done through careful study of the changing social, technological, and economic trends in higher education, as well as the ongoing assessment of its education programs and a new college-wide strategic planning initiative. The College also partnered with Eduventures, a well-known and respected research firm, to conduct original research on topics of interest for the College, to be used in data-driven decisions of a strategic nature.

[1] Key Goals
[3] Main Campus Master Plan (Five Year), Administrative Services, 2009
[6] Strategic Plans
Audit Reports, Columbia College, 2010
Criterion Three- Student Learning and Effective Teaching

Core Component 3A - The organization provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.

Of Note: Academic Assessment: A Success Story

A culture of assessment requires that:

- Student learning is taken seriously.
- The measurement of student learning is taken seriously.
- Instruments that measure student learning also enhance student learning.
- Students are motivated to perform their best on instruments that measure student learning.
- Results of assessment are used to improve curricula and pedagogy in all venues.

In recent years Columbia College has created a model assessment plan based on its desire to provide quality programs to all venues (Assessment, Plan Update, Academic Affairs, 2010 [1] and Memo, National Trends, Smith Terry, 2009[2]).

The assessment plan is used to identify degree program strengths and weaknesses and address those effectively, to restructure the College’s general education requirements, to evaluate culminating experiences course requirements, and to ascertain differences in course and program delivery in the traditional and non-traditional venues. The College’s students have benefitted greatly from assessment activities; curricula have been restructured as needed, resources have been reallocated, and additional resources have been provided as needed. Columbia College has made great strides in not only implementation of its assessment plan, but also in using that plan to make the College better. Objective data indicate success in accomplishing those goals. Following are various components of Columbia College’s assessment plan.

Master Syllabi

All courses taught by Columbia College are guided by a master syllabus prepared by full-time faculty (Syllabi, Master Template, Academic Affairs). In response to the 2002 HLC team recommendations, all master syllabi were restructured in 2005-2006 and significant changes were made with improved assessment in mind. As a consequence of that process all master syllabi now contain a list of clearly articulated “Course Objectives” and “Measurable Learning Outcomes”, and each instructor is expected to include those in course syllabi and to meet those objectives and outcomes. The master syllabi might be considered Columbia College’s basic units of assessment because they directly address what takes place in the classes, whether taught in the traditional classroom, online, or in a combination of the two.

Student Evaluations

All courses taught by Columbia College regardless of venue are assessed via student evaluations. Evaluations are administered during the last week of the term and responses are anonymous. Faculty members receive typed copies of comments as well as a summary report of rankings after final grades for the course have been submitted. Student evaluations are
considered in decisions regarding promotion and tenure, in future class assignment for adjunct instructors, and ultimately in decisions to retain faculty members. In 2011, student evaluations went online to improve efficiency and ease of administration. SET Form

**Assessment of General Education**

General Education is formally assessed with the Educational Testing Services Proficiency Profile (ETSPP). Since 1997 Columbia College has utilized standardized exit exams, including previous use of the Measure of Academic Proficiency and Progress (MAPP) and the Academic Profile (AP) to assess general education. In 2011 the Faculty Association endorsed continued use of the ETSPP for general education assessment (Assessment, ETSPP Report, Academic Affairs, 2010). [1]

**Assessment at Time of Graduation**

- **Major Field Tests**

The Major Field Test (MFT) is administered to students in their culminating experience classes when that exam is available and appropriate. The MFT allows Columbia College to compare its graduates' achievement with students graduating from similar institutions nationwide (Key Goals, Columbia College 2011, Key Goal 3.3[3]). Majors currently assessed via MFT include Biology, Business Administration, Chemistry, Computer Information Systems, Criminal Justice, English, Forensic Science, Management Information Systems, Mathematics, Political Science, Psychology, and Sociology. Students completing the Master of Business Administration must take the MBA Major Field Test.

HLC had taken an interest in Columbia College's assessment work and mandated the export of assessment to AHE (Focused Report, Academic Affairs, 2006[4]). Various protocols were implemented, and by Spring 2007 MFTs were being administered at all College locations, with good student numbers especially in Business, Criminal Justice and Psychology.

Faculty use MFT results primarily to identify strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum and to make adjustments that will strengthen the degree programs. Because MFT results can also be analyzed by venue they can be used to identify AHE locations (including Online) with strong or weak performances. Using MFT data in this way is a reality check on anecdotal evidence about presence or absence of rigor and expectations, by discipline and by venue.

Results of MFTs taken by 93 Day students were collected, as were those of a randomly-selected sample of 99 AHE students. The results were analyzed using three independent variables that were hypothesized to be related to variability in MFT scores (Assessment, MFT Data, 2009[1]).

1. Number of years between the first course in the major and capstone course. The hypothesis was that the larger amount of time between taking the first course in the major and taking the capstone course (during which the MFT was administered), the more "forgetting" would take place, resulting in lower MFT scores. Result: No relationship, because most MFT takers had taken their first major class fairly recently.
2. Percentage of courses in the major taken at Columbia College. The hypothesis was that the more courses in the major taken from Columbia College instructors, the higher the MFT score. This was based on the assumption that Columbia College courses were both more integrated into the capstone experience and that Columbia College courses were more rigorous than major courses accepted in transfer typically from community colleges (where many courses are taught as lower-level while the same course may be upper-level and more rigorous when taught at Columbia College). **Result:** No relationship, because most MFT takers had taken most of their major coursework with Columbia College.

3. GPA in the major. The hypothesis was that academic achievement, as shown by course grades, would be related to MFT performance (a common finding about standardized tests). **Result:** Strong positive relationship, as expected and as generally found with standardized tests.

The findings in hypotheses 1 and 2 were very helpful. They meant there were no extraneous variables affecting MFT performance; conclusions could be drawn from MFT results.

In the years since 2008 several thousand students have taken the MFT (Assessment, MFT Data, 2009-2011[1]). Key Goal 3.3: Faculty and staff have used these assessment and other data to make improvements in curricula and pedagogy (Key Goals, Columbia College, 2011, Key Goal 3.3[3] and Assessment, Academic, Columbia College 2009-2011[1]). And the key data finding was that traditional Day students and AHE students performed at about the same level on the MFT. This was an enormously important finding; it mitigated concerns that the quality of instruction in AHE was inferior. Not until 2010 did a gap appear between Day and AHE MFT performance. In 2010 AHE performances did not decline; however, Day performance improved to the point that the average Day MFT score was above the 50th percentile.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures of Student Learning in Assessment of Degree Program Learning Outcomes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Major</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>American Studies</td>
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<td>Art</td>
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<td>Biology</td>
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<td>Business Administration</td>
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<td>Chemistry</td>
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<td>Computer Information Systems</td>
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<td>Major</td>
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<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Computer Science</td>
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<td>Criminal Justice Administration</td>
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<td>Education</td>
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<td>English</td>
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<td>Environmental Science</td>
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<td>Forensic Science</td>
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<td>General Studies</td>
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<td>History</td>
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<td>Human Services</td>
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<td>Management Information Systems</td>
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<td>Mathematics</td>
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<td>Psychology</td>
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<td>Sociology</td>
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<td>Speech Communication</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Bragging Rights: Three Majors and a Location**

Serious progress on using MFT results was made by the Business Department in the mid-2000s. Results showed deficiencies in finance and quantitative analysis; in response, faculty required coursework in these areas ([Memo, Business Dept., Cunningham, Eric, 2006][2]). Scores began to improve and have continued to do so ([Smith Article in Alumni Magazine][3]).

Criminal Justice MFT scores have consistently been higher than the national average. This is due to the curriculum being closely aligned with MFT content and to the high level of practical and professional experience in law enforcement of many CJ students.

Psychology MFT scores have increased to the point they are well above the national average – but only among traditional Day students. AHE MFT takers score well below the national average. The higher Day scores are due in part to more extensive course offerings. Full-time Psychology faculty and AHE staff are working together to better align course offerings and tighten degree requirements ([Memo, Psychology Faculty Credentials, Cunningham, Eric, 2009][2]).
St. Louis had been a traditionally low-achieving location. A new director made creation of a strong assessment culture a top priority. Many activities in and out of the classroom reinforced assessment ([St. Louis MFT Plan](#)). Seniors scored at very high levels for several years. When key elements of the plan were discontinued in 2010, scores dropped.

- **Internal Examinations and Internal Assessment**

No MFT is available for Human Services so the faculty in that department developed an internal examination to assess graduates' understanding and knowledge. Students graduating with degrees in Art are required to submit portfolios of their work. These portfolios are evaluated with regard to knowledge of basic art principles, creative traits, and portfolio presentation. This assessment tool is only three years old and is already being used to address curriculum issues.

Students are admitted to the Education program based on scores on the College Basic Academic Subject Examination (CBASE). At graduation Education majors demonstrate proficiency via the PRAXIS II exam. They must also submit a portfolio to include the students’ teaching philosophy, exemplary artifacts demonstrating competence in instruction methods and chosen academic field, a professional development plan, and other indicators of competence and preparedness for the classroom. Education majors also complete a survey at the time of graduation to ascertain their opinions regarding the program itself and their experience as an Education major. First-year teachers are surveyed to learn whether they believe they were prepared for the classroom.

Students majoring in American Studies must complete a senior thesis. The thesis must be a significant, original work written in one of the primary areas covered by the American Studies curriculum (American Literature, History, Political Science, Sociology). This requirement also applies to students majoring in Philosophy and Speech Communication. No MFT is available for these disciplines.

Speech Communication majors must complete an oral departmental exam. The Speech Communication department is currently developing a written component, as well ([Reports from Disciplines Not Using MFT](#)).

**Nursing**

Students graduating with the Associate of Science in Nursing are assessed via the licensing exam, the National Council Licensing Examination (NCLEX). During their studies nursing students are also periodically assessed via the Health Education Systems, Inc. (HESI) ([Nursing Assessment Reports](#)).[1]

**Graduate**

In 2008 an outcome of a focused visit on offering graduate studies online was a recommendation for improvement of assessment of graduate programs.

MAT students must prepare and present a graduate portfolio demonstrating accomplishment of program goals. They also must engage in self-evaluation using the Five Goals of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.
As part of their capstone course MSCJ students must complete a senior thesis defining an original research problem, reviewing relevant literature, presenting a logical research methodology, and the results and findings. In 2011, the new degree program will be in effect, with a different capstone course (MSCJ 595) replacing the current one (MSCJ 580). The requirements for MSCJ 595 will not involve a thesis, but rather will involve the application of students' theoretical and experiential learning to an administrative problem or case study.

MBA students must complete a “Strategic Planning Project” assignment to include a power point presentation, a written final report, and peer evaluation. In addition, MBA students take the MBA MFT in their capstone course.

MAMS students must complete a master's thesis.

- Program Reviews

All academic and support programs are reviewed by external peer evaluators on a five-year rotating schedule. Review of academic programs is conducted by faculty from peer institutions who visit the campus for several days, visit classes, review pertinent documents, and visit with faculty and students. Following the visit the team presents a report summarizing strengths and weaknesses and making recommendations for curriculum development, program change, etc. These reports[5] are then used to guide program change and growth.

- Student Affairs Assessment

Student Affairs continued its efforts to improve assessment in order to increase accountability, improve services and increase credibility with college faculty, staff, students and stakeholders. Its assessment efforts include a self-study and program review completed in the spring of 2010; the continuous monitoring of basic tracking data such as visits to campus life offices, the number of participants in Student Affairs functions and activities, and residence hall occupancy figures; a communication and technology survey completed in the summer of 2010; a residence hall satisfaction survey administered every spring; training evaluations from the paraprofessional staff administered every fall and spring; individual program assessments conducted by Residence Life regarding its programming; exit interviews with graduating Resident Assistants and with Leadership Scholarship recipients; student forums on food service; satisfaction surveys conducted with recent graduates, with attendees at the graduate fair, and with attendees at the career fair; and many other instruments. "Student Voice" is an online assessment tool that links learning outcomes to Student Affairs progress and services (Student Affairs Assessment Reports[1]).

- Career Services Alumni Survey

Each year the Grossnickle Career Services Center surveys more than 1,000 recent alumni to determine the number of students who found employment in their field, how they obtained their
position, and the number who are attending graduate school. Tracking this information is a daunting task and the response rate is usually about 30%. New employees were added to the Center during the past year, however, and one of the goals is to improve the response and reliability of the data. Graduates are tracked by academic degree and this provides an indirect assessment of those programs (2010 and 2011 Career Services Reports). [1]

- **Assessment on Military Bases**

The AHE military campuses participate in the Department of Defense’s (DoD) Military Installation Voluntary Education Review (MIVER) process on a periodic basis. DoD assembles higher education professionals from colleges and universities across the country into MIVER teams that evaluate the quality of the voluntary (off-duty) higher education programs offered on military installations around the world. The MIVER frequency is generally seven years or less. Each higher education institution must submit a detailed self-study for review by the MIVER team in advance of the visit. The evaluation teams examine the academic and student service operations of each college or university on the military installation. They interview students, faculty and administrators. The evaluators observe classes to assess teaching quality and sufficiency of classroom technology. Both laudatory comments and shortcomings are provided in a detailed written report rendered by each MIVER team. Colleges and universities are given specific directions and timelines for corrective actions if deficiencies are noted (MIVER[6]).

- **Annual Assessment Report**

At the end of each academic year the chairs of the College’s academic departments compose individual reports summarizing assessment data for their departments. These reports summarize results of MFT exams, senior projects, or other assessment tools for the entire college system. The reports differentiate success rates in programs generally and by venue (day, evening, AHE, online) specifically. AHE data are then reported by specific location.

The departmental reports, which include specific recommendations for improvement in curricula and pedagogy, are then encapsulated in a summary report by the EVP/DAA, who posts the report on the website (2010 and 2011 Departmental and Annual Reports).

**Evaluation of Core Component 3A**

Assessment activities in themselves are only tools; the results must be used to make Columbia College better. All academic departments use the results as an opportunity for annual self-reflection and improvement. When weaknesses in curricula are identified, for example, departments quickly move to address those weaknesses by improving curricula and by requesting additional faculty if a weak area requires additional expertise. All academic departments have become better as a consequence and students at all College venues have benefitted. Recent examples of assessment-driven improvement include:
• The monitoring of drawing skills among art students as a result of portfolio reviews, and evaluation of a possible "remedial" drawing class to address this deficiency if monitoring continues to show problems.
• Increased coverage of statistical analysis in business classes as a result of MFT scores.
• Review of the Computer Information Systems curriculum and development of a CIS senior test as a result of disparity in MFT scores between Computer Science and Computer Information Systems majors.
• Curriculum revision in the Master of Science in Criminal Justice as a result of assessment results from 2008-09.
• Addition of courses to the online Master of Arts in Teaching curriculum as the result of external program review.
• Requirement of an applied statistics course for Biology majors as a result of MFT scores (Assessment, Report, Academic Affairs, 2009 and 2010).[1]

Another major challenge is developing effective assessment tools for degree programs lacking such tools. While the ETSPP is used to assess the Bachelor of General Studies, for example, a better instrument is needed. As mentioned previously, the College has begun implementing assessment activities throughout the Columbia College system; assessment occurs in all venues. The expansion of these activities has made it possible to determine which venues are doing better jobs of teaching the curriculum and which students are better prepared by the time of graduation. This is an area of potential improvement for the College. Venues that are not performing at acceptable levels with a particular degree or program should be targeted for improvement to better achieve the College’s goal of uniformity in rigor and achievement.

Conclusion

During the last decade Columbia College has worked vigorously to create an environment of assessment and to create the tools necessary to adequately assess its academic programs, and the benefits to the students and College generally are significant. Assessment results have increased the College’s awareness of programs’ strengths and weaknesses and, consequently, have made programs better. Significant program changes have resulted because the College embraced the assessment process, and the College is better for it. The assessment process is constantly evolving and improving and a brighter future for Columbia College is inevitable because of it. The College should constantly seek out new and better assessment tools with the goal of relentlessly improving its academic programs.

[ 1 ] Assessments
[ 3 ] Key Goals
[ 4 ] Focused Visits
[ 5 ] Reports
[ 6 ] MIVER
Articles
Forms
Program Reviews
Syllabi, INCC 123 Master, Academic Affairs, 2004
Website, Master Course Syllabi, Academic Affairs, 2012
Core Component 3B- The organization values and supports effective teaching.

**Faculty**

- **Full-time**

The content of the curriculum and strategies for instruction are governed by the faculty. The Faculty Handbook (Handbook, Faculty, Faculty Association, 2008[1]), which is recognized as the governing document for curricular matters, states unequivocally, “The faculty is responsible for determining the curriculum, defining the appropriate conduct of students, approving the undergraduate and graduate academic calendars for the main campus, certifying eligibility of students for degrees and recommending dismissal of students from the college for academic reasons. The faculty have primary responsibility for such areas as subject matter and methods of instruction, evaluation of student performance, requirements for degrees offered, determining when degree requirements have been met, research, faculty status and those aspects of student life that relate to the educational process.” The institution has made a concerted effort to increase the number of terminally degreed faculty over the years to ensure that teaching and curricular governance are directed by a highly qualified faculty; today about 80 percent of full-time faculty have the highest degree in their field.

- **Adjunct**

A careful and rigorous process of approval and evaluation is used for the hiring and retention of adjunct faculty. Faculty positions require a minimum of a master’s degree in the subject to be taught, with only rare exceptions in which special certification or extraordinary work experience may be substituted. Faculty members are recommended for employment by the director in the case of Nationwide locations, and the department chair in the case of the Main campus. In all cases, the guidelines for levels of education and specific coursework required are developed by the home campus academic departments, and all adjunct faculty must be approved by the EVP/DAA (Handbook, Adjunct Faculty, AHE, 2011[1]).

**Professional development**

- **Full-time**

The support of professional development designed to facilitate teaching suited to varied learning environments occurs in a number of different ways. All full-time faculty members have a personal professional development allocation of $850 per year which they use for conference travel, workshops, and other activities to enhance their subject matter mastery. In addition, competitive awards of up to $1,000 per faculty member are available through the college’s Elections and Professional Development Committee. The committee evaluates fund requests in light of the college’s teaching mission and awards additional funds as it deems appropriate, with such awards being approved by the EVP/DAA. In addition, faculty development is supported through sabbaticals and summer research grants. Brown bag lunches are also occasionally held on topics of interest to faculty.
Adjunct

To maintain consistency of instruction and professional development among the college’s many locations and delivery modes, Faculty Integration Conferences are scheduled on a regular basis. An average of about three Faculty Integration Conferences have been held each year since 1998, bringing together faculty from all locations to share knowledge on teaching improvements, plan curriculum changes, and reaffirm and reassess learning goals. Departments that have a large number of majors in a wide variety of campuses, or that have both undergraduate and graduate programs, generally have more frequent FICs than other departments; for example, the Business Department and Criminal Justice Administration/Human Services Department have held seven FICs each in the last twelve years. Cross-disciplinary FICs are also routinely held on areas such as the culminating experience course and graduate studies. The term “Integration” is a hallmark of this activity, as home campus faculty and nationwide campus faculty are always placed in close cooperation with each other in order to make sure that learning objectives and pedagogical know-how are shared. In addition, some Nationwide locations take advantage of local faculty development opportunities. For example, the Kansas City location has sent faculty to the annual Kansas City Professional Development Council’s “Enhancing Teaching and Learning” conference. (Agenda, FIC[2]).

The focus on effective teaching applies equally to the online component of instruction. No instructor, whether employed full time or part time, is permitted to teach an online course without having successfully completed a rigorous new online teacher training course. These training sessions are provided four times a year and last for two days. Topics covered in the training include best practices in online teaching, policies and procedures required of online instructors, and techniques for facilitating good online discussions. Online courses are also redeveloped every three years so that the material is kept current and teaching techniques can be modified to respond to technological and personnel changes[3].

Teaching evaluation

Full-time

The evaluation of effective teaching is an integral part of policies for the hiring and retention of faculty. The Faculty Handbook states that all evaluation of faculty, whether annual review, mid-probationary review, review of non-tenure-track faculty for renewal, or consideration for tenure and promotion, “shall rest heavily on demonstrated teaching ability.” All self-evaluations mentioned above must be weighted so that no less than 55 percent of the self-evaluation is focused on teaching ability. Specific areas in which teaching ability must be demonstrated include: course content; appropriate and effective class presentations; adequate course preparation and planning leading to a carefully constructed syllabus; the use of enrichment opportunities such a travel, computer work, and library work; willingness to assist students outside of the classroom; appropriate and effective student evaluation policies; consistent and fair treatment of students; timely and competent record-keeping; and appropriate levels of academic rigor and expectations. Documents that are used to demonstrate teaching effectiveness include course syllabi, student evaluations, peer evaluations, administrative evaluations, self-evaluations, class visit reports, grade distributions, and other materials. The Handbook also mandates that quality of teaching is the primary criterion for advancing in rank or receiving tenure. In addition, formal public recognition of effective teaching occurs with the
awarding of the annual Trustees’ Award for Excellence in Teaching (Form, Self Evaluation and Report, Academic Affairs, 2010 & Form, Class Visit, Academic Affairs, 1995[4]).

Student course evaluations are welcomed and taken seriously. All courses and labs from all instructors at every level are evaluated in every session. The evaluation forms themselves receive regular scrutiny and evaluation from the faculty to ensure that they produce accurate and actionable results for the improvement of teaching. The current evaluation form is the product of just such activity, having been approved by the Faculty Association in 2010 after a lengthy process of examination that sought to maximize its accuracy and usefulness (Form, Instructional Evaluation, Academic Affairs, 1995[4]).

Innovative practices

In order to make the best use of technology to support improved pedagogies and innovative practices, the college has aggressively spread the use of “smart” classrooms across its many locations in the past ten years to enhance the student experience and to make classroom time maximally enriched. At the main campus, all classrooms are now equipped with enhanced technology, a situation that is mirrored at many of the nationwide locations. Technology without proper training is valueless, however, and the college has invested a proportionate amount of time and effort into making sure that faculty members are skilled in the use of new technologies. For example, in summer 2011, Technology Services offered an Instructional Technology Immersion Seminar for five full-time and five adjunct faculty, with the expectation that they would become faculty technology champions. Seminar, Instructional Technology Immersion - Technology Services, 2011[5]

- Adjunct

In the college’s nationwide locations, innovative practices include the implementation of an Internet-based business simulation called GLO-BUS at several of the college’s Illinois locations, which has demonstrated outstanding results and gotten rave reviews from students (Article, Strategic Management Goes High Tech, Hartman, Debra, 2011 03[6]). In the first session of 2010, a Crystal Lake team placed 1st (tied with 30 other teams) competing against more than 1,600 teams from more than 100 colleges and universities worldwide. Many locations have introduced MOBI technology to their math classes [MOBI Technology]. MOBI is an interactive whiteboard designed to support student-centered active learning and give educators the mobility and flexibility to manage classes and deliver engaging lessons anywhere in the room. Off-campus learning experiences are extensively used at all locations, and many instructors are adopting the use of hybrid classes, in which in-seat and online instruction methods are combined.

The college’s extensive commitment to online education led it to examine the available learning management systems, and after a careful examination of all possible options, it chose the Desire2Learn LMS in 2003. The D2L system was chosen for its dynamism, its ease of use, and the rich learning environment provided to its users. Approximately 40 percent of full-time home campus faculty have gone through training in D2L technology and teaching online courses.
### Technology Support Activities

<table>
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<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>PURPOSE</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Faculty Development Activities</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Instructional Technology Immersion Seminar</td>
<td>Create faculty champions for new technologies; Introduce faculty to available tools</td>
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<tr>
<td>Workshops by departments and interests</td>
<td>Range of support</td>
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<td>Online training seminars</td>
<td>Maximize faculty access to technology</td>
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<td><strong>Course Enhancements for Faculty</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Expansion of &quot;smart&quot; classrooms</td>
<td>Spread technological capabilities to as many locations as possible</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use of consistent learning management system</td>
<td>Create uniform experience among classes; regularize expectations for faculty</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expansion of simulation software</td>
<td>Maximize &quot;real-world&quot; experience for all students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relocation of Online Campus to Federal Hall</td>
<td>Create better workspace for course designers, expand facilities for instructional technologists</td>
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<tr>
<td>Addition of two-way live video classroom in Williams Hall</td>
<td>Create opportunity for hybrid/live video instruction between campuses</td>
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<td><strong>Student Support Services</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Development of Student Voice survey tool</td>
<td>Ascertain student wants and needs more accurately</td>
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<tr>
<td>Purchase of Retention Alert software</td>
<td>Improve student success and persistence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Management of social media</td>
<td>Multiply points of access and information for students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Faculty involvement in professional organizations**

- **Full-time**

In a recent survey of faculty, all who responded reported that they belonged to at least one relevant professional organization, with some reporting as many as five. Although the faculty response rate was not 100 percent, the responses did indicate a high degree of professional involvement. Moreover, faculty members hold active leadership roles in many organizations, including the American Chemical Society, the National Communication Association, the Central States Communication Association, the Midwest Sociological Society, and the Midwest Ethics Society (Faculty Survey Results).
Adjunct

Among the more than 1,400 adjunct faculty members at locations there are many individuals who are not only effective teachers, but also active working professionals. Organizational affiliations include the American Institute of CPAs, the National Association of Certified Valuation Analysts, the Society for Human Resources Management, the Project Management Institute, the Missouri Valley Economics Association, the American Choral Directors’ Association, the Missouri Music Educators’ Association, the National Art Education Association, the National Communication Association, the Association of Government Accountants, and the National Association of Industrial Technology, among many others.

Evaluation of Core Component 3B

Peer review of instruction will increase. As the importance and sophistication of technology in instruction has increased, so has the need for direct assistance to faculty in integrating technology into teaching, both in the online environment and in the face-to-face environment. More direct assistance will be provided.

Conclusion

Effective teaching remains at the core of the mission and identity. The institution makes this commitment clear in its governance structure, its evaluation methods for faculty and curriculum, and in its spending decisions. Strong institutional support for teaching is the norm across locations and delivery modes. Examination of support for effective teaching as a part of this self-study has shown that this support extends across all locations and delivery methods. While there is inevitably some disparity between the support for full-time faculty members and that of part-time faculty, the college makes a concerted effort to be sure that part-time instructors and instructors for the online venue are included in teaching support efforts.

The Faculty Integration Conference has been the keystone of the college's efforts to maintain quality teaching across its many locations, and it has served that function well. As the FIC’s have matured over the years, with many faculty members having attended multiple events, the content of the FIC's is evolving to match. The self-study effort has reaffirmed Columbia College's strength in teaching support but also reminded it that the type and method of that support needs to remain flexible.

[1] Handbooks
[2] Agendas
[4] Forms
[6] Articles
Assessments
Faculty Professional Organizations, Academic Affairs, 2011
Key Goals
Reports
SSS Program Proposal, Student Affairs, 2009
Summary, Elluminate, Technology Services, 2011
Summary, MediaSite, Technology Services, 2011
Summary, NetSupport School, Technology Services, 2011
Syllabi, INCC 123 Master, Academic Affairs, 2004
Core Component 3C- The organization creates effective learning environments.

The college is completely committed to academic outcomes assessment. As is the case with all institutions, outcomes assessment is a dynamic process. The college seeks to evolve as new instruments and techniques for outcomes assessment become available. The college is also completely committed to periodic (every five years) program reviews of both academic departments and support departments. The results of this process are used to create an environment of continuous quality improvement. Even with the challenges presented by supporting 35 nationwide locations, the college has aggressively pursued first-rate classroom technology. Following are measures taken to create and enhance the learning environments.

**Academic Assessment Planning**

The college integrates academic assessment into all of its planning. The Academic Assessment Committee is a standing committee of the college. The committee meets at least monthly during the academic year and the committee consists of the EVP/DAA and elected faculty and appointed staff members. The committee maintains the currency of the college’s Assessment Plan. [College Assessment Plan][1] The plan outlines how the college will conduct academic assessment. The results of assessment inform all actions taken to create and enhance the college’s learning environments. In 2011 the faculty approved the update and revision of the original (2004) assessment plan.

**Annual Academic Assessment Report**

The EVP/DAA, with input from each academic department chair and AHE, prepares the Annual Academic Assessment Report. [2010 and 2011 Academic Assessment Report][1] The report compiles data from the Departmental Assessment Reports and highlights the academic performance, by major, of the graduating seniors as well as the results of general education.

**Academic Department Program Reviews**

Academic department program reviews provide input to department chairs and their faculty on perspectives from the external reviewers. The recommendations of the program review team are considered by faculty and administrators and when warranted, suggested changes are adopted. These changes may impact curriculum, pedagogy, instructional resources, and student services.

**Administrative Department Program Reviews**

Just like their academic counterparts, each administrative department undergoes a program review every five years. This review is conducted by appropriate professionals from similar institutions. The process ensures that each department is keeping abreast of changes in technology and process. The process also benchmarks the department against the appropriate professional organizations (e.g. AACRAO, NACUBO, etc.) to determine if the “industry standard” is being met. [Program Review SSRS, Team Reports, Department Responses][2]

**Outcomes Assessment Testing**

The results of program outcomes assessments (MFT, departmental exams, portfolios, etc.) are used by the faculty to inform curricular changes. These changes entail strengthening or
changing course content, deleting courses from the curriculum and adding new courses to the curriculum. An example of this was weaknesses detected in the finance and economic portions of the business administration curriculum. These shortcomings were indicated by substandard scores on the finance and economic subtests of the ETS Major Field Test (MFT). Business faculty subsequently bolstered the curriculum by making changes to the finance and economic courses in the business core curriculum.

**National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)**

National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) documents dimensions of quality in undergraduate education and provides information and assistance to colleges and universities to improve student learning. In 2008 Columbia College administered the NSSE to freshmen and seniors. The report was useless because Day Campus and AHE students were not separated (despite assurances from NSSE that they would be). The college has not used NSSE since.

**Assessment of Faculty by Administrators**

Probationary full-time faculty and those being reviewed for promotion receive a classroom assessment by a college administrator during the course of the academic year. In AHE, all adjunct faculty receive at least one annual classroom assessment by a college administrator. This review by a professional, most often outside the faculty member’s academic discipline, provides input that can improve teaching and focus administrator attention on deficient instructional resources. [Class Visit Form](#)

**Assessment of Faculty by Students**

A course/instructor evaluation by students is conducted for every course. This student feedback is reviewed by administrators and the faculty member. It provides the most detailed and sustained picture of faculty member success or failure in the classroom. Faculty members are able to use student comments to inform changes in teaching philosophy and technique. Student feedback also provides valuable information about strengths and weaknesses in instructional resources. This process went online in 2011. [Form, SET, Academic Affairs, 2011](#)

**Support for Diversity**

As part of the college’s mission statement, one of its professed values is civility and respect. It is intended that civility and respect be extended to all, regardless of their race, religion, gender, nationality, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, marital status, veteran status or disability. Faculty, staff and students are guided respectively by the Faculty Handbook, Staff Handbook and appropriate course catalogs with regard to their conduct. In all cases these documents advocate the maintenance of a culture of courtesy, respect and dignity. These requirements for civility and respect are in no way diminished by the protection of academic freedom in the classroom. All faculty and students are considered to be a community of learners and the classroom is a safe haven where all points of view are respected. Students on the main campus have access to a wide variety of diversity activities such as workshops and guest speaker presentations. [2010 and 2011 Programs](#)

**Academic Advising and Student Success**

Day Campus students receive their advising from full-time faculty. Successful advising includes early completion of the basic skills courses, completion of the general education curriculum prior
to significant coursework in the major and strict adherence to course prerequisites. The Director of Advising, a new position in Fall 2011, is improving coordination of development and training for Day advising.

The college’s basic skills course are College Algebra, English Composition, Introduction to Computer Information Systems and Introduction to Speech. Successful completion of these courses provides a foundation for future academic success. Completion of the rest of the general education curriculum, which includes coursework in History, Arts & Humanities, Natural Sciences & Mathematics and Social & Behavioral Sciences, further establishes the student on a path to academic success. Although academic advisors always advocate that students complete all course prerequisites, the college went a step further to ensure students were properly prepared for each course. In the fall of 2008, the college instituted electronic prerequisite checking. This system prevents a student from circumventing prerequisites when they use the electronic registration system. AHE employs full-time professional academic advisors, who receive a one-week new advisor training course on the main campus and participate in an annual academic advisor conference. [AHE Academic Advisor Workshop Agenda][4] Academic advisors are encouraged to further their skills by participating in state or regional National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) conferences. The college’s professional academic advising corps has a career progression system that provides increases in salary for longevity and graduate education and recognizes advisors with job titles reflecting their experience level (e.g. Advisor I, Advisor II, Senior Advisor I, Senior Advisor II). Academic advisors are the only position within the college to have a career ladder system. [Summary of Academic Advisor Career Ladder System][5] This reflects the recognition of the key role that academic advisors play in student success. Academic advising has been improved considerably, and student services are becoming more integrated across all venues. Key Goals, Columbia College, 2011-Key Goals 3.1; 7.2[6]

**Freshman Experience**

On the main campus and selected nationwide locations the college offers *Introduction to Columbia College* course INCC 111. This course, in an eight-week seminar format, introduces students to the value of learning and provides students an opportunity to explore the goals of an ethics-based liberal arts education. The course provides an opportunity for the student to identify their role in the academic, cultural and social community of the college. The college catalog, general education curriculum, degree requirements and academic advising process are introduced. Students are also made familiar with the wide variety of academic support resources available to them (e.g. Stafford Library, Student Computing Center, Bruce Math Center, Seabrook Writing Center, etc.). A sister course, *Strategies for Success in College* (INCC 123), is offered to online students. The preponderance of research resources from Stafford Library are available online to all students regardless of their location. Also, the Bruce Math Center and the Seabrook Writing Center provide electronic resources available to all students. [INCC 123 Master Syllabus][7] Student services will be integrated across all venues. Key Goals, Columbia College, 2011-Key Goal 7.2[6]

**Placement Testing**

The college employs placement testing for two key academic areas, mathematics and English composition. The Day Campus uses the results of ACT testing or ACT ASSET exam to properly place students in the appropriate level of courses in mathematics and English composition. The Evening Campus and the Nationwide locations in Missouri use the ACT ASSET exam for mathematics placement and currently are piloting a writing sample test for English composition
placement. The Nationwide locations outside of Missouri use the ACT ASSET exam for both mathematics and English composition placement. The Online Campus currently has no placement mechanism. This shortcoming is currently being addressed.

**Math Center**

The Bruce Math Center provides support for students enrolled in math courses at the Columbia College main campus from Beginning Algebra through Calculus II and Statistics I. This assistance is also available to local Online Campus students. Services are free of charge and no appointment is required. As staffing is available assistance is also provided to students for additional courses including Calculus III and Discrete Math. Professional and peer tutors explain concepts, solve non-graded problems, help with problem-solving development, share test-taking strategies and suggest strategies for dealing with math anxiety. The mission of the Math Center is to enable undergraduate learners to pursue academic goals by supporting and supplementing classroom instruction, encouraging sound study habits and encouraging independent learning. (Key Goals, Columbia College, 2011- Key Goal 7.2)[6]

**Writing Center**

The Seabrook Writing Center provides to students free help for all writing projects in any subject, regardless of their special needs or academic level. Services are available to students enrolled in Day Campus or Evening Campus classes and to local Online Campus students enrolled in English 107, 111, and 112. The writing center helps students develop ideas for papers, organize essays, work on research and analysis, master citation guidelines, and edit and revise papers. The center is open 60 hours a week, and consultants meet with students in one-on-one appointments or during walk-in sessions. Writing staff work to engage students in improving logic, clarity, and substance in their writing as well as to help them build confidence in their writing skills. Helping students develop good academic writing is a significant factor in their successfully completing an undergraduate degree. (Key Goals, Columbia College, 2011-Key Goal 7.2[6])

**Tutoring Services**

The Seabrook Tutoring Services provide free study sessions and skill building in specific disciplines in order to enhance students’ academic achievement and excellence in their coursework. Tutors offer assistance on a walk-in basis for about forty different class sections each semester, helping students to understand concepts and assignments, develop problem solving skills, and prepare for quizzes and tests. Tutors are committed to offering students opportunities to discuss academic material outside of class, to providing nondirective academic support with the aim of empowering students to think critically and independently, and maintaining a clear focus on the high standards demanded by faculty and found in academic requirements. (Key Goals, Columbia College, 2011-Key Goal 7.2[6])

**Online Tutoring Services**

Columbia College has contracted with *SmartThinking* [SmartThinking Summary] to provide online tutoring for all students enrolled in any online math or English course. Each course of this type includes information on the course homepage detailing the availability of tutoring and how to receive the assistance. Each student can receive unlimited tutoring for the duration of the academic term on any math or English subject. This tutoring is available via a live chat or by email. In a math course the tutors will work with students to help them understand the concepts.
and processes for solving various problems. In an English course the tutors will provide assistance on developing and structuring any writing; in addition, they will also review papers and provide feedback and suggested revisions. (Key Goals, Columbia College, 2011-Key Goal 7.2)[6]

**Student Development Programs**

Student Affairs provides a wide array of student development programs. Most of these programs are aimed at the Day student, but Evening and Nationwide students avail themselves to some of the services, particularly the Career Services Center. The student development programs include topics centered around future employment opportunities, focused on promoting physical or mental health, promotion of diversity issues and others. The programs include:

- **Student Government Association:** SGA serves as the voice of the students and tackles serious campus issues. In the recent past, SGA has advocated for security cameras in parking lots and to-go boxes from the dining hall. SGA has 36 student positions split among freshmen, sophomores, juniors, seniors, residents and commuters. Elections for positions are held at the beginning of the fall semester.

- **Student clubs/organizations:** With nearly 40 different co-curricular opportunities, students are strongly encouraged to get involved. Clubs and organizations fall into one of three types: (1) Academic Organizations and Honor Societies; (2) Social Clubs and Organizations; and (3) Service Groups. Advisors to the clubs and organizations are faculty and staff members. Every club/organization is required to complete service projects for the betterment of the community. Many members also attend regional and national student conferences and competitions. Every spring, the outstanding club/organization and advisor are named.

- **Residential Life:** Residential students can choose to live in one of the three traditional residence halls (Banks, Hughes and Miller) or an apartment complex (Cougar Village). All residential facilities are wireless, have central air conditioning and are equipped with individually controlled thermostats, cable jacks for cable television and ports for computer hook-up. Student resident assistants and head residents serve as student advisors to residents and provide programming opportunities that encourage community development. Day students are required to live on campus through their sophomore year.

In 2012, 18 freshmen science majors will live in the same section of Banks Hall and take Chemistry I and II together, from the same professor. This professor will also teach their INCC 111 section and will hold office and tutoring hours in Banks. This is the college’s first experiment with a living-learning community.
• **Emerging Leaders Institute:** Through this comprehensive leadership experience, students develop leadership skills, participate in service learning opportunities and work with mentors from the community. ELI students also enroll in COLL 109, an introductory course on leadership. The program, open to sophomores and juniors, is a three semester commitment and is scholarship-based. Students must interview and be selected for participation.

• **Orientation and Welcome Week:** At Orientation and Welcome Week, students meet friends, explore the community, receive help in transitioning to campus life and learn of the college’s educational expectations and opportunities. Orientation begins once a student decides to attend and continues throughout the student’s first semester. Welcome Week occurs during the entire first week of classes and includes activities that welcome both new and returning students. A community consultant, who is a peer advisor, works with all new students through these programs as well as through INCC 111, the first-year experience course.

• **Outdoor Education Classes:** The college offers an array of outdoor educational courses every semester for Day students. Classes for credit include backpacking, canoeing, rock climbing, team challenge, wilderness stewardess and caving.

• **Intramurals and fitness:** Intramural competitions are offered throughout the year and are open to students of all athletic abilities. Students participate in basketball, volleyball, tennis, slow-pitch softball and more. Yoga and zumba dance are offered as fitness programs. A state-of-the-art, brand new fitness facility recently opened. Students have daily access to fitness equipment and recreational facilities (basketball and tennis courts) throughout the school year.

• **Varsity athletics:** Competing in the NAIA Division I American Midwest Conference, Columbia College has five winning intercollegiate athletic teams: women’s volleyball, basketball and softball; and men’s soccer and basketball. The student athletes are strong performers on the court and in the classroom. Any Columbia College student can attend a varsity athletic competition, free of charge, by presenting his/her student ID. Following a three-year study, the college will be adding five new sports (three women’s, two men’s) in Fall 2012. [Varsity Athletic Expansion Proposal][8]

• **International programs/ESOL:** Thirty-seven different countries are represented by the international student population. The International Programs office assists international students with immigration regulations, visas, American customs and more. The Conversation Program, coordinated by this office, links international students with domestic students so that more intentional learning and relationship-building can occur
between students. Many international students enroll in the college’s English as a Second or Other Language program which is designed to help non-native speakers of English raise their language skills to a level of competence necessary to function in an educational setting. Six ESOL courses are offered (ESOL 100, 101, 102, 103, 104 and 105). Students who enter with a score below 500 (paper-based) on the TOEFL, must enroll in ESOL. A new doctorally-qualified faculty member was hired in 2011 and charged with taking the ESOL program to the next level.

- **Career Services:** All students, regardless of venue, have access to the services and programs offered by Career Services. These include individual assessments of skills and abilities to assist with career planning; assistance in obtaining full-time, part-time and summer employment opportunities and internships; advising on graduate and professional school application and interview processes; and programs on interviewing, resume/cover letter contractions, job hunting and networking and salary negotiations. Several new software programs have been implemented to assist students with career planning: Cougar Career Network (online network of jobs and internships) and Interview Stream (web-based interview program). Key Goals, Columbia College, 2011- Key Goal 7.1 [6]

- **Counseling:** Individual, confidential counseling by a licensed professional counselor or licensed social worker is offered to students free of charge. Counseling is short-term, solution-focused with session limits set per semester. For chronic mental health issues or those that may require more extensive counseling, staff provides consultation and referral to community resources. Presentations on various mental health and wellness topics are provided throughout the school year.

- **Health Services:** Health-related services are available to Main Campus students. The clinic is located on the second floor of the Atkins-Holman Student Commons, and is directed by a nurse practitioner who, along with a consulting physician, provides care for minor illnesses and injuries, health care counseling, health promotion and community referral services. Visits to the clinic are free; however, payment for lab work, most vaccines and referred physician visits are the client’s responsibility.

- **Disability Services:** Services, accommodations and auxiliary aids are provided to students with physical, sensory, neurological, chronic health, learning, psychological and other impairments who qualify under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. The Coordinator coordinates services and academic adjustments for all Day, Evening and Nationwide students to ensure equal access to facilities, programs, services and resources of the college. ADA Manual [9]
• **Student Support Services:** SSS, a federally-funded TRIO program administered by the Department of Education, annually serves 160 eligible students. Program services include instruction in basic study skills; tutorial services; academic, financial and/or personal counseling; assistance in securing financial aid; assistance in applying for admission to and financial aid for graduate and professional programs; guidance on career options; mentoring and other special services. According to the most recent report by the Department of Education, Columbia College’s SSS program achieved the following rates: persistence- 81%; academic good standing- 91%; and six year graduation- 53%. 2010 SSS Proposal[10]

**Student Leadership Development Programs**

Student leadership development is an area where a student develops specific skills which coupled with his/her curricular experiences prepares him/her for future employment and graduate school. The following are some of the different opportunities that Day Campus students have for development.

Community consultant program: These students help new students transition to Columbia College and co-teach INCC 111, the college’s first-year experience class.

- Community consultant trainer (2) - These students are former community consultants who excelled in the position and now train and supervise incoming community consultants.
- Peer educators (4) - These students educate students about health issues affecting college students in a fun, nontthreatening and nonjudgmental manner. The scope of this position has been broadened and impacts both residents and commuters.
- Head resident (3) - These students are former resident assistants who excelled in the position and now supervise a residence hall. There are three Head Residents, one in each residence halls.
- Apartment manager (1) - This student is a former resident assistant who now supervises the Cougar Village apartments.
- Resident assistant (12) - These students oversee a floor or unit within one of the residence halls.

**Classroom Technology**

The college strives to keep pace with changes in classroom technology and provide faculty and students with all the tools necessary for an effective learning environment. Computers with data projectors [Computer with data projector image][11] are available for all classrooms in the college. In most cases, this equipment is permanently mounted in the classroom. In some cases, especially in shared facilities on military installations, the equipment is mounted on a cart and wheeled into the classroom when needed. Most of the classrooms on the main campus and an increasing number of classrooms on the Nationwide locations have Smartboards [Smartboards image][11] which enhance the faculty member’s ability to interact with computer projected images. To further extend the capability of the Smartboard, Interwrite Mobi Pads [Interwrite Mobi Pads image][11] are being made available to faculty who request them. This
device frees the faculty member from returning to the front of the classroom to share information on the Smartboard. This remote technology saves valuable classroom time and enhances communication. Document cameras [Document camera image][11] are available in most main campus classrooms and are available on an as needed basis on the nationwide locations. This device is particularly effective at transmitting images of opaque objects. Sets of Interwrite Clickers [Interwrite clickers image][11] are available to faculty who request them to conduct “real-time” assessment of student understanding and knowledge. The college is expanding its video-conferencing [Video-conferencing Center image][11] capability which will allow communication and collaboration between and among locations. The use of software such as MediaSite (lecture capture) [Summary MediaSite][12], Elluminate (virtual classroom) [Summary Elluminate][13] and NetSupport School (classroom management) [NetSupport School summary][14] continues to enhance the learning environment by placing expanded tools at faculty disposal. On the main campus Technology Services provides a 5-minute Service Level Agreement (SLA) or response time for any classroom instructional technology issue.

**Day Campus Student Retention**

The traditional day campus program had a 61% retention rate for the 2010 full-time, first-time freshman (bachelor’s degree seeking) cohort; this rate has fluctuated since 2000 between 51% and 67%. To reach and maintain a student body level of 1,250, the retention rate must be improved. It is believed it is less expensive to retain an existing student than it is to recruit and matriculate a new student; improving the retention rate will improve the fiscal health of the institution. Improving the retention rate will raise the graduation rate, improve recruiting and result in more alumni.

The Retention Office has developed a strategy to get the traditional program retention rate above our peer group average for the traditional campus within 5 years. For 2010, the peer group retention rate is around 78%. The Retention Office strategy consists of implementing three packages for 2011-12. These packages will have a positive and significant effect on overall traditional retention.

- The Process Improvement Package will affect the entire undergraduate cohort, but priority is toward freshmen students. This includes a new Gradebook weekly report, the implementation of the new Retention Alert Notification System, and the reorganization of the Student Alert Support Team.
- The Pilot Initiative Package will help identify successful initiatives targeted toward high risk students.
- The Freshmen Student Initiative Packages are designed to impact freshmen students immediately. Some of these initiatives include a letter to the freshmen parents, timely freshmen surveys, and reports to identify students who have not seen their advisor or who have not registered.
- The addition of a Retention Manager and Freshmen Advisor will assist in the overall success of improving student retention.

Departments have become accountable for actual retention reporting, and "good fit" is being used as the focus of all venues with regard to admission and retention standards. Key Goals, Columbia College, 2011- Key Goals 1.6 and 1.3[6]
Evaluation of Core Component 3C

There are activities and services that are available to the main campus students that are not replicated at the Nationwide locations. Examples include a robust Math Center, Writing Center and Tutoring Services program. Other examples include extracurricular activities such as sports, clubs and non-academic entertainment or personal development events. Although the above is true, the research literature on non-traditional students reminds us that in most cases these students will not avail themselves of many of these activities and services even if available. For the college to attempt to replicate on the Nationwide locations those things available to traditional students on the main campus would be a tremendous waste of resources. The exception to this rule would be tutoring services in mathematics, writing and quantitative courses (Business Finance, Statistics, Accounting, etc.). Additionally, the college should attempt to standardize its placement efforts for mathematics and English composition. Currently, the placement instruments and techniques vary dramatically from venue to venue. Academic outcomes assessment is a dynamic field. The college must continue to pursue the best instruments and techniques available to inform curricular evolution.

Conclusion

There have been few quantitative changes in how the college addresses the creation and maintenance of effective learning environments since the last visit of the Higher Learning Commission in 2002. Outcomes assessment, program reviews, tutoring services, classroom technology, placement testing were, in some form or another, in place a decade ago. What has changed dramatically is the qualitative aspect of the learning environment.

The college has refused to rest on success it achieved in 2002. In every area in this core component the college has invested faculty and staff effort and significant fiscal resources to continually improve. The executive leadership of the college has not changed in the past decade. This continuity is reflected in the unwavering path to excellence in learning environments that the college has chosen to follow.

The college is on the right path. The learning environment is hallowed ground for the college. As long as we stay true to the college vision of being a model institution, the learning environment will continue to improve and mature.

The college should continue to invest human and monetary resources in maintenance of the learning environment. Should executive leadership change during the next decade, a critical part of the transition process would be to emphasize the importance of nurturing the learning environment.

[1] Assessments
[2] Program_Reviews
[3] Forms
[5] Academic and Enrollment Advisor Career Tracks, AHE
[6] Key_Goals
[7] Syllabi, INCC 123 Master, Academic Affairs, 2004
[9] Handbooks
[10] SSS Program Proposal, Student Affairs, 2009
CORE COMPONENT 3D- The organization's learning resources support student learning and effective teaching.

Access to resources

Columbia College provides a wide range of resources to support students and faculty in their learning and teaching. These resources include Stafford Library, teaching and student computer labs in Buchanan Hall and other locations, and maintain or support resource libraries and computer labs at many of the nationwide locations.

Specific programs needing additional resources are supported to ensure the college has the tools necessary to encourage learning. Examples include the dedicated nursing labs at the Lake of the Ozarks, the video-conferencing classrooms of the Columbia College Nursing Network (CCNN), which provide real-time instruction between the Lake of the Ozarks location and the main campus (Federal Hall) and planned expansion and improvement to dedicated nursing labs on the main campus. Key Goals, Columbia College, 2011-Key Goals 4.1 and 4.3[1]

The college also strives to ensure sufficient computer lab resources are available to students. The most recent addition of this type of resource was the inclusion of a general use computer lab in the recently remodeled Online Campus building. This computer lab, capable of accommodating more than 40 users at any given time, provides availability on top of other existing opportunities.

All student learning resources are monitored and evaluated to ensure they are providing the necessary level of services and staffing that students need to succeed in a learning environment. As an example, computer labs are scheduled to be upgraded and replaced to ensure that technology in the computer labs meets the needs of students. The Stafford Library constantly reevaluates its online databases to ensure each is effective, available, and, when appropriate, new offerings are added to expand the offerings available to students.

Student resources are also evaluated as a part of program reviews, student evaluations in each course, MIVERs (Military Installation Voluntary Education Review) and by the Higher Learning Commission.

The college has shown a dedication to enhancing learning resources through the inclusion of additional technology in the classrooms, when appropriate. As an example, many classrooms on the main campus have Smartboards, as do some of the training labs and meeting rooms. Publications related to teaching are distributed to faculty and adjunct faculty that include tips on teaching, successful methods of incorporating active learning into the classroom, and numerous other topics.

Technology support

The college's Technical Services provides numerous monthly training opportunities for staff and faculty on a wide range of technological topics, including Microsoft Office, SharePoint, classroom technology, and other key topics. [Summary of Tech Services monthly trainings][2] In addition, one on one support is available through Technology Service’s Help Desk to assist staff and faculty with any problems that arise or difficulties faced on any technology-based issue.

The college also has a staff member in Technology Services who, as part of his responsibilities, is focused on training. This Helpdesk Analyst/Trainer often provides the monthly training
programs and frequently meets with staff individually or with departments to ensure the necessary skills and knowledge are covered. Full-time faculty members are strongly encouraged to attend the biennial Faculty Instructional Technology Workshop to learn about the latest software, hardware and practice. 2012 Faculty Instructional Technology Workshop agenda[3]

An example of the college’s approach to classroom technology support can be found in its adoption of graphing calculators in mathematics classes. In 2003, mathematics professor Dr. Ann Schlemper conducted research at one AHE location (the Evening venue of the Columbia campus) to determine the need for graphing calculators in selected math classes. Pre- and post-tests were administered to determine calculators’ effect on both student content knowledge and on student beliefs and attitudes toward mathematics. The results of the research showed that student beliefs and attitudes improved with the use of graphing calculators, and disproved the common notion that students who use calculators "let the calculator do the thinking" rather than mastering content knowledge. As a result, graphing calculators were phased in as required purchases for key lower level classes: MATH 104 (Beginning Algebra), followed by MATH 106 (Intermediate Algebra), 150 (College Algebra), and 250 (Statistics I), and are now required in all college locations, although the uniformity of application of that requirement needs to be checked periodically. Schlemper report[4]

**Support and staffing for learning resources**

The college has demonstrated its commitment to supporting learning resources, both in staffing and other support, through a number of means, including the creation of a Division of Graduate Studies to coordinate and enhance graduate programs at the institution. Key Goals, Columbia College-2011, Key Goal 3.2[1]

**Partnerships and innovations**

The college strives to embrace real-world projects and opportunities that can enable strong partnerships and enhance learning. Exemplary practices by faculty include Dr. Brad Lookingbill’s distinguished teaching award from the American Historical Association, and others. Lookingbill AHA News Release[5] The Nursing program continues its partnership with Boone Hospital Center, and an agreement between the college and Columbia Public Schools and three other Boone County school districts provides student teachers access to classrooms. BHC and school agreements[6]

With a core focus on teaching, the college seeks out opportunities for partnerships and strives to identify innovative teaching methods that enhance student learning. As an example, a course taught by Dr. Sean Siebert partnered with the town of Cuba, MO., to develop an actionable economic development plan. This plan required students to apply classroom-based learning to a real-world environment and to do so in a way that included clear recommendations, suggestions, and possible approaches. Article on Cuba project[5]

Faculty Integration Conferences, Lead Faculty at various Nationwide locations, and other measures mentioned elsewhere demonstrate the commitment to ever-improving quality education at all venues.
Evaluation of Core Component 3D

Space usage will become a growing topic as the college continues its current growth cycle. While the addition of new facilities and office space (such as Federal Hall in downtown Columbia) will help alleviate this problem, more efficient space usage will also be essential (Key Goals, Columbia College, 2011- Key Goal 7.1[1]). This holds true at both the main campus and the Nationwide locations, and efforts will be needed in both areas. Recent efforts, including committees to review space usage of open/vacated facilities, shows progress is already being made in this area and a focused commitment to continuing a well-planned and supported space allocation process can help support the institution’s mission.

Opportunities for growth in facilities has occurred due to need, but is often the result of an external prompt (offer to donate portion of building cost like at the recently acquired property for the Rolla Location and Federal Hall in downtown Columbia). Meeting the goal of implementing more intentional approaches to expansion is key, and current efforts should help address this issue, including better analysis of space needs, better proactive approach to space planning to account for growth of College, and continuation of the space planning committees.

Conclusion

Learning resources play a key role in the College supporting its mission of providing exemplary teaching. Progress over the last ten years has provided a solid level of learning resources for student use, across all venues and delivery methods. New technology has been implemented in a measured way by ensuring it meets the goal of improving student learning. Future changes to the technology landscape will necessitate a consistent focus on all learning resources and space allocations to ensure students are provided the necessary resources in a method or location that encourage their use.

[ 1 ] Key_Goals
[ 4 ] Reports
[ 5 ] Articles
[ 6 ] Partnership Agreements
  Award, Asher Award, Lookingbil Brad, 2009
CRITERION FOUR: ACQUISITION, DISCOVERY, AND APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE

The organization promotes a life of learning for its faculty, administration, staff and students by fostering and supporting inquiry, creativity, practice, and social responsibility in ways consistent with its mission.

CORE COMPONENT 4A – The organization demonstrates, through the actions of its board, administrators, students, faculty, and staff, that it values a life of learning.

Columbia College is dedicated to promoting lifelong learning. This dedication is evident in research and learning opportunities faculty, staff and students participate in, institutional support of research and learning opportunities, and in coursework and activities available to students both in and outside of the classroom. This chapter offers evidence for Columbia College’s support for the acquisition, discovery, and application of knowledge.

- The importance of a “life of learning” is consistently articulated by the President and all of the members of the Administrative Council.
- Academic freedom is valued.
- The college has demonstrated, through planning and a pattern of financial allocation, that it values and promotes a life of learning for its students, faculty and staff.
- Staff at Columbia College have both internal and external training opportunities.
- The Schiffman Ethics Lecture Series is further evidence that the college supports lifelong learning.
- Students, faculty and staff have produced scholarship and art and have created knowledge through scholarly research.
- Student achievement is recognized in a variety of ways
- Grants are sought and awarded internally and externally

The Board has approved and disseminated statements supporting freedom of inquiry for the students, staff and faculty. The college Statement of Mission is widely disseminated on the web, college catalogs and official college publications. Mission Statement

The Constitution of the Faculty Association, article 1 and 1.2 reads, ”the Faculty Association investigates, appraises, and makes recommendations for actions to improve all components of the academic environment and to provide and promote opportunities for professional development” (Handbook, Faculty, Faculty Association, 2008 - Page 12).[1]

A policy to provide appropriate release time for research by full time faculty has been implemented. This may include release time for sabbaticals or release time for course development.

Tenured faculty are eligible for sabbatical after they have provided a minimum of six years of service to the college. Sabbaticals[2] have the purpose of allowing faculty a paid leave of absence for the purpose of study, formal education, travel, research, writing or other approved experiences of professional value.

Because the college is a teaching institution, few faculty are able to obtain grants and other funding to support research and other scholarly activity. Recognizing this limitation, in 2003 the college implemented summer research grants with compensation equal to that of teaching a
three-hour course. Thirty-six faculty have taken advantage. Summer Research Stipend List, Faculty, 2006-2011, 2011[3]

Academic Freedom

The AAUP academic freedom statement is endorsed by the Faculty Association and the Board of Trustees. The Faculty Handbook includes a statement on academic freedom: “The unfettered search for truth and free expression of the results of this exploration are essential to the educational process in an educational society. The college supports such academic freedom and considers it fundamental for the protection of the right of teachers to teach, to conduct research, and to publish the results of research; and of the right of students to learn. Faculty are entitled to freedom in the classroom to select and discuss subject matter and to select methods of instruction and standards of evaluating student performance. Faculty are not entitled to introduce extraneous material not related to their subject matter.” The faculty survey [4] indicates faculty believe they have appropriate academic freedom.

Financial Support of Lifelong Learning

The college allocated $862,362 in the most recent fiscal year budget for professional development for employees. The professional development grant for faculty allows $850 to each faculty member each academic year. Faculty can request an additional $1000 of professional development funds through the Elections and Professional Development Committee.

Employee Educational grants (EEG) are available for faculty and staff of the college. (Handbook, Faculty, Faculty Association, 2008 - Pages 77-80[1]). This grant allows faculty, staff and their children to enroll without tuition charge or at reduced cost. There is also an Employee Graduate Educational Grant, allowing full time employees of the college to enroll in graduate courses with a significant decrease in tuition. The college has a tuition exchange policy, allowing full time employees and their children to attend other colleges within the Council of Independent Colleges and Tuition Exchange, Inc. programs for undergraduate education.

Employee Educational Grant Expenditures

Training Opportunities

Training opportunities are abundant at the college and include webinars, national and regional conferences, in-house trainings, shadowing, visiting other campuses, local conferences and workshops. Between fiscal years 2003 – 2010, $232,235 has been budgeted for the Staff Association for staff professional development opportunities. These funds allow for speakers to deliver seminars on areas of professional development. For example, the Evaluations department requires employees to participate in three trainings per year. It is common practice amongst departments for staff to report on their trainings at staff meetings. (Key Goals, Columbia College, 2011 - Key Goal 7.3[5])

During preparation of this self study it became clear that there was no consistent record-keeping of staff professional development achievement. It is recommended that a system be implemented, perhaps in conjunction with the annual review process, that will document individual and departmental development activities. This will be a useful tool in determining which departments support and utilize staff training opportunities.
Schiffman Lecture Series

The Schiffman lecture series is further evidence that the college supports and values a life of learning. Dr. Tony Alioto, Professor of History and Althea & John Schiffman Endowed Chair in Ethics, Religious Studies & Philosophy, oversees the Schiffman Series (a Fall religious studies colloquium and a spring lecture by a major speaker). This lecture series enhances learning throughout the college and local community[6].

Scholarly Activities

Faculty curricula vitae provide complete lists of publications and other scholarly activities. These are available in the Academic Affairs Office. Scholarship and professional development accounts for 10-25% of the annual faculty evaluation. According to the handbook, (revised in 2011) “Faculty members perform not only as members of the Columbia College faculty, but also as members of their profession within their areas of expertise. Scholarly and professional activity may be demonstrated in, but shall not be limited to, the following activities:

- Continued study and increasing competence in the area of expertise (e.g. teaching courses which the faculty member has not taught previously, maintaining up-to-date knowledge or skills through informal courses and/or instruction).
- Formal instruction through non-graduate academic and/or professional coursework, seminars, workshops and/or institutes.
- Graduate instruction for a terminal degree, including any that may be related to continuing employment and/or promotion in rank at the college.
- Pursuit of post-doctoral/terminal degree enhancements and/or certifications related to their area of expertise.
- Attendance and/or presentations at conventions and conferences.
- Membership in and/or assumption of leadership roles in professional and/or learned societies.
- Involvement in research, professional publications, creative works, exhibitions or performances.
- Service as a judge or evaluator, editor, reviewer, visiting scholar, consultant and/or authority at another organization.
- Recipient of awards, honors and/or grants which are not related to Service to the College.

For purposes of consideration for promotion and general evaluation, faculty members must provide documentation of their scholarly and professional achievement in their yearly self-evaluation.

Recognition of Student Achievement

Recognition of student achievement is accomplished by a number of means. The college publishes a ‘Dean’s List’ at the end of each semester to identify students who have achieved a gpa of 3.5 of higher. The college conducts an Honors and Awards Convocation every year during the spring semester. This is a way to publicly acknowledge students who have excelled in areas such as Campus Life, leadership, campus-wide and within their majors. Scholarships, gifts and certificates are handed out during this ceremony. Day and evening campus students are honored during the Honors and Awards Convocation. There are also special recognitions
associated with graduation; these include Latin honors designations, the Dean's Academic Achievement Award, High Achievement on Senior Test Award and the Presidential Award. The criteria for each of these special awards are discussed in the Day catalog (pp. 95-96). Recipients of these awards are listed in the commencement programs.

Specific honor societies are listed in the 2010–11 undergraduate catalog (pp.138-140) and include:

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<tr>
<th>Society</th>
<th>Discipline</th>
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<tr>
<td>Alpha Chi</td>
<td>General, Academic, Upperclassmen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alpha Kappa Delta</td>
<td>Sociology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alpha Lambda Delta</td>
<td>General, Academic, Freshmen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alpha Phi Sigma</td>
<td>Criminal Justice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alpha Sigma Lambda</td>
<td>General, Academic, Adult Students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kappa Delta Pi</td>
<td>Education</td>
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<td>Kappa MU Epsilon</td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
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<td>Lambda Pi Eta</td>
<td>Speech Communication</td>
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<td>Phi Alpha Theta</td>
<td>History</td>
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<td>Pi Sigma Alpha</td>
<td>Political Science</td>
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<td>Psi Chi</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
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<td>Sigma Beta Delta</td>
<td>Business</td>
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<td>Sigma Tau Delta</td>
<td>English</td>
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<td>Sigma Zeta</td>
<td>Science</td>
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<tr>
<td>Upsilon Pi Epsilon</td>
<td>Computer Science</td>
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Alpha Sigma Lambda is the most recent established honor society and is specifically for adult learners. The college hosts Nu Lambda chapter of Alpha Sigma Lambda, first chapter exclusively for online students.

The college also publicly acknowledges achievement of students, faculty and staff, through such venues as the Connections publication, In the News publication and Summer Research Grant presentations.

It provides multiple opportunities for students to participate in programs supporting high levels of academic achievement and to be recognized for their accomplishments. The Honors Program is designed to promote genuine inquiry and collaborative learning, emphasizing the dialogic nature of academic work and intellectual discovery. Admission to the honors program is on a selective basis and students are required to complete a series of honors-level courses and participate in a service project.

Students may also participate in distinction projects which result in baccalaureate degrees with distinction. These require demonstration of excellence in a special two-semester project carried out under the direct supervision of a faculty member[7].
Grant Seeking

External grant seeking is encouraged and supported but not well-coordinated. The Development office has a staff member who researches grant possibilities; however, most grants are applied for and awarded to full-time faculty. The college will add a part-time grant coordinator in fall 2012. List of grants received since 2002

Evaluation of Core Component 4A

The college values a life of learning, as evidenced above. Some changes the college has recently implemented include accounting changes to separate out travel expenses and training expenses. Closer documentation of staff and faculty training would provide more transparency in the process and would help the college better account for all of the training that is going on. Scholarly research and publication is not required for tenure and promotion; however, many faculty engage in it. They are essentially on their own in terms of locating, applying for, and administering grants. The new grants coordinator position will help.

Conclusion

The college demonstrates that it values a life of learning through its Mission Statement and the many ways it supports and recognizes the achievements of its students, faculty and staff. Students, faculty and staff have multiple opportunities for training and development, and this support from the college translates to better prepared faculty in the classroom, growth of staff and, ultimately, the students.

[1] Handbooks
[5] Key Goals
CORE COMPONENT 4B-The organization demonstrates that acquisition of a breadth of knowledge and skills and the exercise of intellectual inquiry are integral to its educational programs.

One of the seven major components within the Transformational Plan is ‘exemplary academic quality’. This commitment is supported in numerous ways throughout the institution and embraces the intellectual activity of not only students and faculty, but of all staff (see core component 4a). The result is an environment that values, promotes and recognizes cognitive achievement.

- General education is a required part of every student’s program of study.
- The college offers study abroad opportunities to both students and faculty to promote exposure to diverse learning opportunities.
- Internships are supported to enhance the linkage between theoretical knowledge and its application.
- All degree programs undergo regular review.
- The college believes that student participation in clubs and organizations is an integral part of the learning experience.
- The college encourages and supports faculty achievement in diverse ways.

**Students**

As a teaching institution, intellectual growth of students is fundamental to our mission. The college recognizes that this growth must be multidimensional in order for students to become balanced, productive members of society and provides opportunities and challenges to students in many venues.

**General Education**

General education is a required part of every student's program of study and ensures that students are exposed to a breadth of knowledge. General education courses explore and promote understanding of the interrelationships among the liberal arts and sciences including the arts, history, humanities, mathematics, and the natural, social and behavioral, and computer sciences (Day college catalog PP. 25-30[1]; AHE catalog, pp. 8-11[2]). Completion of the general education curriculum provides a foundation for the student to pursue lifelong learning and involved citizenship in the human community; it also encourages creativity and the discovery, acquisition and application of knowledge in the pursuit of excellence.

Although a broad range of courses within each area is available for students fulfilling general education requirements, all are designed to fulfill a consistent set of goals:

- Explicitly include significant writing and speaking components;
- Encompass appropriate ways to embrace material from other disciplines;
- Foster and develop a sense of the power of diversity and cultural pluralism; and
- Stress the meaning, use and value of critical thinking skills.
The Basic Studies segment of the general education curriculum supports the acquisition of critical thinking skills, knowledge and techniques that enhance and enrich subsequent coursework. Specific skills developed and fostered by these courses include writing, computation, communication and technological literacy.

A final component of the general education curriculum is the requirement that all students who graduate from the college complete an ethics course.

Assessment of the efficacy of the general education program is accomplished by administration of the Educational Testing Services Proficiency Profile (ETSPP). The ETSPP and its predecessors, MAPP and AP, have been administered at the College since 1997. The most recent assessment of general education outcomes (December 2010) indicated that “the current Columbia College General Education Curriculum prepares our graduates at a level very close to the national mean or better. In March 2011 the faculty endorsed the continued use of the ETSPP as the primary assessment instrument for general education (Assessment, ETSPP Report, Academic Affairs, 2010[3]).

General education requirements have been in place since 2000. Although courses have been added and deleted, there has been no comprehensive review as is routine with most programs. Given the many changes in the college during the past ten years, it is time to re-evaluate the general education curriculum to ensure that it is consistent with the institution’s mission. This goal is in the Transformational Plan and the process would benefit from insights and recommendations from outside entities, including the HLC Visit Team.

**Student Research**

One of the long-term goals of the science program at Columbia College is to increase the exposure of students to scientific research and to provide opportunities for individual students to participate in original research. This intent has been incorporated into the curriculum through courses such as Research Design and Senior Seminar. Facility limitations have hampered attempts to involve students in broader scope independent research but the new science laboratory building will allow student research opportunities to be expanded. (Key Goals, Columbia College, 2011 - Key Goal 2.1)[4]

Many students conduct research projects within specific courses or as part of capstone courses. Psychology students frequently present their results at the Midwest Psychology Association conference and other student presentations typically occur at the class or departmental level.

Students in any area may also participate in research-based activities for their projects that lead to the baccalaureate degree with distinction. These are two-semester projects carried out under the supervision of a faculty member. **Distinction Projects**

**Study Abroad**

The college offers study abroad opportunities involving both students and faculty in order to promote exposure to diverse learning opportunities in unique settings. The two most utilized study abroad opportunities are the annual Study Tour Experience each May and a summer program in London as part of the Missouri London Consortium (MLC). In 2005, policies and processes for managing the Study Tours were institutionalized with the creation of a Study Abroad Committee. Currently, the Committee selects the location for each year’s tour,
approves the tour itinerary and company, approves proposed courses and revises policies as necessary. In addition, the Committee reviews any other requests for faculty-led study abroad programs. Study Tour Experience courses are taught in a web-assisted format during the eight-week session preceding the trip, which takes place in the latter half of May. This allows students throughout the system, including online, to take courses. Students complete most of their coursework prior to the trip, but do not finish their final project until after their return. Students receive a grade of Incomplete for their course, which is then changed to a grade following the completion of their final project. All students taking a course, as well as the instructors, must take part in the tour. Tour participants are not required to take a course. Study Tours are open to all students (credit and non-credit taking) and heavily promoted to faculty, staff, alumni, family, friends and others in the community.

Although not part of the Study Abroad Program, the choir, the Jane Froman Singers, has toured abroad on several occasions, taking students to many destinations in recent years, such as Austria, Canada, China, the Czech Republic, Italy and the United Kingdom.

In 2005, the college became one of the founding members of the Missouri London Consortium (MLC). Until 2009, the MLC was a consortium of small private Missouri institutions that partnered with the Missouri Consortium for International Programs and Studies (MOCON), a larger consortium made up primarily of large Missouri public institutions. MOCON had been providing semester and summer study opportunities in London since 1982. The consortium ran an ‘island’ program for member students and faculty to study and teach in London. Students took courses with students from other consortium members taught by members of those institutions in classrooms at Imperial College in London. Logistics for the program were provided by International Enrichments, Inc.

In 2009, the founder and President of International Enrichments sold his business to another study abroad provider, CAPA. Following the transition to CAPA, the MOCON institutions elected to retain their program as a semester only program. The members of the MLC elected to maintain and expand our smaller group, while focusing on developing our own summer program using CAPA as our lodging and classroom provider. Summer 2010 was the first summer of this new program.

Since 1997 the college has had a relationship with Kongju National University in South Korea. Each year a number of Korean students enroll in the Day program. Both institutions would like to see the relationship evolve into more of an exchange relationship and a formal exchange document was signed in 2009. In the fall of 2009, the first Columbia College student spent a semester at Kongju.

Students are also allowed to participate in programs offered by other institutions and providers. In addition to the aforementioned programs, the college has an affiliation agreement with Central College of Iowa and an agreement with the University of Missouri that allows our students to take part in their faculty-led summer programs.

One of the goals of the Transformational Plan is to increase student academic study abroad opportunities. Currently relatively few students study abroad and one of the goals of the Transformational Plan is to increase student academic study abroad opportunities. Since 2006, there have been only 27 students studying abroad for credit, although a few more have taken part in Study Tours for no credit. Eleven faculty members have also benefitted from the opportunity to participate. Part of the problem is simply stimulating student interest in study abroad, but a major challenge is convincing students, and in many cases their parents, that the
benefits of study abroad are worth the costs. Because financial considerations often appear to be a barrier to student participation, the administration recently approved a proposal from the Study Abroad Coordinator to create a $7500 Study Abroad Scholarship. Study Abroad is on the Development Office’s radar should they meet a donor with interests in international education. Work with the Development office to develop a Study Abroad Award through a direct appeal to a targeted group of alumni and interested parties is also ongoing. In a very recent development, the college is exploring a partnership with National Student Travel and Teacher Education Association (NSTS) in Malta that would create its first international campus.

**Internships**

Internships are in-depth, practical learning experiences wherein students are placed in various agencies or organizations compatible with their academic majors and educational interests. Internships are supported by the college’s academic mission and by the belief that theoretical knowledge is enhanced by and through the application of that knowledge. Although only the Environmental Science and Education degrees and the Certificate of Professional Officiating currently require internship experiences, internships are available in all academic areas to students in their junior or senior year. Since 2005, there have been approximately 70 internship enrollments per year, with students in all venues (day, evening, nationwide) involved. These numbers exclude internship-related activities of education majors because field experiences are integrated throughout their coursework. Participation in internships by non-education students may have been limited in the past because access to information about opportunities has been diffuse, with individual departments, faculty members and the Career Center often having non-overlapping knowledge of availability. In 2010, the Career Center created and filled a position that has specific responsibility for centralizing and expanding the college’s internship program and a Task Force has met to develop standardized procedures for internships. (Key Goals, Columbia College, 2011 - Key Goals 7.1 and 7.2)[4]

**Graduate Programs**

As with all other programs, the graduate degree programs undergo regular, in-depth reviews that include preparation of a self-study and analysis by an outside visit team. Graduate programs were reviewed in 2000 and 2005 and a comprehensive review coordinated by the Graduate Dean is currently underway.

Since the last HLC Comprehensive Team Report of 2002, graduate studies have undergone significant changes. Some of these changes have been documented in the Focused Visit Report, Academic Affairs, 2003[5], the Focused Visit Report, Academic Affairs, 2006[5], and the 2008 Staff Report[6]; other changes have been more recent.

A number of changes have been made in the graduate catalog and in academic policies to enhance the perception of a graduate culture. Perhaps the most significant of those changes have been changes in admissions and enrollment procedures. Graduate admissions are now centralized through the Enrollment Management office, providing more uniformity of policies and standards. In addition, students in the Online Campus are now permitted to enroll in classes at the Home Campus if they so choose. Because admissions policies have been regularized, no distinctions need be made between students’ location of origin when they enroll for classes. It is hoped that this change will, over time, eliminate any potential perception that online students have a “second-class” status within the institution. In 2011 a stand-alone Division of Graduate Studies was created to coordinate its qualitative and quantitative growth. (Key Goals, Columbia College, 2011 - Key Goal 3.2)[4]
Graduate students were invited for the first time in 2010 to participate in the college’s Festival of Writing, which celebrates high-quality analytical writing through public recognition and prizes. Students from all locations, including the Online Campus, were consciously included in the invitation to participate, in order to enhance the sense of common experience among all graduate students.

In 2010, the college received HLC staff approval to offer its first new graduate program since 1998. The Master of Arts in Military Studies, developed by a highly regarded military historian who is a member of the college’s full-time faculty, takes an interdisciplinary approach to the subject of the military’s place in American society and world affairs, and of management and personnel issues within the military. This degree is also distinctive in that it will be the first master’s degrees to be offered in the entirely online format. The first classes of this new degree were offered in August 2011.

A substantial boost to the development of new graduate programs has been an initiative spearheaded by the Marketing Department, which offers research assistance and development support for faculty members who are interested in championing new degree programs through the governance process. This initiative maintains faculty control over the curriculum while providing tangible encouragement, in the form of time, information, and money, to faculty members who wish to advance new degree ideas. (Strategic Plan, Enrollment Management, 2011 [7] and Reports, Degree Program Changes, Academic Affairs, 2011 [6])

**Emerging Leaders Institute**

The college observed the marked decline in community participation and student reluctance to assume leadership positions that has crept into American society. In response, it launched the Emerging Leaders Institute (ELI) in 2004. Since then, the program has engaged 51 students in leadership activities and 27 students are currently participating. Designed as a three-part program, ELI seeks to cultivate student leadership and community involvement. In the first semester, ELI students take Introduction to Leadership for college credit. In the second semester, students learn to become a change agent and foster growth in their community. And in the third semester, ELI students are paired with a community mentor in the student’s career field. In return, ELI students receive a scholarship at the conclusion of each semester — and priceless leadership and community skills.

**Student Clubs and Organizations**

The college believes that participation in clubs and organizations is an integral part of the college learning experience. Active involvement provides the opportunity for students to make a difference, develop new skills and to meet people. Over forty clubs and organizations are available to students at the main campus. These include honor societies, academic clubs, social clubs, the Student Government Association and the Student Activities Commission. All recognized clubs and organizations on our campus are required to participate in at least two service projects annually.

Although students in the online and AHE environments have fewer opportunities for participation, their achievements are recognized by honor societies such as Alpha Sigma Lambda, a national honor society for adult students and Sigma Beta Delta, a business honor society.
A goal of the Transformational Plan is to provide additional opportunities for students to participate in clubs and organizations. The Current list of clubs is on pp. 138-42 of the Day catalog[8].

**Student Athletics**

One way the college demonstrates that academic achievement is valued throughout the student experience is provided by the academic record of student athletes. Since 1994, student athlete persistence and graduation rates have exceeded those of the student body as a whole.

**Partners in Education**

The college established a Partners in Education relationship with Eugene Field Elementary School in 1987. After a very close relationship lasting 22 years, Field Elementary was closed in 2009 and the partnership dissolved. The most prominent activity was the Reading as Partners program - by the final year of the partnership, the college was sending 115 students/employees to Field School every week to read 1:1 with a kindergarten or first grader. Recently, the Partners in Education club on campus reorganized as CAST (Committed and Serving Together) and wanted to broaden their service opportunities beyond the public school. Currently students are volunteering at the Humane Society, Cedar Creek Therapeutic Riding Center and the Food Bank. Because students have expressed how much they miss the relationship with Field School, volunteer efforts with a focus on writing are underway with Benton Elementary, another nearby school.

**Faculty**

The primary role of the faculty is to nurture the intellectual development of their students. Success requires not only skill and dedication to the teaching process, but continued intellectual growth on the part of the faculty member. The college encourages and supports faculty achievement in the following ways:

- Classroom technology is state-of-the art with extensive training resources available. All classrooms are equipped with technology enhancements including SmartBoards. Faculty teaching in-seat courses have access to the DesireToLearn (D2L) platform used by online classes to expand accessibility of resources. Technology Services offers an extensive menu of training services online and during workshops.
- Course evaluations. Every course is evaluated by every student every time. Faculty and administrators review these evaluations. Form, SET, Academic Affairs, 2011[9]
- Mentoring. New full-time faculty are assigned a faculty mentor. Halfway through the tenure period probationary faculty present their portfolios to the Tenure, Review and Promotion Committee for constructive review.
- Each full-time faculty member has $850 available each year to spend on professional development. In addition, funding of up to $1000 is available from the faculty Elections and Professional Development Committee and from the office for Academic Affairs to support worthy professional activities.
- Summer research grants. Faculty may apply for summer grants to pursue scholarly or creative interests. Recipients present their work at an open forum during the academic year following the grant.
• Sabbaticals. Tenured faculty with at least six years of full-time service may apply for a sabbatical leave for approved experiences of professional value.

• Technology workshops. In spring of even-numbered years, Academic Affairs sponsors technology workshops for all faculty. Faculty and staff present sessions on new software and other products. Seminar, Faculty Technology Workshop, Academic Affairs, 2010[10]

• Faculty can teach courses through the Study Abroad program.

• Faculty can be awarded a course release once every two years to develop and teach an online course. Reports, Course Release, Academic Affairs, 2012[6]

• Faculty can be awarded a course release once every two years to pursue scholarly or creative interests. List of faculty and activities

• Faculty Integration Conferences. AHE facilitates conferences that bring adjuncts to campus for one and a half days to discuss teaching topics with full-time faculty. Reports, Training and Educational Opportunities for Staff, 2011[6] Agenda, Faculty Fall Conference, Faculty Association, 2011[10]

• Paid professional assignments. Several administrative responsibilities are undertaken by faculty. Examples include: department chair, study abroad coordinator; graduate program coordinator; Jane Froman Singers director; Althea and John Schiffman Endowed Chair in Ethics, Religious Studies and Philosophy.

The Transformational Plan includes specific goals for enhancing intellectual inquiry and achievement within the faculty. These include:

• The level of faculty scholarly activity will increase.
• Funding for faculty development will increase.

Evaluation of Core Component 4B

The general education curriculum is due for comprehensive review and potential revision. Significant cultural and technological changes have occurred in the ten years since the general education requirements were established and it is time to evaluate the relevancy of the curriculum.

Student involvement with practical, hands-on applications of knowledge can be enhanced and expanded through research and internship opportunities. Appreciation of diversity will be fostered by additional support for study abroad programs.

Conclusion

Columbia College demonstrates that acquisition of a breadth of knowledge and skills and the exercise of intellectual inquiry are integral parts of its education programs. Students are required to complete a general education curriculum that ensures they have a broad base of knowledge appropriate to the liberal arts focus. They also must demonstrate proficiency in basic skills (math, composition, technology) that will enable them to function in the modern world. Students have many opportunities to deepen and broaden their intellectual activity through programs such as Study Abroad, internships and student clubs and organizations.
Faculty are provided support and numerous opportunities to continue their professional development and expand their intellectual growth. Technological resources are state-of-the-art, generous funding and release time is provided and a diversity of activities are available for interested faculty in all venues.

[4] Key Goals
[5] Focused Visits
[6] Reports
[7] Strategic Plans
[9] Forms
[10] Agendas
Catalog, Day, Academic Affairs, 2011
Catalog, Nationwide, AHE, 2011
Distinction Projects, Columbia College, 2011
Handbooks
Memos
Seminar, Faculty Technology Workshop, Academic Affairs, 2010
CORE COMPONENT 4C - The organization assesses the usefulness of its curricula to students who will live and work in a global, diverse, and technological society.

- The goals of general education support the college’s liberal arts and sciences mission by offering courses that encourage interdisciplinary approaches and cultivate the understanding and acceptance of cultural diversity.
- The college requires that all programs undergo a rigorous review on a regular, five-year schedule to ensure consistency and relevancy.
- The college actively participates in the development of new programs that reflect consumer demands, to include accessibility via the Online Campus.
- Master Syllabi provide an outline for course content to ensure that faculty in any location and using any delivery method are providing a consistent experience in relation to course objectives.
- All baccalaureate and masters programs offered by the college carry the requirement for a culminating, or capstone, experience that helps to assess the consistency of instruction.
- A notable international population and an active International Programs Office both add to diversity.
- The Career Services Center has developed initiatives that speak specifically to the workplace component of living in a global, diverse and technological society.

The college is committed to providing its students with a relevant and useful education that prepares them to live and work in a global, diverse and technological society by offering courses in a variety of formats, including in-seat, online and hybrid delivery methods. The College approaches this commitment three-fold: first, through regular academic program reviews that assess currency and relevancy; second, by ensuring the programs offered at all locations and by any method are consistent in rigor, content and instruction and meet high academic standards; and third, by offering co-curricular programs and opportunities for students that foster the development of social responsibility. The following sections will detail the current and future status in these pursuits.

Currency and Relevancy of Academic Programs

General education requirements directly relate to the diversification and technological development of students. In particular, the goals of general education support the college’s liberal arts and sciences mission by offering courses that “encompass appropriate ways to embrace material from other disciplines” as well as those that “foster and develop a sense of the power of diversity and cultural pluralism” (Day Catalog p. 25[1]). Basic Studies requirements enhance skills that allow students to access and participate in every discipline. For example, included in the Basic Studies requirements is CISS 170 Introduction to Computer Information Systems, which seeks to “expose students to technology that is increasingly part of the human experience” (Day Catalog p. 26[1]). All graduates must also meet a Multicultural Requirement by completing a course which explores other cultures or cultivates an appreciation of cultural diversity (Day Catalog p. 26[1]). Several degree programs also require additional courses that focus specifically on cultural and global diversity. Some examples include: SOCI 270, Minority Cultures and Relations, a requirement for the American Studies and Human Services Degrees, as well as for all education certification programs; as well as MGMT 339, International Business, for the Business Administration Degree; and POSC 292, International Relations, for the Political Science Degree.
Assessment of Academic Programs

Key Goal 1.1 in the Transformational Plan states that “undergraduate and graduate degrees will be selectively added and strategically retained or eliminated” in an effort to ensure these goals are being met. Several current policies are in place to ensure the achievement of these goals. For example, in the Fall of 2007, the requirement for 6 hours of foreign language (including American Sign Language) or foreign culture was added as a requirement for incoming, BA seeking students at all campuses (Key Goals, Columbia College, 2011- Key Goal 1.1[2]; Day Catalog p. 31[3]; AHE Catalog, p. 12[4]).

Offering and maintaining the currency and relevancy of academic programs to students who will live and work in a global environment requires regular and thoughtful evaluations of academic programs. The College requires that all programs undergo a rigorous review on a regular, five-year schedule. The review begins with a self-study documenting the current status of the program and is followed by a review and visit from an outside team composed of appropriate individuals from peer institutions. Departmental faculty use the process to initiate changes in curriculum, resources allocation and assessment. The Academic Program Review Guidelines specifically require that each program be reviewed at the quantitative level (enrollment, declared major and graduate numbers, for example), and at the qualitative level (program admissions standards, faculty composition and learning environment assessments, for example). Additionally, a full review of the program’s outcomes is made including: status of departmental outcomes assessment(s), co-curricular activities, faculty recognition, sabbaticals and grants. The program is also synthesized using a strengths-weaknesses approach and goals for the next three years are submitted that are designed to promote program quality.

Overall, the program review provides a measurable and rigorous method to assess the effectiveness, currency and quality of all academic programs (Program Review, Schedule 2010[5]). Furthermore, the delivery and content of the curriculum is assessed and restructured using student course evaluations. For example, the Online Campus course evaluations are reviewed each session at the administrative, academic department and dean level. Student input is considered for course updates and changes in content. In addition to internal course evaluations, some departments receive evaluation by external accrediting bodies while others base course components on the recommendations of notable associations. For example, the Education department requires all students intending to teach to meet the Missouri Department of Secondary Education (DESE) course content distribution requirements. Additionally, Education students must submit a passing score on the PRAXIS II Examination as their culminating experience (Day Catalog p. 52[6]). The Nursing program offered at the Columbia, MO and Lake Ozark, MO campuses is fully approved by the Missouri State Board of Nursing (Day Catalog p. 92[7]). The Business Administration program bases its core curriculum and course work upon the recommendations of the Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP) (Day Catalog p. 41[8]).

In academic year 2011 – 2012 the college moved to a partially online student course evaluation system to allow faster feedback to faculty. The online system can automatically remind students of the need to complete the evaluation, tabulate and report findings, and immediately provide anonymous data to faculty and administrators. The accuracy and immediacy of the assessment allows faculty to improve lesson plans and administrators to address other non-academic issues.
Every year the Career Services Center conducts a survey of recent graduates to solicit input about the students’ college experience and future plans. This information provides valuable feedback to academic and campus life programs (Key Goals, Columbia College, 2011–Key Goal 7.1[2]). **Results of the 2007 through 2010 surveys**

Many programs, including nursing, criminal justice and education have outside advisory groups that provide input from employers, professionals in the field and community members.

**Changes to Academic Programs**

Key Goal 1.1[2] of the newly revised Transformational Plan has seen recent achievement; “new undergraduate and graduate degrees will be selectively added.” A proposal defining the process for the conceptualization, development and vetting of new degree programs was presented in 2011 by the Marketing Department using the concept of strategic program expansion[9]. The proposal speaks directly to the importance of developing new programs that reflect consumer demands, to include accessibility via the Online Campus. According to the proposal, while the Academic Affairs office would continue to “champion the development of new degrees, including the definition of student learning outcomes and creation of the master syllabi and course syllabi,” the Marketing department’s role would be “to advance ideas and provide market intelligence that supports the planning necessary…to bridge the gap that exists between the conceptual and developmental stages of new degree implementation.” Further, the development and implementation of new degree programs must pass through the current governance structure, which includes obtaining authorization from the following: key executive members, Curriculum and Academic Policy Committee (CAP) or Graduate Council, the faculty association, the Board of Trustees and the Higher Learning Commission. Further, the facilitation of this process would be accomplished by the New Program Development committee, convened by Marketing and consisting of key administrators and faculty members appointed by the EVP/DAA.

In 2009 the college added a B.S. degree in Environmental Science, replacing a less rigorous Environmental Studies degree. In response to a growing number of military students taking courses in the online format, the college has approved the Master of Arts in Military Studies to be offered online beginning in the Fall of 2011. In an article published in Compass, the new program will adhere to the College’s liberal arts mission, while “emphasizing the study of military affairs from the perspectives of traditional disciplines such as history, philosophy and political science.” Over the past ten years, there have also been programs that have been discontinued or modified. The Social Work program was replaced by Human Services because the latter permitted a more flexible curriculum and provided a better means of exporting the program to AHE. The plan to construct a new science laboratory building will result in a new chemistry degree (BS in Chemistry) and is likely to provide the infrastructure needed to support additional science-related degrees (Key Goals, Columbia College, 2011–Key Goal 2.1[2]).

In 2010 the college was approached by the United States Marine Corps and Major League Baseball about developing a certificate program that would provide academic and professional support for Marines who wanted to be highly competent baseball umpires when they returned to their communities after discharge or retirement. In partnership with Major League Baseball the College created a liberal arts certificate with a curriculum that focused on human relation and interpersonal communication skills, culminating in an internship that was the Major League Baseball Umpire Camp held annually in Compton, CA[10]. Two Marines qualified for and attended MLBUC[11] in November 2010 and one qualified and attended in November 2011. The first certificate was awarded in December 2011. The certificate program was made
available to the general population in summer 2011. While the great majority of program completers will go on to be qualified baseball and softball umpires in their communities, some may become professional umpires.

**Consistency in and Achievement by Academic Programs**

- **Master Syllabi:** Because the college offers classes in a variety of formats at a number of locations nationwide and online, the importance of ensuring the consistency in these programs is paramount. A proposed plan was prepared in 2004 following an HLC visit team’s recommendation: “The College’s Master Syllabi need to contain clear measurable outcomes as well as course objectives” (Assessment Plan, p. 6). The initial step in maintaining consistency is the use of a Master Syllabus that provides the foundational outline for each course. Master syllabi are created by faculty and approved through the faculty governance process. The intention of the master syllabus is to provide an outline for course content to ensure that faculty in any location and using any delivery method are providing a consistent experience in relation to course objectives. However, instructors are also encouraged to cover additional topics of interest as long as those topics are relevant. In this way, the master syllabi ensure consistency in approach, but also allow for diversity of individual approaches to course material. All master syllabi were comprehensively reviewed and updated beginning in 2005. The process took until 2008 (a total of more than 600 courses).

A second step in maintaining the quality of instruction is the requirement that all adjunct faculty be approved to teach each specific course by the full-time time faculty in the department. This ensures verification that adjunct faculty on nationwide campuses and online are qualified.

- **Culminating Experiences:** In addition to course evaluations college-wide that seek to ensure consistency in academic programs, the college has other policies to ensure this goal is met. These include required capstone courses and assessment. All baccalaureate and masters programs carry the requirement for a culminating, or capstone experience. All undergraduate students are required to achieve a grade of C or higher in these courses. The culminating experience courses for undergraduate degrees typically consist of a seminar course that requires the student to synthesize the knowledge gained from their undergraduate courses. These courses also administer the Educational Testing Services Proficiency Profile (ETSP), short form, designed to measure learning in general education courses. In addition, these courses administer the Major Field Test (MFT) or similar comprehensive field test appropriate to the particular program. Many of these culminating courses are designed to familiarize students with research reports and some lead to publishing or presentation at conferences. Master syllabi For example, for the BS in Biology Degree, students are required to take BIOL 395 Research Design for the Sciences in which they prepare the topic and lab report for an experiment they perform in BIOL 490 Senior Seminar. For the BA in History Degree, students are required to complete HIST 494 Historical Research and Methods, in which an original body of research based on primary sources is prepared.
For the graduate programs, students are required to achieve a grade of B or higher for their culminating experience course. The MBA program’s capstone requirement, BUSI 595 Strategic Management, requires application of all previous learned educational experiences in accounting, economics, finance, management, and marketing. Extensive use of case analysis and strategic report writing is used to integrate all previous course materials in the analysis and resolution of complex business strategic planning problems. The Master of Arts in Teaching degree requires the completion of EDUC 508 Integrative Project requires that students participate in a final review which includes the portfolio presentation, self-evaluation and program evaluation. All must demonstrate, in an exit interview, reflective analysis, analytic and creative skills.

- **Assessment Culture:** Progression towards an assessment culture over the last ten years has been steady. While the MFT was in its infancy of use in the Columbia College day program in the early 2000s, a systematic roll-out to the nationwide campuses and online began in 2003-2004. As a result of the 2002 HLC visit team’s recommendations, the college truly embarked on a mission toward assessment. The 2005 academic assessment report stated that “2005 saw a significant expansion of assessment in AHE [Adult Higher Education], especially in the use of the MFT and the AM [Assessment of Major] form. Many campuses and individual students produced strong MFT scores. An assessment culture is taking shape.”

- **Cultural Diversity:** Almost thirty percent of all Columbia College students are minorities and the college is a national leader in Black student bachelor degree completion[10]. As indicated in section 4b, the college has an active study-abroad program that offers scholarships for study outside the United States. A notable international population and an active International Programs Office both add to diversity. It currently has a total of 236 International Students, representing over 50 different countries. In addition to the International population, the college also has 264 total individuals classified as Permanent Resident or Refugee statuses. International Data [12]In addition to firsthand contact with students from diverse backgrounds, an assortment of clubs and organizations exist to provide students with first-hand experiences of various cultures, lifestyles and global issues. Some of these organizations include Committed and Serving Together (CAST), Horizons Gay-Straight-Bisexual-Lesbian Alliance, Model United Nations, the International Club, the Spanish Club and Travel Club.

- **Career Services:** In addition to these activities and programs that promote diversity and cultural learning, the Career Services Center has recently developed or proposed initiatives that would speak specifically to the workplace component of living in a global, diverse and technological society. For example, in January 2011, the Center launched Cougar Career Network (CCNet), an online database that links over 700 nationwide employers with current students and alumni. CCNet allows students and alumni a location to build a resume as well as view and apply for jobs and internships. The system is designed to provide a better method of tracking where students end up working as graduates (Key Goals, Columbia College, 2011- Key Goal 7.1)[2]. In addition to CCNet, the Career Services Center is also developing relationships with alumni in the
hopes of creating mentorships to assist in recruiting current students and graduates. In 2011, the Center implemented an internship model that services the entire college. **Internship Guidelines** The goal is to provide students with credit-bearing, faculty directed, practical experiences in a working environment outside the college. Allowing for improved tracking and reporting on the internships. Also, credit-bearing internship opportunities are provided to students in the evening, online and nationwide campuses. All internships have strict eligibility guidelines, including minimum GPA, minimum accumulated credit hours and degree-seeking standing.

**Evaluation of Core Component 4C**

While this section has evidenced that the college is working toward educating students to work in a global, diverse and technological society, there are a few opportunities for further development. The first is to continue to foster an assessment culture in the venues that fall behind the others in assessment. By surveying the methods whereby successful venues and programs achieve high MFT scores, perhaps some trends or tools used by them may be beneficial for those performing poorly. Another opportunity for improvement relates to the co-curricular opportunities available. While there are several organizations and programs tasked with promoting diversity and cultural pluralism, perhaps a co-curricular requirement in the general education core would ensure all students could participate in activities that promote social responsibility.

**Conclusion**

Columbia College ensures that students are prepared to function in a global, technological society by providing a strong general education to every student. Academic requirements are supplemented by numerous opportunities to broaden exposure through such programs as study abroad, internships and student clubs and organizations. The college rigorously assesses the usefulness of its curricula through a comprehensive evaluation process and regularly scheduled program reviews. The Assessment Plan formalizes this process. The relevancy of the curriculum is constantly updated through Master Syllabi reviews, program reviews and the addition or deletion of courses and degrees.
Handbooks
Key Goals
Program Reviews
Syllabi, INCC 123 Master, Academic Affairs, 2004
CORE COMPONENT 4D - The organization provides support to ensure that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly.

- Ad hoc and formalized professional development
- Specialized instructional technology professional development
- Compensated time for dedicated professional development
- Regulatory and intellectual property protection training
- An extended hours and fully staffed solutions center that provides immediate support for instructional and administrative technology related needs.

Through the guidance of the Transformational Goals, the college has built an eco-system of support to ensure that students, faculty and staff can acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly.

**Support for Students to Acquire, Discover, and Apply Knowledge Responsibly**

- **Tutoring Services:** Students are immersed in a learning experience from their earliest contact with the college. Traditional students are supported and engaged in the learning process throughout all activities. Of course, the classroom is the focal point of acquiring, discovering and applying knowledge, however, many other forums incorporate a learning aspect. Math and English are supported through the Math and Writing tutoring labs, whereas online students have access to online tutors. Online students have access to virtual tutoring centers.

![Math, Writing, & Online Tutoring Expenditures](chart.png)
• **Counseling Services**: Stress is often associated with the added effort of attending college. Counseling Services provides confidential counseling free of charge to assist students with personal, developmental, or psychological concerns related to their academic progress and/or personal growth. Counseling is short-term, solution-focused with session limits set per semester. For chronic mental health issues or those that may require more extensive counseling, Counseling Services provides consultation and referral to community resources. Presentations on various mental health and wellness topics are provided in conjunction with Student Development, Student Support Services, and Residential Life.

• **Student Support Services**: Available to more than 160 qualified students enrolled at the main campus, Student Support Services (SSS) is a federally funded TRIO program, administered by the Department of Education, designed to encourage eligible students to persevere and complete their college degree. Services provided include tutoring, mentoring, scholarship and financial aid assistance, educational workshops, cultural activities, graduate school and career exploration and a laptop lending program. Participants also have exclusive access to a state-of-the-art computer lab, a study lounge and tutoring and proofreading labs. Students who may qualify for the program include first-generation college students (meaning neither parent earned a baccalaureate degree), students who meet federal income guidelines and students with documented physical, learning and mental health disabilities.

![SSS Grant Expenditures](image)

• **J.W. and Lois Stafford Library**: The J.W. and Lois Stafford Library supports the teaching and learning of the college community by providing a variety of resources and services to assist in retrieving, evaluating and using information. Stafford Library and its
staff support the academic programs, serving the students, faculty and staff in Columbia, online and at the 35 locations. The Library, built in 1989, provides an environment conducive to learning that will help students throughout their college careers. The Library is open more than 80 hours per week and staff members are available to provide reference help to students at all times. Library instruction is provided on an individual basis as well as to classes. Arthur, the library’s catalog, is available on the Internet. Library computers provide access to a variety of databases and the Internet. Over fifty online databases are available to search for full-text or indexed articles from professional journals, legal publications, newspapers, magazines and reference publications. Students are able to access the databases from off campus using their eServices account, and students have access to the collections of more than 60 academic libraries in the state of Missouri. Students may borrow books by using the MOBIUS online catalog or visiting a participating library.

- **Protection of Human Subjects:** In compliance with U.S. Public Law 93-348, Title II, Protection of Human Subjects, the college requires any survey or research project involving human subjects that is conducted by or for students, faculty, administrators, staff, or members of the Board of Trustees and/or is conducted on college premises is subject to review by the Protection of Human Subjects Committee. The committee’s purpose is to examine and review surveys, experiments, studies, and any other research projects involving human subjects to insure that legal rights are not violated, to insure that no one is harmed or compromised in any way by participation in a college-related study or survey, and to assure compliance with regulations formulated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for the protection of human subjects of research. According to federal law, the committee must review any survey or study that (a) might identify respondents or subjects; (b) deals with sensitive topics such as illegal conduct, alcohol or drug use, sexual behavior, etc.; (c) might lead, if not kept confidential, to criminal or civil liability, or might damage the employment, academic standing, or financial standing of anyone identified or associated with the survey or study.

- **Ethical use of intellectual property and electronic resources:** Students are also accountable to use knowledge responsibly. Therefore training in ethical computing and copyright law is required for peer-to-peer computing.

Students have clear guidelines for responsibly participating in the academic and social environment. These guidelines are introduced to students upon enrollment in the college and are integrated into all college activities. The freshman experience course, INCC 111 Introduction to Columbia College, provides an introduction to the college and to the values of learning. All Day students receive a Student Handbook which itemizes expectations of students in sections on Academic Integrity (p. 132), Student Code of Conduct (p. 130), Student Rights and Responsibilities (p. 131), Conduct Procedures (p. 132-134) and Computer Ethics in the Catalog. Introductory composition courses include specific discussion of plagiarism and the college makes Turnitin.com, a plagiarism detection tool, available to all instructors. Online students and many in other venues are required to take a tutorial and quiz on plagiarism. In
addition to the college-wide guidelines for academic and student conduct, individual instructors often reiterate academic integrity policies and requirements for classroom conduct in their syllabi.

All students are required to complete an ethics course as part of their degree program. This course may be general ethics (PHIL 330 Ethics) or a specific class related to a particular field of study, for example PHIL 332 Environmental Ethics, CJAD 345 Ethics and Morality in Criminal Justice or MGMT 368 Business Ethics.

Faculty and Staff

- **Professional Development:** Many faculty look to expand their knowledge and skill set with additional professional development opportunities. The college offers many opportunities for faculty to achieve their personal professional development goals. Short courses are available for faculty to better learn how to use instructional technology in the classroom, whereas, sabbaticals are available to more senior faculty.

Staff are encouraged to seek new knowledge and skill sets that support their professional responsibilities, or that apply to the completion of a formal degree. Conferences, peer user group meetings, non-credit training seminars are examples of professional development available to staff. The college also offers the Employee Education Grant to employees who have a desire to attend for credit undergraduate and graduate level classes. (Key Goals, Columbia College, 2011- Key Goal 7.3[1])

NOTE: The graph above illustrates the funding for the faculty and staff professional development, however, due to an accounting change, travel expense was removed from the professional development budget after fiscal year 2009 creating an appearance of reduced funding, when in reality professional development funding has increased every year. The 2010
All faculty and staff are responsible to apply knowledge responsibly and maintain care in the collection and use of information, which starts with new employee training on the first day of employment. The session includes regulatory compliance training inclusive of Family Education Rights & Privacy Act and information security awareness. The Faculty Handbook includes a section on Professional Ethics (p. 20-21). The Staff Handbook contains information related to employment policies, employee conduct, confidentiality and standards of performance. All employees are required to undergo sexual harassment training on an annual basis.

The Online Campus supports continuous development and training for staff in all Online Campus departments. It has three directors supervising areas of academics, instructional technology and student support services. On an annual basis, each director will meet to present conferences and training opportunities of benefit to staff. The opportunities are extended to all staff, of which some conferences will be attended by staff on a rotating basis to provide attendance for all who wish to participate. Staff selection is based upon content and need. The Online Campus also promotes, and hosts, a number of webinars open to staff and the main campus. After attending a conference, participants are expected to develop and present to those who did not attend, so that all may benefit from the conference.

**Evaluation of Core Component 4D**

The general education curriculum, including basic skills courses, is a cornerstone of the college’s liberal arts and sciences tradition. The current general education curriculum was implemented in 2002 and has functioned effectively with minor changes. Despite its apparent success in providing students with a broad exposure to knowledge and the skills to remain lifelong learners, it is time for a thorough review of the general education curriculum. The curriculum should also be included in the regular five-year program review cycle to ensure that it
maintains currency and effectiveness. The college specifically requests input from the HLC visit team on how to assess and update the general education curriculum.

The college provides an extensive menu of training and professional development opportunities to faculty and staff but there is little documentation associated with participation in, or effectiveness of this training. It is recommended that all professional development be documented, recorded, and used to insure faculty and staff receive necessary training to be successful in their position. Other benefits may include:

- Improved quality assurance of data and processes
- Articulation of positional expectations
- Elimination of “knowledge silos”
- Greater interaction between departments / divisions
- Adherence to compliance / regulatory issues
- Documentation and benchmarking of training effect, allowing reevaluation of program

The college utilizes many committees and task forces involving members of the Board of Trustees, faculty, staff and students. In some cases, committees have no written charge or guidelines. In other cases, there is significant overlap between agendas of committees and task forces. This may lead to inefficiency because of redundancy and lack of clear goals. It is suggested the college undertake a thorough inventory of all committees and task forces, including membership and purpose of each group. This information should be available in writing to the entire campus community.

**Conclusion**

By making time and resources available, Columbia College establishes a clear and definitive support model that ensures faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly. The use of physical, virtual, traditional and innovative methodologies follow a classic development life cycle, in that they are reviewed for proper “fit” into our culture, implemented, analyzed for efficacy, then revised as necessary.

[1] **Key Goals**
EEG Grant
ProfessionalDevelopment
SSSGrant
Tutor Expenditures
CRITERION FIVE: ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE

As called for by its mission, the organization identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways that both value.

CORE COMPONENT 5A- The organization learns from the constituencies it serves and analyzes its capacity to serve their needs and expectations.

Since its founding in 1851, Columbia College (formerly Christian College) has been committed to serving the greater good. The original motivation for the College was to provide access to education for women; the University of Missouri, located less than ten blocks to the south, was not co-educational at that time. And while Christian College was founded by members of the Christian Church, Disciples of Christ and has always been in covenant with that group, it has always been non-sectarian. To this day the college welcomes diversity among its students, faculty and staff.

While the college maintains a traditional program emphasizing the liberal arts and sciences, since the 1970s it has also been a leader in providing educational opportunities to working adults especially those affiliated with the United States military. Not only does the college serve its immediate community of Columbia or the state of Missouri, but it also has locations around the country as well as a highly efficient and accessible online course delivery system.

These multiple sources of delivery indicate the college’s commitment to accessibility and diversity. They are the actualization of its mission, i.e., to improve the lives of diverse learners through exemplary teaching. The great challenge for the college is to accomplish this mission while also maintaining the core values of student centrism, life-long learning, ethics and citizenship, quality and improvement, civility and respect, and environmental and fiscal stewardship.

These multiple sources of delivery also demonstrate the commitment to serving the common good. While the moderately selective traditional program is based on the principle of full-immersion and engagement with professional scholars, the working adult programs provide access to students for whom traditional college is not feasible. The college is proud to be the gateway to education for students who might otherwise be denied a higher education opportunity.

Columbia College prides itself on being nimble and flexible. In order to best serve its constituencies within the scope of its mission, it works to be attuned and responsive. Because the faculty and staff are invested in their academic, civic, and philanthropic communities, it is prepared to meet the needs of those communities. Examples of this responsiveness include the addition of several Associates degrees. The Associate in Science in Fire Service Administration and the Associate of Science in Nursing were both responses to conversations that occurred between College administration and community leaders. Further, the department of Criminal Justice works closely with local law enforcement administration in order to serve its educational needs. The Master of Science in Criminal Justice Administration has experienced several changes in response to feedback from these community members. The new (2011) Master of Arts in Military Studies degree is a response to needs expressed by the military for a liberal arts master’s degree that will advance rank promotion opportunities for officers.
Perhaps the most high profile example of engagement of this kind is the relationship between the Education department and several local school districts. The college is partner with every Boone County school district. The partnership facilitates the placement of field experience students (including student teachers), and teachers at the partner schools can take a graduate course at no expense. As part of the partnership, the faculty visit students in these schools. Education students are required to teach two lessons (three for elementary and special education certification programs). The goal is for student teachers to be known as partner teachers in a community of practice.

The original partnership was with Columbia Public Schools and included Benton Elementary, Midway Elementary, Russell Blvd Elementary, Gentry Middle, Smithton Middle and West Junior High School. The following year Grant Elementary, Parkade Elementary, and Jefferson Junior High School were added under a similar agreement[1]. Douglass High School was added in 2011 and serves as the first high school partner in the Columbia Public Schools District.

The Ridgeway Elementary School agreement was established in 2011. Ridgeway serves as a professional development school. Students receive priority placements and are afforded additional observational and tutorial opportunities not always available in other partner schools.

Summer Expeditions is a summer enrichment program for high-potential 4th, 5th and 6th grade students who are not being served by the Columbia Public Schools gifted program. These capable students are from lower socio-economic backgrounds and may have previously thought college was out of their reach. Seventeen students were chosen to participate in “Summer Expeditions 2010” because their schools believe they have high potential for future success and could benefit from a little encouragement. The program was so successful that the number of participating students doubled in 2011[2].

By working with the Summer Expedition students, student teachers learned many practical skills that could not have been taught in the college classroom. They were able to plan and teach leadership training sessions. The college has promised a scholarship to all Summer Expedition students who graduate from high school and enroll at the college.

The college is interested in how its students succeed once they are out of college. The Career Services office administers a survey annually (Reports, Graduate Surveys 2007-10, Student Affairs, 2010[3]).

The Education Department surveys first-year teachers and their principals (First Year Teacher Survey (Principals), Education, 2007-2010[4] and First Year Teacher Survey (Principals), Education, 2010[5]). It asks questions about the efficacy of its programs, the schools’ satisfaction with their preparation, etc. Area school teachers and administrators have input into Education curriculum as members of a Teacher Education Committee which meets several times each year.

Several academic departments utilize advisory boards (Business Administration, Criminal Justice, Education, and Computer Science). The EVPDA meets with his student advisory board on a monthly basis.

Student advisory boards and the Student Government Association provide input and feedback regarding curriculum, policy, procedures and co-curricular activities. The College also launched
a “Customer Service” committee in an ongoing effort to improve service to students, faculty, and staff.

2010-2011 CUSTOMER SURVEY RESPONSES

Of Note: A Special Partnership: The United States Military

Columbia College’s engagement of the military began early. In 1973 it formed its first site on a military facility. It has been a Services Member’s Opportunity College for many years. It began offering online classes in 2000 because the military needed and expected this delivery mode. It has military-friendly tuition, policies and procedures. Currently eighteen of its 35 locations are on military bases, and 6,975 students are either active-duty military or are receiving service-related benefits (27% of all students).

Examples of Outreach

The AHE office uses information gleaned from several sources such as the annual Military Installation Guide as well as Google Analytics to determine from which areas students or prospective students are visiting the college’s web pages. An evaluation is conducted to assess numbers of active duty personnel, family members, veterans and Department of Defense civilians located at any one military installation and in an area as a whole. One result of reviewing and assessing student demographic data is the Regional Serving the Public Servant Coordinator Initiative (SPSC). Three regional SPSC positions were approved for the island of Oahu in Hawaii, the Puget Sound area in Washington State and the Norfolk area in Virginia.

Through the use of the Service Members Opportunity Colleges Handbook, the College learns which institutions are serving any given installation and which degree programs they offer at that location. From this, the College can determine which degree programs to offer.

Informal visits with Education Services Officers (ESO) at annual conferences for military education provide another opportunity to assess the need for Columbia College’s degree programs or testing services. The College regularly holds an informal meeting with current ESO’s for the purpose of strengthening our working partnership and to ascertain how the college can work to meet the changing needs of a particular base. This relationship is carried on throughout the year with the campus director’s partnership with the ESO.

There are times when a military service branch conducts its own surveys for the purpose of determining the changing educational needs of its members or to determine the next level of educational programs the service branch requires to meet a military goal. Individual military installations conduct periodic needs assessments to determine the educational needs for the installation community. In these cases, the military service branch invites institutions of higher learning to partner in a specific program, such as military occupational-related degree programs. Examples are: the Army’s Career Degree Program, the NCO Career Degrees Program, the Navy’s Rating-Related program, NCPACE (Navy College Program Afloat College Education), NCPDLP (Navy College Program Distance Learning Program), the Marines MCCP (Marine Corps College Program) and the Air Force’s AU-ABC Program (Air University-Associate to Baccalaureate Cooperative). Columbia College is a partner in all of these programs, which essentially recognize specific military transfer credit as they apply to specific Columbia College degree programs.

Participation with the various military education portals (GoArmyEd, AI Portal (Air Force) and the Virtual Education Center (VEC, Navy) allows the College to better support these military
students as we recognize and operate within the various military processes for student registration; degree planning and tracking; course drops/adds/withdrawals; and fee payment. While these same services are available through the College’s web sites, participation in the military portals provides a “one-stop shop” for many military students; they need only to access their military portal to conduct any one of a number of actions, both for civilian education as well as military-related actions.

These military portals require or provide the opportunity to post a college website or a link to the website. Ensuring the web sites contain accurate and current information on the military portals requires the college to be vigilant about all web content, and consistently provide accurate and current information to all students. *

Participation in many military-related endeavors, e.g., the need for online degree programs, has forged the way for the college to improve and enhance all levels of student services for all students, not just the military student.

The nature of the military is that it is a community of diverse peoples. By itself, the military student community (active duty personnel, family members, members of the National Guard and veterans) is a unique student demographic. The college recognizes the uniqueness of this student population and educates the staff and faculty about the unique needs of this group. Examples of this can be found in published refund policies, reinstatement policies, etc. These policies recognize the challenge presented by extended deployments, unexpected temporary duty assignments, triennial change of permanent station and they are designed to consider the extraordinary circumstances that affect military students (AHE Undergrad Catalog, p. 39[6]).

The college formed a Veteran Services Committee in November 2008. The committee’s purpose is to seek new ways to better serve the veteran student population at the main campus, online, and across the 35 nationwide locations. The committee led the way for a student veterans group to form and be duly recognized by student government as an active student organization on campus. In the spring of 2009, the Veteran Service Center opened on the main campus to serve as a resource center for veterans attending the main campus. The Veterans Service Center was renamed the Ousley Family Veteran Service Center after a generous contribution by Columbia College graduate, Mr. George Ousley, a former Navy Sailor.

Recognizing the uniqueness of the military community is a strength of the college. An example of understanding the military environment is the story behind the establishment of a college-funded grant program for spouses of active duty Coast Guard personnel. In 2009, the Department of Defense (DoD) established the My Career Advancement Account (MyCAA) tuition assistance program for spouses of DoD military personnel. The USCG is not a part of DoD, it is under the Department of Homeland Security therefore, spouses of Coast Guard personnel were ineligible for the MyCAA program. The college believed in leveling the playing field, as it were, and established the Coast Guard Spouse Grant. The CG Spouse Grant follows the same guidelines as the MyCAA program.

Beginning in 2008, the college recognizes the faculty, staff, students and alumni who have, or are serving, in the armed forces with the annual Military Recognition Day event. This event celebrates the service to their country by the men and women who work for, study at and graduate from Columbia College.
Evaluation of Core Component 5A

Several external factors will facilitate opportunities for improvement in how the military is served. The Post 9/11 GI Bill (CH 33) will afford many more veterans, and their family members, to pursue postsecondary education goals. Not only will the institution realize many more student veterans, there is an opportunity to direct attention and services to the spouses and dependents of veterans.

Should Congress reduce the funding level of military tuition assistance (for the active duty component) the college will conduct an assessment of the impact on enrollments and identify how best to address the impact through efficiencies and to increase the effectiveness of programs and services.

As long as the Department of Defense funds and supports the My Career Advancement Account program (a federally funded tuition assistance programs for eligible spouses seeking licensure, certificates and two-year degree programs), the college will strive to increase military spouse enrollments by providing strong programs and student support services.

[ 1 ] Partnership Agreements
[ 3 ] Reports
   Catalog, Nationwide, AHE, 2011
   Handbooks
CORE COMPONENT 5B - The organization has the capacity and the commitment to engage with its identified constituencies and communities.

The college makes effective connections with its communities. Student Affairs regularly sponsors community events[1].

The Honors Program curriculum includes a course in community service and other courses in the curriculum include a service component. The college formally participates in various service organizations including the United Way and Relay for Life (American Cancer Society). In fact, staff are given paid time to participate in the United Way “Day of Caring.”

Among the various expectations for faculty is that they provide service to the college and the community. Almost all faculty members are regularly engaged in community service and consider it as included in their job description. Perhaps more striking is the amount of service work in which employees engage. From volunteering at the Show Me State Games to serving on the city council, Columbia College faculty and staff are productive and contributing members of their communities.

The college provides students with internships to serve the community. For example, some students are interning at Mustard Seed, a local store that seeks to engage the community in principles and practices of fair trade. Also, each club in Campus Life completes a service project during a semester. Besides United Way and Relay for Life, clubs have been involved with the Food Distribution Center, the 5K run/walk for cancer and other organizations. The college also sponsors the Emerging Leadership Institute. Each member of this group partners with a mentor who is a leader in the local business or service community.

The college offers its facilities for community use. Located in the center of the state and very near Interstate 70, Columbia is an attractive, central location for many events. For example, it regularly hosts academic conferences and the Missouri High School basketball coach’s conference. Recently it hosted “Summer Expeditions,” a summer educational opportunity for high ability but at-risk local elementary school students. Other examples of facilities use include the Rotary Club, a local yoga group, and Theater Reaching Young People (TRYPS).

In summer 2011 the Principal of the new Catholic high school in Columbia approached the College about using college classrooms to start the fall term because the new building would not be finished in time. The college embraced the opportunity and opened campus to 80 students and staff. Classes were held on campus during September and October and the college and Fr. Tolton High school formed a permanent bond.

Thanks to a generous gift by Mr. John Schiffman, each year the college hosts a high-profile lecture in “Ethics and Society.” The speaker is generally someone who attracts more than just academic interest; speakers have included Robert Kennedy, Jr., David McCullough, and Michael Beschloss. These events are free and open to the public. The college invests in local marketing and the event is always well-attended by members of the community[2]. Other engagements of note include faculty integration conferences which bring adjunct faculty to the home campus for policy and curriculum discussions and an online course, INCC 123, designed to help adult learners make a successful transition to college.
The Columbia College Alumni Association (CCAA) was founded in 1963; it offers benefits, programs, and activities to more than 64,000 members around the world. Its mission is to foster lasting relationships and to sustain the College’s traditions. CCAA Mission Statement Columbia College students become members of the CCAA upon graduation. There is no fee or registration process.

The CCAA Board of Directors is the 25-member leadership group of the Alumni Association. It is made up of alumni volunteers who are committed to the success of the CCAA. The leadership provided by the board is integral to the successful implementation of its strategic plan, designed to accomplish the mission, vision and purpose of the Alumni Association.

The board meets four times a year to establish policy, develop goals and objectives and direct the Alumni Relations office in long-range planning. The board consists of an executive committee, directors and ex-officio members.

**Evaluation of Core Component 5B**

In many of local communities, including Columbia, Mo., the college has been referred to as one of the best-kept secrets. The newly organized Office of Public Relations has embraced the challenge of revealing this secret through enhanced media relations and community relations initiatives. There is still work to be done and new opportunities to discover. Three areas currently identified as areas of improvement include: (1) Encouraging more students, not just at the main campus, to become more involved in their campus and local communities but to encourage our AHE students to self-report their involvement and activities. (2) Building on the CCAA strategic plan to continue to strengthen affinity among alumni, students and employees of the college. (3) Through community relations programming and relationship with media (locally, regionally and nationally) create a greater awareness of the scope of service that current exists and the continuing efforts to strengthen that service to all of our constituents.

[1] Calendar, Student Affairs, 2012
Agendas
Articulation Information, 2011
Covenant, Disciples of Christ, Columbia College, 2011
Key Goals
Partnership Agreements
Reports
SSS Program Proposal, Student Affairs, 2009
CORE COMPONENT 5C - The organization demonstrates its responsiveness to those constituencies that depend on it for service.

The college is proud of the many collaborative ventures it maintains with other higher learning organizations. It has over twenty articulation agreements with other colleges.

Articulation Agreements
As mentioned above, it has a healthy and mutually beneficial relationship with several local school districts. It also maintains its historical covenant with the Christian Church, Disciples of Christ[1]. While non-sectarian, the college has always invited the senior minister of the First Christian Church in Columbia to sit on the board of trustees. Through the Higher Education and Leadership Ministries division of the Christian Church, faculty and students are able to take advantage of grant and scholarship opportunities.

As part of this grant, the college hosted a “Summer Ethics Academy” for high school students for several summers. High school students lived on campus and engaged in rigorous study of moral theory for three weeks at no cost, and received three hours of college credit. The academy met for three summers in 2006, 2007 and 2008.

The college works hard to be a “good neighbor” in the educational arena. Its faculty strives to make sure that the curriculum is consistent with best practices so that its students may transfer with ease; this also allows its graduates to effectively pursue graduate studies when desired. Also, the administration has created clear and effective transfer policies.

The college is also a literal good neighbor. Campus facilities and grounds have been beautified significantly in recent years. Adjacent distressed properties have been purchased and renovated or razed. The college partnered with the City of Columbia to beautify Rangeline Street, a major thoroughfare that runs north and south through campus. Parking was removed from the street, a landscaped medium was created, attractive lights were installed and all utility lines were buried (Key Goals, Columbia College, 2011- Key Goal 4.1[2]).

The value of the college’s programs is evidenced by numerous public statements made by community leaders. In 2011, Missouri Governor Jeremiah “Jay” Nixon proclaimed October to be Columbia College Online Education Month. In June 2009, Mayor Darwin Hindman and the City Council unanimously passed Resolution No. 124 honoring the successes of the men's and women's athletic teams.

Unity in the Community – Open Doors…Open Minds is an umbrella program created in 2002 with a committee comprised of students, faculty and staff. Open Doors…Open Minds encourages students, faculty and staff to promote a campus community based on awareness, tolerance and ultimately, understanding. By treating all persons with respect and dignity, an opportunity to create a healthy and supportive campus community is realized.

The office of Student Development works to provide programming that encourages an embracing and accepting culture. 2010-11 PROGRAMS The college also sponsors a program around Women's History Month, 2011 SCHEDULE Black History Month, 2011 SCHEDULE international appreciation 2010-11 INTERNATIONAL CLUB PROGRAMS and cultural sensitivity[3] as well as other issues of inclusion throughout the year.
Evidence of commitment to making connections with diverse communities is best shown in two very different places. Close at hand is the Student Support Services. This program, partially funded by a federal government TRIO grant, assists at-risk college students. These students receive extra advising, have access to tutors and special programs, and enjoy a comfortable casual space. The second example is the exchange agreement with Kongju National University in the Republic of Korea. Each year, many students travel from Korea to study at the college. Furthermore, Columbia students are able to study at Kongju as well. (Partnership Agreement, Kongju National University, International Programs, 1997)

Preview days are held in the fall and spring time. These special opportunities allow students to get a feel for the campus, visit with faculty members and campus offices and listen to presentations concerning campus life and financial aid. The Admissions Office hosted three Preview Days during the academic year; days for high school seniors and transfer students, and their parents, to visit the college, tour the facilities, and meet with faculty, staff and students. A total of 138 prospects attended the three events and 40 registered for classes in the fall 2011 semester for a 29% matriculation rate (down from 2010, which had a 37% matriculation rate and flat with 2009, which had a 29% matriculation rate). Preview days will be held, for the 2011-12 academic year, on November 5, 2011, February 4, 2012, and March 10, 2012.

The Scholarship Day competition includes a writing exercise and a personal interview with faculty and staff. The competition is on December 3, 2011; January 21, 2012; and February 18, 2012 on the main campus. Students compete for the top ten scholarships offered at the college. The Columbia College Scholarship is awarded to five students and is worth full tuition, room and board. The Presidential Scholarship also is awarded to five students and is worth full tuition. Both scholarships may be renewed based on academic performance.

The Admissions Office hosted two Scholarship Days during the year. Of the 34 students who participated in 2010-11 Scholarship Days, 24 of them are registered for the fall session, with a strong likelihood that they will matriculate. This would represent a 71% matriculation rate (compare to 74% matriculation rate from 2009-2010).

Other examples of this commitment include the annual hosting of an art exhibit and reception for “RampArt,” a community organization that serves disabled individuals, the piloting of a one hour graduate speech pathology course at the community’s request, and the “Serving Public Servants” program that was implemented to better communicate college opportunities to law enforcement, fire service, National Guard and members of all five military service branches.

In 2002, the college received the Ray Ehrensberger Award from the Commission on Military Education and Training for innovation in adult education.

Finally, the College is proud of its relationships with other local institutions of higher education. It is located in a city that is also home to Stephens College and the University of Missouri; during the academic year there are more than 30,000 college students in town. The college maintains cooperative cross-enrollment agreements with both schools. These agreements include faculty, staff and student access to one another’s library resources, as well as students’ ability to take courses at other schools when they are not available at their native campus, at no additional cost.
**Evaluation of Core Component 5C**

Although the accreditation of the nursing program may not affect the vast majority of the nursing students, it is an area of concern for some students and therefore should be a concern of the institution. Although the collaborative programs that exist are beneficial and serve the students well, they are primarily academic; additional collaboration could exist that would focus on social service and diversity.

[2] Key Goals
[5] Partnership Agreements

Agendas
Articulation Information, 2011
CORE COMPONENT 5D - Internal and external constituencies value the services the institution provides.

Columbia College’s excellent relationship and reputation with civic and business leaders is evidenced by the high level of participation it sees with its Career Services department. Employers consistently post internships, as well as full-time, part-time, and summer employment opportunities. Career Services also provides employers with opportunities to recruit and interview students on campus, conduct information sessions, and speak to various classes. When Career Services hosts “Career Day,” approximately 60 employers regularly attend to provide information on jobs, internships and other information about their respective organizations. Finally, over 800 potential employers of Columbia College students are registered with Career Services. (Key Goals, Columbia College, 2011 - Key Goal 7.1[1])

Other examples of the college’s value to constituencies can be found in the strong support for Cougar Athletics, the high ranking the college has in U.S. News and World Report, and the fact that the college is one of the top recommended colleges for National Guardsmen by the National Guard Education Support Center and Center and is consistently ranked as a top military friendly institution by Military Advanced Education (recognized for four consecutive years) and GI Jobs (recognized for three consecutive years) and Military Times, Edge (which publishes an annual list of the 50 most popular schools used by service members, recognized in the top 20 for the last three years) and Military.com’s veteran friendly survey results. These publications speak directly to the military community, including veterans. The information shared with readers provides insight into an institution’s services and programs specifically for the military student and veteran enabling the reader to make an informed decision when it is time to select an institution of higher learning.

**Evaluation of Core Component 5D**

Columbia College is an advocate of the traditional liberal arts, and yet most of its students pursue degrees in the professional fields. While it does a good job connecting students majoring in Business Administration, Nursing and Criminal Justice or those pursuing Education Certification with potential employers, there is room for improvement with assisting liberal arts majors. Business and community leaders are aware that the job market changes quickly, and those who have been taught how to think critically, speak well, write clearly, and learn quickly are more likely to succeed. However, there remains a disconnect in connecting students with these skills to the jobs that need them; further, students themselves are not clearly given the message that these skills are in demand. Too often, the College is not able to provide a clear response to the student who asks in regard to the study of the liberal arts “what would I do with that?”

**Conclusion**

There have been substantial changes in how the college learns from its constituencies and serves their needs and expectations since the last visit of the Higher Learning Commission in 2002. Over the last decade military voluntary education has experienced a major shift in emphasis from encouraging service members to pursue pure civilian education to pursuing military-related degree programs. Institutions like Columbia College have been invited to partner with the military community in a variety of programs across various service branches, which strive to marry the traditional world of academia with military education. Columbia
College continues to respond to the invitations when it makes sense to do so, following our commitment to the mission of the institution and academic integrity.

The support for providing quality education to the military community by executive leadership of the college has been unwavering for over 35 years. This support is reflected in the fact that Columbia College has achieved national recognition as a quality educational program for those in the military community (active duty, Guard, Reserves, family members and veterans).

With the reorganization of the division of Development, Alumni and Public Relations, a greater emphasis on intentionality has been placed on connecting with and communicating with all Columbia College communities. This will build on our solid reputation of service that currently exists and inspire greater service in the future.

Columbia College works tirelessly to ensure that the practices and policies of the institution are those that best serve the students. This is evident in not only the transfer policies that are in place at the institution, but also the opportunities provided to students through collaborative ventures with the Columbia, Missouri community as well as the communities in which each of our campuses sit. Columbia College’s continued commitment to their students and their success has resulted in our recognition at the local, state, and national level.
FEDERAL COMPLIANCE

Credits, Program Length and Tuition (Commission Policy 3.10)

In determining credits, program length and tuition Columbia College uses practices common to other institutions of higher education that are accredited by the HLC. The college operates its day program on a 16-week semester system with courses offered during the fall and spring (15 weeks classroom instruction and one week for final exams). It offers accelerated eight-week programs in AHE. After May commencement there is an eight-week summer term.

The college follows a traditional “Carnegie Unit” as a measure of academic credit for its seat-based courses. Credit in regular academic courses is computed according to the time spent each week in classroom instruction. One credit hour normally represents one 50-minute session of classroom instruction per week for a semester. Carnegie guidelines are also followed for laboratory, practicum, internship, studio and tutorial credits. The normal course load consists of 15 credit hours per semester. A student must carry a minimum of 12 hours to be considered full time and a course load of 18 hours is the maximum allowed under the regular tuition rate. Scheduling of an excess of 18 hours must be approved by the student’s advisor and the EVPDAA. Policies for credit earned outside regular classes (e.g., Advanced Placement, CLEP, correspondence, international baccalaureate, Dantes) are provided in the Day catalog (p. 150[2]), AHE catalog (p. 31[3]) and Graduate catalogs [4](p. 19). All certificates require at least 15 hours. All associate degrees require a minimum of 60 semester credit hours. All baccalaureate degrees require a minimum of 120. All masters degrees require a minimum of 36.

Tuition rates are determined each spring by the president of the college and are presented to the board of trustees at its May meeting for approval concurrent with the college operating budget. Tuition is identical for all day undergraduate programs. Tuition rates in AHE are different from day rates but are determined and approved according to the same process. Tuition for Nursing classes is higher than standard AHE tuition due to the cost of clinicals and specialized facilities and equipment.

Day tuition rates are provided to prospective students in a sequence of communications. For prospective students receiving need-based financial aid, award letters are mailed in the spring and include the tuition rate for the year in which they enrolled. Following spring and summer registration sessions for new students, the business office sends fall semester bills that state tuition costs for the coming semester. Current students are notified of tuition rates in their financial aid award letters mailed each year and in the semester bills mailed during the summer. Adult learning students are made aware of tuition rates through the appropriate class schedule.

Records of Student Complaints (Commission Policy 13.3)

The college maintains records of the formal written student complaints and their disposition filed with the offices of the president, EVPDAA, dean for Student Affairs, and vice president for AHE. These records are available for review in the president’s office.

Verification of Student Identity (Commission Policy 3.12)

Columbia College defines distance learning as any computer-mediated instruction outside the classroom: fully-online classes, hybrid classes and web-enhancement of seat-based
classes. The college learning management system requires individual student ID’s and passwords for access to any of the web-based environments.

**Transfer Policies (Commission Policy 3.11)**

Columbia College is transfer-friendly, yet has rigorous standards for accepting credit in transfer. Policies are found on pp. 152-53 of the Day catalog[5], pp. 32 and 36 of the AHE catalog[6], pp. 33-34 of the graduate catalog[4], and p. 19 of the AHE graduate catalog[4].

**Transfer-friendly**

- The college has articulation agreements and equivalency guides.
- Students transferring from community colleges with agreements may transfer up to 81 hours of community college credit.
- Acceptance of Advance Placement, International Baccalaureate, Excelsior, ACE, military (DANTES, DD214, USAFI), Law Enforcement Training Institute, RN certification and LPN certification.
- Articulation Agreements[7]
- Students transferring with an Associate of Arts degree have fulfilled Columbia College’s general education requirements.

**Rigorous Standards**

- Official transcripts are required from transfer students; students are barred from registering for a subsequent term if all official transcripts are not received.
- Transfer students must have a 2.0 cumulative grade point average (undergraduate) or 3.0 (graduate) to be unconditionally admitted (based on credits accepted in transfer). Students below that threshold may be admitted by committee.
- Only credits from regionally-accredited institutions are readily accepted in transfer. Credits from non-regionally-accredited institutions are occasionally accepted upon appeal and review.
- Students may only transfer eligible courses for which they have earned letter grade of C or better.

**Title IV Program (Commission Policy 1.6)**

Columbia College fulfills its Title IV responsibilities. Documentation includes Program Participation and ECAR documents[8], A-133 audit reports[9], and the 2011 Financial Aid Program Review[10].

**Title IV Compliance**

The college has a history of compliance managing federal financial aid under the Title IV program. No findings or questioned costs have been reported in the A-133 Audit Reports[9] since 2006. The college has never had a program review or special audit initiated by the Department of Education or any other regulatory agency.
The college maintains rigorous internal processes to award federal aid in compliance with Title IV requirements and to determine a student’s eligibility for the program.

Since 2002 – 2008 (most current year reported), the college’s student loan default rates on federal loans were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Default Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The college’s default rates have been close to the national average for private four-year schools, and well below the national average for all schools. The college participated exclusively in the Federal Family Educational Loan Program through 2010. Most all loans were serviced through a single loan servicer, who was recognized for excellent default prevention and management.

The college maintains a satisfactory academic progress policy to monitor financial aid eligibility. It applies to all students who wish to establish or maintain financial aid eligibility. The policy is in the catalogs (Day, p. 114, AHE, p. 51[11]). All faculty are required to report class attendance weekly.

**Campus Crime Information**

Columbia College completed all federally mandated campus crime report and makes all Clery Reports for the past three years available.

There is very little crime on the main campus or on any of the 35 Nationwide locations.

**Contractual Relationships**

**Cross-enrollment Agreement with MU and Stephens**

Columbia College does not contract with third parties for the delivery of academic content bearing the college’s name. All collaborative partnerships with other institutions clearly state the portion of academic programs delivered by each institution, relevant transfer rules and rules for awarding degrees. Articulation Agreements[7] London Program Agreement
Institutional Disclosures and Advertising and Recruitment (Commission Policies 12.2 and 12.6)

Reference to the college’s affiliation with HLC is made in all catalogs (Day, p. 3[12]; AHE, p. 2[13]; Main Campus Graduate, inside front cover; AHE Graduate, p. 3) and on the website. Information about how to contact Columbia College is ubiquitously available on the website, in catalogs (Day, inside front cover[12]; AHE, p. 5[14]; Main Campus Graduate[4], p. 2, AHE Graduate [15]p. 5), and in numerous other college publications. Columbia College Contact Information

Relationships with Other Accrediting Agencies and with State Regulatory Bodies (Commission Policies 9.1, 9.2(a), 9.3, 9.4, 10.2)

Historically the college has not vigorously pursued specialized accreditations. They are expensive, time-consuming and often tediously prescriptive, requiring programs to go in directions that are inconsistent with the institutional mission. Because the educational and economic landscapes are changing, in the future the college may be required to seek and obtain specialized accreditations that it would otherwise pass on.

Two specialized accreditations are not optional; they lead to mandatory licensures. If Columbia College students want to teach in public schools in Missouri, they must graduate from an institution that is accredited by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. If Columbia College Nursing students want to practice nursing in Missouri, they must graduate from an institution that is approved by the State Board of Nursing. DESE Letter, Columbia College, 2004[16]

The college has both program accreditations: the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), and the Missouri State Board of Nursing (SBN). The college’s teacher education program was recertified until 2013. After the SBN’s visit in 2010 the nursing program at the main campus was fully approved until 2013. After the SBN’s 2011 visit to the Lake of the Ozarks location, that program was fully approved, with annual reviews required until licensure test pass rates improve.

The college lost National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission (NLNAC) accreditation of its Nursing program in 2009. Unbeknownst to college administrators the director of the Nursing program at that time failed to file a required report. Even though the director quit immediately and the college promised aggressive remediation, NLNAC was unyielding. The college reapplied for accreditation in 2010 and met all but one requirement (percent of clinical instructors with masters degrees); NLNAC denied accreditation. As of this writing, the college remains in the candidacy process.

In 2006 the college did not seek Council of Social Work Education (CSWE) reaccreditation. The social work program had been on CSWE conditional accreditation since its 2004 reaccreditation and it was clear it was not going to be able or willing to commit the resources necessary to get off probation. In addition CSWE was changing its criteria, making it very difficult for smaller programs to stay accredited. On recommendation of the social work faculty the college abandoned its accreditation, discontinued the Social Work major and replaced it with a Human Services major, which is one of the college’s fastest-growing degrees.
In 2011, in response to the federal mandate that was subsequently stricken down by the courts, the college applied to all fifty states for authority to teach online. As of this writing the college is authorized to offer online coursework in 47 states. State Authorizations to Teach Online & General State Authorizations[17] Prior to 2011 the college maintained its authority to operate in the thirteen states in which it had Nationwide locations.

Stakeholders were invited to send comments by mail to:
Public Comment on Columbia College (MO)
The Higher Learning Commission
230 South LaSalle St.
Suite F-500
Chicago, IL 60604

[1] Key_Goals
[3] Catalog, Nationwide, AHE, 2011 pg 31
[10] Program_Reviews
[14] Catalog, Nationwide, AHE, 2011 pg 5
[16] DESE Letter, Columbia College, 2004
[17] State_Approvals
Catalog, Day, Academic Affairs, 2011
Catalog, Day, Academic Affairs, 2011 pg 1
Federal Loan Default Chart
Reports
Conclusion

Columbia College has prepared this document, with accompanying evidence, to demonstrate fulfillment of the Commission’s criteria for accreditation.

The college meets **Criterion One** because:

- It has a clear and relevant mission;
- It takes pride in its heritage and future of diversity;
- Its people "get" the primary mission of teaching and learning;
- Shared governance and administration operate efficiently;
- It prizes integrity in all things.

A challenge to address is maintaining strategic planning momentum at the unit level.

The college meets **Criterion Two** because:

- Its unified institutional strategic planning process keeps long-range planning and reaccreditation “front-of-mind”;
- It has made a massive investment in technology;
- It has no debt and significant reserves.
- It has an extensive program review process that has led to numerous improvements in curriculum, pedagogy and operational practices.

Challenges to address include:

- Day student recruitment and retention.
- Academic advising.
- Impending reductions in military tuition assistance.

The college meets **Criterion Three** because:

- It takes outcomes assessment seriously.
- It supports instruction in diverse ways.
- It creates healthy and productive learning environments in all venues, in and out of the classroom.

Challenges to address include:

- Enhancing the assessment culture.
- Staying abreast of instructional technology.

The college meets **Criterion Four** because:

- It provides or funds diverse faculty and staff development activities.
- It provides numerous opportunities for student and faculty intellectual growth.
- It has embraced globalism and multiculturalism in its curricular and co-curricular offerings.
The focus on integrity extends to faculty, staff and student development activities. Challenges to address include:

- Being more competitive for grants.
- Reviewing general education soon.
- Enhancing study abroad.

The college meets **Criterion Five** because:

- It has numerous mutually-beneficial partnerships.
- It is well-known for the diversity of its outreach.

Challenges to address include:

- Improving local awareness for the Day program.
- Anticipating the dynamics of voluntary education in the military.

**Columbia College formally and respectfully requests that it be granted continued accreditation.**