

# Assurance Argument

## The College of Wooster

*submitted to the Higher Learning Commission*

14 June 2017

## Introduction

### An Introduction to The College of Wooster

*The College of Wooster is a community of independent minds, working together to prepare students to become leaders of character and influence in an interdependent global community. We have been fulfilling this mission for 150 years.*

Co-educational from its founding in 1866 by Presbyterians who sought to do “their proper part in the great work of educating those who are to mold society and give shape to all its institutions,” The College of Wooster was one of the nation’s first institutions to award a Ph.D. to a woman, Annie Irish, in 1882. Wooster’s first black student, Clarence Beecher Allen, entered the College in 1888. For decades, The College of Wooster was one of the most highly regarded colleges with Presbyterian roots, making it an especially attractive place for missionaries to send their children. These relations and connections made Wooster a very international campus long before that had become part of the national agenda.

The College is known for its distinctive approach of mentored undergraduate research as pedagogy and its Independent Study (“I.S.”) program. The first three years of our academic program come together in I.S., a year-long project that allows every Wooster senior, with the support and guidance of a faculty advisor, to focus his or her passion on the creation of an original scholarly work. The senior year culminates in a full day’s Senior Research Symposium. Classes are cancelled and the community is invited to see I.S. presentations, exhibits, and performances by more than 350 seniors.

Currently, 1,980 traditional undergraduate students are mentored by 191 faculty and more than 470 staff in a residential, liberal arts program that leads to the Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Music degree. Our campus is located in Wooster, Ohio, a community of approximately 26,000 residents, approximately 55 miles southwest of Cleveland.

At the time of our 2013 HLC team visit, we were an institution three years into implementing a bold, strategic plan. Our campus was growing increasingly diverse, and we recognized that we had much more to do to support this diversity and create a truly equitable and inclusive campus. We had launched advising and experiential learning initiatives (ARCH and APEX). We anticipated a review of our education requirements in the light of our updated Mission, Core Values, and Graduate Qualities. We were planning for a much needed new life sciences facility with faculty engaging in visioning STEM disciplines at Wooster for the future. We had made significant strides in educational assessment, with a well-developed program in place across the campus, and sought encouragement to advance our assessment program. We had developed an institutional culture of planning that influenced our decision making so that we could advance our mission. We had done much with our human, facilities, technology, and financial resources to advance our core mission and strategic initiatives, yet remained focused on implementing strategic initiatives in the areas of enrollment, endowment, voluntary support, auxiliary operations and resource stewardship to strengthen our resource foundation, including planning the capital campaign that would be “Wooster’s Promise.” In describing how we meet the HLC Criteria for Accreditation, our 2017 Assurance Argument updates our progress and context.

This year, our 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary, is one of beginnings and transitions. I joined the College as its 12<sup>th</sup> president on July 1, 2016, following S. Georgia Nugent, who served as interim president for 2015-16. Grant Cornwell, president at the time of our 2013 HLC Team Visit, became president of Rollins College in fall 2015. This year, we welcomed 564 new students, 38 new faculty, 93 new staff, and four new trustees. We

launched the public phase of “*Wooster’s Promise*”, a comprehensive campaign which will close June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018. We have a new Chair of the Board, Vice Chair of the Board, Vice President of Student Affairs and Dean of Students, and a new Vice President for Advancement. We began construction of the Ruth W. Williams Hall of Life Sciences, created a strategic action plan for diversity, equity and inclusion, and made important strides in student safety.

As we bring the College to the close of its 150<sup>th</sup> year, we are turning toward Wooster’s future, and asking what sort of education will best prepare our students to live well and make a positive impact in their world. We believe that such an education must prepare students to be effective, independent thinkers, ethical leaders with global experience and perspective, engaged citizens who are able to solve problems that matter, and contributors to progress on the important issues of their time.

Next year, we will undertake a comprehensive strategic planning process, which will conclude soon after the close of the *Wooster’s Promise* campaign. We anticipate that process will provide important new direction for our work and our programs across campus. National data demonstrate that the core elements of a Wooster education – strong mentoring, extensive independent research, experiential learning, careful attention to developing written and oral expression, and broad exploration of the liberal arts - are valuable for students’ lives both at college and beyond it.

Through the new strategic plan, we will continue to develop our approaches to those commitments, in order to make the right Wooster education – both inside and outside the classroom - for the coming decades.

Our new strategic plan will also address core operations, including recruiting the next generation of faculty, staff and students, ensuring a strong and well-stewarded resource base and creating/updating the physical and technological infrastructure needed for our programs. We are looking forward to feedback we may receive from the Higher Learning Commission review committee. The timing of this Higher Learning Commission fourth-year report will be ideal for incorporation into our planning efforts.

Sarah R. Bolton  
President

# Criterion 1 - Mission

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

- 1.A - The institution's mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations.
- 1.B - The mission is articulated publicly.
- 1.C - The institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society.
- 1.D - The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.
- 1.S - Summary

# 1.A - The institution's mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations.

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

## Argument

### The College of Wooster's Mission [1.A.1.]

The College of Wooster, a national liberal arts college, has adopted the following Mission Statement:

*The College of Wooster is a community of independent minds, working together to prepare students to become leaders of character and influence in an interdependent global community. We engage motivated students in a rigorous and dynamic liberal education. Mentored by a faculty nationally recognized for excellence in teaching, Wooster graduates are creative and independent thinkers with exceptional abilities to ask important questions, research complex issues, solve problems, and communicate new knowledge and insight.*

The College adopted a mission and core values-based approach to planning in May 2009. Existing documents were updated and additions to the planning process were created through a discussion with the entire Wooster community - faculty, administrative staff, students, trustees, and alumni. It truly became an iterative process of reflection and analysis. We created fresh articulations of our Mission, Core Values, and Vision for Wooster during discussions in faculty meetings, open forums with faculty and staff, discussions with alumni leadership, and comments provided on drafts of the documents. The Board of Trustees adopted the College's mission, core values, and vision statement on October 10, 2009.

### The College of Wooster's academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with our mission. [1.A.2.]

[Department and program reviews](#) (p. 8-9) evaluate the curricula in the context of the Mission with a special emphasis on Graduate Qualities and Core Values. Each department/program has a [mission statement and a set of learning goals](#). Each department is required to [map its student learning and development goals onto the College's Graduate Qualities](#) and Core Values as well as to its courses. Any [major change to the curriculum](#) (p. 3), such as adding a new course, must be approved by EPC and the faculty, and the justification for the change must include a rationale of how it accords with the Mission of the College. References to the Mission are used in justifying requests for new faculty. As one example, [Africana Studies](#) (p. 2) (2016) requested a position and argued that the "position and the courses the successful candidate could offer should make a unique contribution to The College's Core Graduate Qualities, particularly to Diversity and Inclusivity, Social and Intellectual Responsibility, and Independence of Thought." As another example, [Chemistry](#) (p. 3) referenced the College's Vision Statement when they requested a new position that would improve their ability to "[graduate] independent thinkers who are well prepared to seek solutions to significant problems." Similarly, academic departments and programs seeking to fund [capital projects](#), academic equipment, or [specialized technology](#) are requested to state in their applications how the project or equipment would advance the College's Mission, a Strategic Objective, or strengthen their program based on assessment results.

Like the academic departments, student support programs also have mission statements and goals. They conduct self-evaluations which require them to align their mission with that of the College. As an example, a recent [Division of Student Affairs organizational review](#) was guided by several principles, including the goal to "Advance Wooster's mission, Graduate Qualities, and DSA goals (i.e., provide and enhance educational experiences; foster an inclusive and equitable community; promote students' thriving; and, deliver student-centered, high-quality services)."

Some administrative divisions and departments have formal mission statements (for example, [Development and Alumni Relations](#)), others set priorities in the context of the College's Mission and Strategic Objectives and Priorities. Some see as their purpose to enable and support the academic and co-curricular work on campus but do not have an explicit mission statement.

The College's [enrollment profile and planning](#) are consistent with the Mission Statement. Specifically, we make a substantial effort to ensure that students can meet the demands of "a rigorous and dynamic liberal arts education." Our students score very similarly to those of our peer institutions in the GLCA on [SAT and ACT scores](#). In addition to these scores, the College uses Reader Ratings to evaluate students. Reader Ratings are based on test scores, GPA, class rank, quality of high school, rigor of curriculum, and *student leadership characteristics*. Admissions has reduced the number of admitted students who score in the lower ranks on Reader Ratings to ensure our students are prepared for college-level work. (Our learning center helps students strengthen their skills, as described in section 3D.) We strive to [admit a diverse student body](#) (p. 2-3) with the goal of better equipping "students to become leaders of character and influence in an interdependent global community." Details of our efforts in diversity are detailed in Criteria 1.C. Enrollment profile efforts are completed in the context of class size (we are at a stable enrollment size and do not plan to change our enrollment in the near future) and budget constraints.

### The College of Wooster's planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission. [1.A.3.]

This sub-component is addressed in the response to Criterion 5.C.1.

## Sources (evidence provided to the HLC)

- Africana Studies position request
- Africana Studies position request (page number 2)
- Bio Map
- Capital Budget Process form
- changes in curriculum form
- changes in curriculum form (page number 3)
- Chemistry position request
- Chemistry position request (page number 3)
- Dept-Program Assessment and Review Guidelines
- Dept-Program Assessment and Review Guidelines (page number 8)
- Development and Alumni Vision & Mission
- Five Year Enrollment Plan 2016-2020
- Five Year Enrollment Plan 2016-2020 (page number 2)
- Five Year Enrollment Plan 2016-2020 (page number 3)
- Mission Statements and Learning Goals
- SAT ACT scores
- Student Affairs Reorganization Memo 2016
- Technology form

## 1.B - The mission is articulated publicly.

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

### Argument

The College of Wooster has placed its Mission in context and expanded on what it means *to prepare students to become leaders of character and influence in an interdependent global community* in a number of documents that are made available on the College's [website](#), the College Catalogue (p. 6-8), and a variety of other easily accessible places. All first-year students and their parents read and discuss the Mission during [AR CH](#) (our new student orientation) during the portion of the program on the "goals of a Wooster Education." Seniors, and others, are reminded of the Mission when they graduate as it is printed in the [Commencement Program](#). The College of Wooster is a traditional, residential liberal arts college and thus these related documents specify what we strive for in educating students.

As stated on the College's website, our [Core Values](#) reflect the ideas that we hold true and that inspire our activities. They articulate where our efforts are directed. The Core Values include *Education in the Liberal Arts Tradition, A Focus on Research and Collaboration, A Community of Learners, Independence of Thought, Social and Intellectual Responsibility, and Diversity and Inclusivity*. The Core values provide goals, guides, and inspiration for what we want to achieve.

Using both the Mission Statement and our Core Values as a springboard, the College has outlined six characteristics that constitute its [Graduate Qualities](#). The Graduate Qualities are an especially important component of our mission-related documents because they are designed to specify qualities that may be assessed as part of our ongoing process of improvement. In order to fulfill our Mission, our graduates will demonstrate these six characteristics. We recognize that students will take different paths to these qualities and that they will make different decisions about which qualities to emphasize during their time at Wooster. Our six Graduate Qualities parallel in spirit the Association of American Colleges and Universities' (AAC&U) Liberal Education and America's Promise ([LEAP](#)) four Essential Learning Outcomes and AAC&U's seven [Principles of Excellence](#). At the same time, we made sure our Graduate Qualities were distinct from the AAC&U's outcomes. This happened through a deliberate process of development in consultation with students, faculty, staff, and alumni.

The Graduate Qualities have recently been revisited as we consider changes to our general education curriculum. As a result of these discussions, the Graduate Qualities were revised and the revisions were [approved by the faculty](#) (p. 2-3) on December 5, 2016. The updated Graduate Qualities are listed below.

### Graduate Qualities

*Graduates of the College should demonstrate the following personal and intellectual capacities for*

- **Independent Thinking, through the ability to:**
  - Engage in critical and creative thinking
  - Devise, formulate, research, and bring to fruition a complex and creative project
  - Embody the intellectual curiosity, passion, and self-confidence necessary for life-long learning
  - Appreciate and critique ideas, values, and beliefs including their own
- **Integrative and Collaborative Inquiry, through the ability to:**
  - Synthesize knowledge from multiple disciplines
  - Actively integrate theory and practice
  - Engage in effective intellectual collaboration
- **Dynamic Understanding of the Liberal Arts, through the ability to:**
  - Understand disciplinary knowledge in arts, humanities, social sciences, mathematics, and physical and natural sciences
  - Evaluate evidence using methodologies from multiple disciplines
  - Demonstrate quantitative, textual, visual, and digital literacy
  - Employ deep knowledge, insight, and judgment to solve real world problems
- **Effective Communication, through the ability to:**
  - Exhibit skill in oral, written, and digital communication
  - Engage in effective discourse through active listening, questioning, and reasoning
- **Global Engagement, through the ability to:**
  - Understand the histories, causes, and implications of environmental and global processes
  - Engage with the global community through knowledge of a second language and culture
  - Display self-reflective awareness of their roles in diverse local and global communities
- **Justice and Social Responsibility, through the ability to:**
  - Understand and respect the diversity and complexity of human identities, including race, class, gender, sexuality, ability, culture, and religion
  - Actively promote equity and inclusion
  - Demonstrate ethical judgment and work towards a just society
  - Exhibit a commitment to community, civic engagement, and serving others

The Mission, Core Values, and Graduate Qualities are aspirational and shape our [year-to-year planning](#). Strategic Priorities are action items designed to assure our aspirations are translated into actions. The [Priorities](#) are made publicly available along with a progress report on priorities set the previous year.

Taken together, our mission-related documents lead to a description of what we are and what we seek as a residential liberal arts college, specified in our Vision Statement.

### **Vision Statement**

*Our collective endeavor is to prosper as a distinguished independent liberal arts college, to thrive as a vigorous intellectual community, and to create a reputation that reflects our achievements. We seek to be leaders in liberal learning, building on our tradition of graduating independent thinkers who are well prepared to seek solutions to significant problems, to create and communicate new knowledge and insight, and to make significant contributions to our complex and interdependent world.*

### **Sources**

- 2016-2017-Strategic-Priorities-Memo\_Final
- AACU Essential Learning Outcomes
- AACU Principles of Excellence
- Commencement Program \_ First two pages
- Core Values \_ The College of Wooster
- Course Catalogue 2016-2017
- Course Catalogue 2016-2017 (page number 6)
- Faculty Minutes-Graduate Qualities Approved 12-5-16
- Faculty Minutes-Graduate Qualities Approved 12-5-16 (page number 2)
- Graduate Qualities \_ The College of Wooster
- Mission & Vision \_ The College of Wooster
- Purpose of ARCH \_ The College of Wooster
- Strategic Planning @ Wooster

# 1.C - The institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society.

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

## Argument

The College of Wooster has a deep commitment to issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion. These issues are addressed across several criteria in this self-study. Although these issues are important across the various functions of the College, we view our work on these issues as integrated and not fragmented. We are especially focused on our work to

- increase the diversity of our students, faculty, and staff. Most of this work is discussed in this section of the self-study.
- ensure that those in traditionally underrepresented groups (racial, ethnic, national, sexual orientation, and gender identity) have equitable and excellent experiences on campus and to address issues that prevent that from being the case. Our general policies that address many of these issues are presented under Criterion 2, but specific instances are included under other criteria.
- assure that all students develop intercultural competency and global engagement through our curricular and co-curricular programs. Much of this work is described under Criterion 3, but our curricular and co-curricular program are guided by our Mission and Graduate Qualities. The latter have been recently updated and are discussed in this Criterion. We are also assessing how well we are meeting these Graduate Qualities and most of that work is discussed under Criterion 4.

The importance of addressing the diversity of society is reflected in several of our mission-related documents:

- From our Core Values: **Diversity and Inclusivity**: Wooster actively seeks students, faculty, and staff from a wide variety of backgrounds, starting places, experiences, and beliefs. We believe that achieving our educational purpose is only possible in a diverse community of learners. Therefore, we value members who bring a diversity of identities and beliefs to our common purpose, and who reflect a diversity of voices as varied as those our students will engage upon graduation.
- From our Graduate Qualities: **Justice and Social Responsibility**: Understand and respect the diversity and complexity of human identities, including but not limited to race, class, gender, sexuality, ability, culture, and religion. Actively promote equity and inclusion. Demonstrate ethical judgment and work towards a just society. Exhibit a commitment to community, civic engagement, and serving others.

A key element of Wooster's commitment to diversity involves the student body. The results of our efforts in this area can be seen in our [enrollment data](#). We have increased the number of international students and domestic minority students enrolled at the College from a low of 12% in both 2005 and 2007 to 28.5% in 2015. The increase coincides with our focus on mission and planning that began in 2009. Furthermore, we have gone from being similar but lagging slightly behind the average of our competitors in the diversity of our student body to having a slightly larger percentage of international students and domestic minority students enrolled than the average of our comparison group. In 2013 (the most recent year for which we have comparison data), The College of Wooster enrolled 24% international students and domestic minority students, which is above the mean of the Ohio 5 (23%) and above the median of the GLCA (21%). Our efforts in this area continue to improve. As of June 1, 2017 paid deposits indicate that the class of 2021 includes 17% international students and 22% domestic minority students.

The [Posse Program](#) and the [Clarence Beecher Allen Scholarships](#) constitute important components of our recruitment of a diverse student body. We begin our 10th year of sponsoring POSSE Scholars out of Atlanta in 2017-2018. The POSSE Foundation identifies public high school students from urban areas that are disproportionately Black and Hispanic, who have extraordinary academic and leadership potential, and who may be overlooked by traditional college selection processes. The Foundation helps place these students in supportive, multi-cultural teams (Posses) of about ten students. The Foundation's partner institutions award Posse Scholars four-year, full-tuition leadership scholarships. The Allen Scholarships provide up to \$30,000 to African-American students on the basis of overall academic achievement and leadership.

The [diversity of our faculty](#) is also an important part of our commitment to diversity in general. From the academic year 2009-10 (the start of our strategic planning process) to the academic year 2015-16, the percentage of diverse (i.e., international or domestic minority) faculty has increased from 17% to 23%. The effect is even more pronounced if one examines the percentage of diverse faculty among our new hires over that same period. We have hired 33 new tenure-track faculty members over the six year period and 52% of these hires have been international or domestic minority faculty. The percentage of female faculty members has also increased slightly over this time from 46% to 48%. Among the procedures for recruiting a diverse faculty we have added that an announcement advertising a new position must include a statement like the following: "The College of Wooster enrolls a diverse student body (19% domestic students of color and 10% international students); applicants should demonstrate their ability to work with diverse student populations." In addition, each search committee now includes a diversity advocate whose role it is to evaluate the candidates with diversity in mind.

The Board, in 2016, [signaled its commitment to faculty diversity](#) through a one million dollar gift—half of which will become an endowment to support diversity efforts in the future. The other half is intended to fund more immediate efforts to increase faculty diversity. This gift has already allowed for the hiring of four [Perry-Williams Postdoctoral Scholars through the Consortium for Faculty Diversity](#) and the hiring of consultants on hiring and retaining faculty of color. The consultants have begun a series of four just-in-time workshops on these topics that will conclude in 2017-2018. Chairs and diversity advocates are required to attend the workshops. The College has a category of positions called [opportunity hires](#). These positions are designed to increase the diversity of the faculty (as long as the position fits within the Mission of the College).

Though the College's efforts at recruiting a diverse faculty have been effective, we are not complacent. As noted in the [Provost's report to the faculty](#), more faculty of diversity leave Wooster by choice than do majority faculty (10% vs. 6%). As a result, the College not only regularly reviews

and updates the processes for hiring a diverse faculty (such as joining the Higher Education Recruitment Consortium), we have also increased our efforts at retaining the faculty once hired. Discussion on how to hire and retain diverse faculty has taken place at an MLK Justice Dialog and at an open meeting for faculty. Our [provost](#) has attended an AAC&U "Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Faculty Workshop."

Beginning with the 2015-16 academic year, the **Center for Diversity and Inclusion (CDI)** replaced the **Center for Diversity and Global Engagement (CDGE)** as a key coordinator of diversity programs and initiatives on campus. An internal and external [review](#) of the CDGE program indicated that it was not as effective as it should be. Thus it was reconfigured as the CDI. The mission of CDI is as follows:

*The Center for Diversity and Inclusion works in concert with the College's student life and academic programs (1) to promote a diverse, welcoming campus climate for the College's students, staff, and faculty and (2) to foster global understanding and commitment to global engagement for all members of our community.*

CDI serves to coordinate the efforts of all of the offices on campus that deal with diversity issues including the [Office of Sexuality and Gender Inclusion](#), the [Office of Multicultural Student Affairs](#), the [Office of International Student Affairs](#), and the [Office of Interfaith Campus Ministries](#). Together these offices provide information on diversity issues on campus through their websites and newsletters. The CDI initiates, promotes, and funds requests for events that promote diversity on campus. The various offices advertise the events and activities via newsletters, the College's website, and Facebook pages. These offices also provide training and workshops for students. An example is [Safe Zone training](#) (designed to create an atmosphere of respect on campus for all gender identities, gender expressions, and sexual orientations). CDI and its affiliated offices organize, plan, and staff a number of diversity-related celebrations on campus include [MLK Jr. Day](#), [International Education Week](#), and a number of [student-run celebrations](#) including Black History Month, Africa Week, and Asia Week.

In May 2014, the faculty approved a three-year pilot program in which regular classes are canceled on Martin Luther King Jr. Day and replaced with a series of events, workshops, service projects, and discussions as an opportunity "to learn, to cultivate intellectual integrity, and to promote diversity and inclusion." The [Martin Luther King Jr. Day celebration](#) has been held three times and it has drawn participants not only from campus but from the community and local schools. The celebration is being evaluated and a decision is to be made whether or not the event will become permanent.

Each year the College hosts a number of [speakers](#), many of whom have addressed issues of diversity. Some of the events are held in conjunction with First-Year Seminar and others are hosted by a variety of groups and departments on campus. As one example, author Wes Moore presented the Mortenson Lecture during the Fall, 2016 semester. His book, *The Other Wes Moore*, was a required summer reading for all incoming students and it details the importance of context for two African American boys with the same name who have very different developmental outcomes.

In addition to the above, the campus is sensitive to current events regarding issues of diversity and global engagement. Our interim president documented 15 occasions where international, national, and local events presented opportunities for [discussion or action on diversity issues](#) based out of her office in the 2015-16 academic year alone.

Finally, although the College of Wooster does a great deal to address our role in a diverse and global environment, there is no illusion that [our work](#) is complete. Many of our programs and processes are regularly assessed and updated. The view of much of the campus is that more work is needed. As evidence of this, our new president has suggested that one major issue that needs to be addressed during the 2016-17 academic year is "Diversity, equity, and inclusion." A Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Strategic Planning Group (DEISPG) was established in 2016 and has completed a comprehensive set of recommendations for [goals](#), strategic actions, assessments of progress, accountability and communication. They have submitted a report to the president which has been further developed by the cabinet and reviewed by the board of trustees.

The [report](#) includes a strategic action plan, covering 3-5 years, for recruitment of an increasingly diverse staff, student body, and faculty, improving retention and support, building education and cultural competencies for all members of the campus community, and collaboration with the larger community in the City of Wooster.

## Sources

- BOT and President address diversity issues
- CDGE Self Study.2012
- Center for Diversity and Inclusion \_ The College of Wooster
- DEI Goals IN PROGRESS-1
- DEI goals srbfinal v3
- DEISPG Report \_Complete April 24 2017 (PRES)
- Diversifying the Faculty Workshop
- Diversity in Faculty since 2009-10
- Diversity Issues 2015 2016
- Faculty Meeting Hiring March 2017
- International and MultiEthnic Students
- International Education Week \_ The College of Wooster
- Merit Scholarships \_ The College of Wooster
- MLK Jr
- Office of Interfaith Campus Ministries \_ The College of Wooster
- Office of International Student Affairs \_ The College of Wooster
- Office of Multicultural Student Affairs \_ The College of Wooster
- Office of Sexuality and Gender Inclusion \_ The College of Wooster
- opportunity hires
- Posse Foundation
- President \_ Strengthen our Community
- Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Faculty
- Safe Zone Training \_ The College of Wooster
- Strategic Priorities 2016 2017

- Student-run Celebrations, in association with CDI \_ The College of Wooster
- tenure track hiring guidelines
- Tenure Track Searches Chairs Workshop
- The Wooster Lecture Series

# 1.D - The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.

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

## Argument

### The College of Wooster serves the public, not solely the institution, and thus entails a public obligation. [1.D.1.]

The College of Wooster is dedicated to the education of undergraduate students in a liberal arts setting. An important component of that education is preparing students to engage with both local and global communities of interest. This is reflected in several of our mission-related documents:

- *From our Mission Statement:* The College of Wooster is a community of independent minds, working together to prepare students to become leaders of character and influence in an **interdependent global community**
- *From our Core Values: **Social and Intellectual Responsibility*** - We therefore seek to extend the benefits of learning beyond the campus and beyond ourselves, endeavoring to analyze problems, create solutions, exercise civic and intellectual leadership, and contribute to the welfare of humanity and the environment
- *From our Graduate Qualities: **Justice and Social Responsibility:*** Demonstrate ethical judgment and work towards a just society. Exhibit a commitment to community, civic engagement, and serving others.

### The College of Wooster's primary responsibilities are educational. [1.D.2.]

The College of Wooster has no investors, parent organizations, or supporting external interests. Thus our commitment to and engagement with the wider public is based on our mission of educating undergraduates in the liberal arts tradition.

### The College of Wooster engages with external constituencies. [1.D.3.]

The College engages with its external constituencies in a variety of ways. The College welcomes the public to many of its educational and cultural events. In fact, the College is one of the primary hubs of educational and cultural events in Wooster and Wayne County. The number of programs and events is too large to report here, but a number of key programs are listed below.

Most of the [speakers](#) and [events](#) that come to Wooster are advertised on our website and in the local media and the public is explicitly invited to attend. Most of these talks and events are free to the public. Two unusual and positive events that are open to the public are the [Great Decisions](#) lectures and the [Science Café](#). "Great Decisions is a renowned lecture series, established in 1981 as a joint venture between the College and the local Wooster community, that examines international affairs and foreign policy by bringing in experts from a variety of backgrounds." The Science Café brings together scientists and the general public to discuss science-related topics in a non-technical fashion. "The Wooster Science Café is co-sponsored by The College of Wooster and the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center of The Ohio State University, and hosted by Broken Rocks Café."

The College also interacts with the larger community through volunteer activities. One of the largest of these activities is [Scots in Service](#). In 2015, for example, over 600 students, alumni, and friends of the College volunteered their services in 26 cities across the country. Scots in Service is currently on hold because of events associated with Wooster's 150th anniversary celebration and the inauguration of our new President. Plans are for it to restart in 2018.

The College of Wooster supports a number of [program houses](#) in which like-minded students live together and give a [significant portion of their time](#) to volunteer activities. Recent programs ranged from helping children, to supporting the elderly, to training service dogs. In 2015, there were 11 of these program houses.

The number of volunteer organization and activities on campus is so large that the [Wooster Volunteer Network](#) was developed to facilitate and help coordinate these activities. During a typical week, 321 students participated in regular Student Service Organization, Student Religious Organization, or [Interfaith Campus Ministries' functions](#), with many more participating in special events.

Several classes at The College of Wooster contain service learning projects as a way to both facilitate learning in students and provide an opportunity for students to contribute to the greater community. About half of our seniors report that some of their classes had a [service learning component](#) (p. 2) and faculty report that instilling a [sense of community in students](#) (p. 1) is important.

The 2015 NSSE survey indicated that our students often connect their classroom experiences to the public good. Some examples include reports that students "Often" or "Very often" "Connected your learning to [societal problems](#) or issues" (74%), that the College emphasized "Quite a bit" or "Very much" "Attending events that address [important social, economic, or political issues](#)" (70%), that the College contributed "Quite a bit" or "Very much" to their "[Understanding of people of other backgrounds](#)" (71%), and that the College contributed "Quite a bit" or "Very much" to their "[Being an informed and active citizen](#)" (66%)."

The public is invited to student performances in sports, music recitals, plays, dance performances, and the annual IS Symposium. Students not only interact with the campus and off-campus communities at these events, but many of these student groups actively give back to the community. As just one example, a very successful [food drive](#) is held in conjunction with a men's basketball tournament. Many campus facilities, such as the library, the Art Museum, and the [College Nursery School](#) are open to the public. The [community audit program](#) allows local residents to audit one course each semester at no cost.

## Sources

- Al Van Wie
- community-audit
- Great Decisions Series
- News and Events \_ The College of Wooster
- NSSE 2015 attend social issue events
- NSSE 2015 informed citizen
- NSSE 2015 Societal Problems
- NSSE 2015 understand others
- Nursery School brochure
- OICM Participation Report FINAL
- Program House volunteer hours
- Program Houses
- Scots in Service
- Service to Community
- Service to Community (page number 1)
- Service to Community (page number 2)
- The Wooster Lecture Series
- Wooster Science Café
- Wooster Volunteer Network

# 1.S - Summary

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

## Summary

The College of Wooster continues to be mission-driven. We are deliberate in our activities and plans are made in the context of our Mission. An ongoing effort exists to make explicit the connection between the activities of all groups on campus and our Mission. The Mission Statement of The College of Wooster is a description of our defining purpose. It contains the key elements of who we are and what we seek to do. Our Mission is elaborated and explained in other documents including our Vision Statement, our Core Values, our Graduate Qualities, and our Strategic Framework which serves as our Strategic Planning document. Together, these documents guide our current activities and our planning for the future. Our Mission is made public via our web-site, Course Catalogue, and many additional sources.

Diversity issues figure prominently in our mission and College activities. Since our last review, new programs (such as the Martin Luther King Jr. Day celebration) have been developed. Existing programs have been updated (such as the updating of the Center for Diversity and Global Engagement to the Center for Diversity and Inclusion). Opportunities for discussion and change have occurred frequently. In spite of this work, the existing opinion of most of the campus community is that there is much yet to accomplish. As a result, diversity, equity and inclusion remain an ongoing point of emphasis and strategic planning for the College.

The College of Wooster has extended its already considerable outreach to the surrounding community and beyond. The number of volunteer activities and service projects available to our campus community continues to expand. The College continues to collaborate on significant joint campus-community efforts and to serve as a cultural and educational hub for the surrounding area.

## Sources

*There are no sources.*

# Criterion 2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

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

- 2.A - The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions
- 2.B - The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public
- 2.C - The governing board of the institution is sufficiently autonomous
- 2.D - The institution is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.
- 2.E - The institution's policies and procedures call for responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge by its faculty, students and staff.
- 2.S - Summary

## 2.A - The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions

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

### Argument

The College's mission and our core values are the principles that guide our work. Those principles are expressed through our policies and processes. We review and revise these regularly, in order to clarify the responsibilities and expectations of members of our College community and to improve our operations.

[The Wooster Ethic](#) is one component of the [College's Codes of Community and Individual Responsibility](#) (p.34). The Ethic was adopted in Spring 2005 by campus referendum. New students are introduced to it during the summer ARCH program and fall orientation. We then invite them to join the Wooster community by adding their signatures to the Wooster Ethic book during a formal signing ceremony. The Ethic has been referenced in [some College policies](#), [student organizations](#), and [committees](#).

The "[Civility Statement](#)" (p.34) expresses the College community's commitment to respecting diversity and keeping the campus a safe environment for all. It is found in the College Catalogue (p.10) and [The Scot's Key](#) (p. 34 ). New students and parents are introduced to the Civility Statement during ARCH and new student orientation.

The College's non-discrimination policies are outlined in detail in the [Handbook of Selected College Policies](#) and on the College's [website](#). Our non-discrimination policies pertain to employment and access to educational opportunities, and prohibit discrimination on the basis of a number of criteria (e.g., race, color, sex/gender, gender identity, political affiliation, physical or mental disability, veteran or military status) or any other protected category under applicable local, state, or federal law. Our policies also provide protections for those opposing discrimination or participating in any complaint process on campus or within the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission or other human rights agencies.

The College has reviewed and revised its sexual assault and harassment policies. Our goal is to establish zero tolerance for sexual misconduct and disrespect and to become a model campus for our programs in awareness, prevention, and victim support. The College has been working to strengthen every aspect of sexual violence prevention and response, and that work is ongoing. For example, in 2016-17, we strengthened the training of the hearing panel that adjudicates these cases; put in place multi-faceted mandatory training for all new students on consent, bystander intervention, and how to get help; developed and provided additional education and training for groups of faculty, staff and students; brought an expert outside investigator in to perform all investigations of sexual violence on campus; and established an on-line "[Campus Climate Notification System](#)." We have recently added a full-time Title IX Coordinator and established a permanent working group to continually assess both the climate of the campus and the effectiveness of our programs and policies. In Spring 2017, we updated the College's "[Sexual Misconduct Policy](#)."

In keeping with the College's commitment to the highest possible standards of ethical and legal business conduct, we have established an "[Ethics Policy](#)" which commits College officers, trustees, and employees to abide by federal and state laws and regulations as well as College policies in the performance of their duties. The policy includes a provision for individuals to raise concerns about unethical or illegal conduct on the part of a member of the College community through an ethics or "whistleblower" hotline. In 2016-17, the hotline was used once.

Through education, awareness, and example we encourage members of the College community to adopt and act in accord with these principles. We recognize that we need to provide avenues for individuals to report alleged or actual violations of these principles, without fear of retaliation. We do not have a single "non-retaliation" policy: non-retaliation provisions are found within the "[Equal Opportunity, Harassment and Non-Discrimination Policy](#)" (p.13), "[Sexual Misconduct Policy](#)" (p.13), and [staff grievance policy and procedures](#). Any member of the campus community as well as visitors can report violations of policy, incidents of concern, or seek help for themselves or others through the College's [online reporting system](#).

### How We Provide Information About Our Policies and Procedures.

Information about our many policies and procedures is made available to all College employees, students, and prospective students and their families in both electronic and paper format. Specifically,

*With respect to all College Employees.*

Both the [Faculty Handbook](#) and [A Handbook of Benefits, Policies, and Procedures for Support Staff and Administrative Staff](#) outline College policies regarding terms of employment, evaluation, salaries/wages, benefits programs, and general College policies. The College's websites (external and internal) provide comprehensive information on College operating policies for both Faculty and Staff. Every employee who has purchasing or purchasing approval authority is required to sign the [Conflict of Interest Policy](#). Purchasing system access is suspended for individuals who do not complete an updated Conflict of Interest form each year.

*With respect to Faculty.*

The [Faculty Handbook](#) includes a series of "handbooks" that include [The Statute of Instruction](#) ("[The Statute](#)"), the [Handbook for Faculty Advisors](#), the [Handbook for Independent Study](#), and the [Handbook for Off-Campus Study](#). These handbooks and [The Statute](#) outline policies and procedures relating to the duties and rights of faculty, faculty evaluation, the role and responsibilities of faculty as advisors, and the objectives, policies, and responsibilities of faculty for advising Independent Study. The [Handbook for Off-Campus Study](#) provides policy and procedural guidance for faculty in regard to the College's Off-Campus Study program. The [Faculty Handbook](#) also includes a section that describes various College [resources and services](#), and the policies and procedures that pertain to each.

*With Respect to Students.*

*The Scot's Key* and the *Code of Academic Integrity* describe what students need to know regarding issues of academic integrity. Students are encouraged to read and understand it. During 2016-17, Campus Council completed a [comprehensive review and revision](#) of *The Code of Social Responsibility* to go into effect with the 2017-18 academic year. The College's Judicial System is another means of educating students about the fair and ethical practices that must be adhered to regarding academic work. The judicial system is explained to students as they arrive on campus and reiterated at the time of any judicial case.

*With Respect to Prospective Students.*

Procedures for admission for [first-time, first-year, transfer, and international students](#) are outlined on the College's website and the *College Catalogue* (p. 266). As described in Criterion 4, the Catalogue provides detailed information about transfer credits and standardized tests (p.263). For transfer students, information about [requirements for credit to transfer](#) is outlined on the website. Information about the College's [standardized test policy](#) is also provided for prospective students. The *Catalogue* (p.270) outlines the College's policies for appeal of an admissions decision. Similarly, information about [how to apply for financial aid](#) is provided on the Office of Financial Aid's website (<http://www.wooster.edu/admissions/aid/apply/>).

*With Respect to the College's Auxiliary Functions.*

The College self-operates several auxiliary services functions or affiliated organizations including a bookstore, dining service, conference services, a golf course, and a lyric theatre festival. College policies apply to each, and each has its own internal policies which guide operations. For example, the Wilson Bookstore follows a [Code of Buying Ethics](#) which, with the Conflict of Interest policy, each employee must read, sign, and adhere to. Members the Ohio Light Opera, the lyric theatre company, are considered College employees and thus must adhere to the policies and guidelines set forth by the College. Hospitality Services, which provides food, catering, vending, and conference services has a number of well-established policies in place with regard to food purchasing and distribution; in addition, the department follows the [College's purchasing policies](#).

## Sources

- 16-17 College Catalogue
- 16-17 College Catalogue (page number 10)
- 16-17 College Catalogue (page number 263)
- 16-17 College Catalogue (page number 266)
- 16-17 College Catalogue (page number 270)
- 1-Statute of Instruction
- 2-Handbook for Advisers
- 3-Handbook for IS
- 4-Handbook for Off Campus Study
- 5-Services & Facilities
- Application Information for International Students \_ The College of Wooster
- Bookstore ethics documents
- Campus Climate Notification System - Title IX - Confluence at The College of Wooster
- Code of Academic Integrity (DCAE)
- Committee for a Sustainable Campus (CoW)
- ConflictofInterestPolicy-March2011 (BOT)
- Credit Transfer \_ The College of Wooster (web)
- Equal Opportunity Harassment NonDiscrimination (PRES)
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- First-Year Applicants \_ The College of Wooster
- Five Year Enrollment Plan 2016-2020
- Get Help - Report a Concern\_web (PRES)
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- How to Apply for Financial Aid \_ The College of Wooster (ENCR)
- HR-EthicsPolicy (HR)
- ITPolicy\_CopyrightInfringement\_HEOA (I&P)
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- Purchasing Policies Procedures (VPFB)
- Scots Key Social Responsibility Voice (VPSA)
- Scots\_Key (DSTAF)
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- Sexual Misconduct Policy Title IX (PRES)
- Sexual Misconduct Policy Title IX (PRES) (page number 13)
- Staff Grievance Policy & Procedures w appeal (HR)
- Staff Handbook 2011 rev March 2015-1 (HR)
- Standard Test Policy \_ The College of Wooster
- The Wooster Ethic (web) (STUAF)
- Transfer Students \_ The College of Wooster

## 2.B - The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public

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

### Argument

Our website ([www.wooster.edu](http://www.wooster.edu)) is the primary medium through which we present the College to prospective students and their families, the public, and our faculty, staff, and students. We do this through multiple technology platforms. Information Technology is exploring how we can link our core platforms and structure our information while Web Communication is working with departments to continue to improve the main website for external audiences.

Our [accreditation relationships](#) and other required disclosures are displayed on the “[Consumer Information](#)” section of the College’s website.

The Office of Marketing and Communications produces *Telling Wooster’s Story*, which provides information about characteristics of the College that make us “distinctive,” the core messages, and the evidence that supports them. *Telling Wooster’s Story* will be updated summer 2017.

The College [course catalogue](#) is available on the College website. The *Catalogue* describes in detail the requirements and programs available to students, faculty, and staff. Past catalogues (archives) are also available on the website.

The College’s Alumni magazine highlights various College programs, people, and stories of interest about the institution. There are a variety of articles that cover many aspects of college life (examples: Fall 2016 and Winter 2017 issues).

The Admissions Office is a consistent point of contact for all prospective students. Many students’ first contact is through the College’s website. After that, most go to the Admissions office to gather information and/or take tours of the campus. We have implemented and continue to refine [enrollment](#) and [marketing](#) plans that focus our communications and information for prospective students and parents. It is our goal to convey our Mission, Graduate Qualities, distinctive educational approach, and community to students in ways that provide them with a clear understanding of the Wooster experience (see Admissions publications). Students can obtain information on college pricing and financial aid through our Admissions and Financial aid website, which includes an [Early Aid Estimator](#) and [Net Price Calculator](#) to assist students in estimating how much financial aid they will receive.

### Sources

- Accreditation Consumer Information (I&P)
- Admissions Materials combined (ENRMKT)
- Consumer and Accreditation Information (I&P)
- Five Year Enrollment Plan 2016-2020
- Marketing Plan final\_Oct 2012 (ENMK)
- Net Price Calculator (ENRMKT)
- Telling Wooster Story 2014 [CRELMKT]
- WoosterMagazine\_F16\_web (CRELMKT)
- WoosterMagazine\_W17\_web2(CRELMKT)
- Wooster’s Early Aid Estimator (ENRMKT)

## 2.C - The governing board of the institution is sufficiently autonomous

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

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

### Argument

#### 2.C.1.

As described in Criterion 5.B the Board of Trustees has committed to periodic review and revision of its structure, policies, and processes. Core to the Board's commitment is maintaining focus on its appropriate role as fiduciaries of the institution in the immediate and long-term. The Board's deliberate efforts to focus its discussions on high-level matters of strategic importance to the institution, and to advance the College's strategic objectives and related strategic initiatives, are most evident in the individual committee charters and in the topics of Board [strategic discussion sessions](#) and [annual retreats](#). The Board takes specific actions in advancing elements of our strategic initiatives outlined in our [Strategic Framework](#) and related [Annual Strategic Priorities](#). These actions follow the Board's deliberations on plans presented by the Administration. Examples of such actions include endorsement and goal setting for our current capital campaign, "[Wooster's Promise](#)," the current construction of [The Ruth W. Williams' Hall of Life Sciences](#), major renovations to provide facilities appropriate for APEX and student residential life ([Brush Hall](#), [Gault Schoolhouse](#)), establishing and funding the "[Perry – Williams Fellows](#)" program with the goal of creating a more diverse faculty and staff and in furtherance of the mission of the College, and approval of annual budgets that are based on strategic priorities.

(also provided: Examples of Board of Trustees Minutes: October 2013, March 2014, May 2014, February 2015, May 2015, October 2016)

#### 2.C.2

The Committee on Conference with Trustees ("Conference") is a six member elected committee of the faculty. Among its charges (*Statute* p.33) is to engage in discussion with Trustees about policy matters and to relay faculty concerns to the Board, as illustrated in [examples of agenda for recent meetings](#). Conference does this at a meeting held with the Committee on Faculty Relations each time the Board convenes. No administrators are present at this meeting. Similarly, students, typically members of Student Government, Campus Council, and other student leadership organizations, meet with the Student Development Committee of the Board to [convey student concerns and updates about student initiatives](#). Both the student and faculty committees also send representatives to observe trustee committee meetings and the open session of the full Board meeting.

The Board's membership includes perspectives of the College's constituents, including alumni, parents of current students, and community members. As of spring 2017, 42 of the 43 available Board seats are occupied by active members; there are also 26 emeriti or honorary life trustees of whom 14 regularly participate in Board meetings. Of the membership 86% are alumni. Six members of the Board are nominated to membership by the alumni of the College. In addition to alumni, the Board seeks to have members who are parents of current students and members of the Wooster community. In Fall 2017, we will welcome two "GOLD" (graduates of the last decade) trustees to the Board.

#### 2.C.3

The Board operates in accord with the [Bylaws](#) of the College, the College's [Amended Articles of Incorporation](#) (in particular, Article V), and the [Covenant](#) between the College of Wooster and the Synod of the Covenant of the Presbyterian Church (which remains in effect until renewed by the College and Synod). These three documents describe the respective responsibilities of the Board and the extent of the continued understandings between the College and the Presbyterian Church since the College became independent of the Church. As a private, independent institution, we are non-partisan in our activities and have policies guiding non-partisan activity on the campus, including fundraising and events. These are described in detail in the [Handbook of Selected College Policies](#) (p.25).

All Board members disclose any potential [conflict of interest](#) with respect to serving as a Board member. These disclosures are [reviewed](#) by the Audit Committee of the Board; Board members are expected to recuse themselves from discussions or deliberations when they may have a disclosed or potential conflict. At its June 2017 meeting, the Board adopted a [revised conflict of interest policy](#) for Board members and senior administrators.

#### 2.C.4.

The College's [Bylaws](#) reserve the general power to "oversee the quality of the curricular and co-curricular educational programs of the College and their alignment with Wooster's mission, strategies, and financial resources" for the Board. The day-to-day operation of the College is the responsibility of the administration and faculty.

The [Academic Mission Committee's charter](#) clearly states that the faculty is responsible for "the content and structure of the curriculum of the College and for the pedagogy employed to achieve the learning goals set out by individual faculty, by departments and programs, and by the Faculty as a whole." The administration is given the responsibility for "nurturing the continuous development and improvement of the faculty,

curriculum, and pedagogy, and for rigorously evaluating the quality of the same.” The Board is responsible for only for general oversight: “The Board of Trustees, through the work of the Academic Mission Committee, is broadly responsible for stewarding the quality of the College’s core mission.”

**Faculty.**

The primary governing document for the Faculty is *The Statute of Instruction* (“*The Statute*”). The *Statute* governs the Faculty with respect to the duties and rights of the Faculty and is binding on both the Faculty and the Board of Trustees. Revisions to both the *Bylaws* and *Statute* during 2008 through 2013 further delineated and clarified the roles of the Board and the Faculty with respect to the educational program and policies. The *Statute* also details the committee structure within the faculty including the five major elected committees. As required by the *Statute*, the five elected committees (Committee on Committees, Committee on Conference with Trustees, Educational Policy, Strategic Planning & Priorities Advisory, and Teaching Staff & Tenure) meet together once every semester (*Statute*, p.32) with the President. “Crosstalk,” (President, Provost, chairs of the major elected faculty committees, and the chair of the faculty meeting) meets bi-weekly to facilitate communication among the President and the committees, and serves as one resource for the President in which to elicit faculty opinion and counsel on strategic and policy matters.

Our most recent change in faculty governance occurred in 2015-16 when we eliminated the Financial Advisory Committee and replaced it with the [Strategic Planning and Priorities Advisory Committee](#) (SPPAC). The intent was to establish a formal committee to *advise the President on strategic planning and the determination of resource allocation, to consult with campus constituencies on strategic planning and priorities, and to regularly apprise the faculty of issues under discussion.* The work of SPPAC is discussed in more detail in Criterion 5.

Faculty members feel they are engaged appropriately in campus decision-making. Yet, as noted in discussion of workload in core component 3.C.1 and indicated in our 2013-14 HERI Faculty Survey, committee service remains a significant component of faculty workload (Table 2.1 and Figure 2.1).

Table 2.1					
Faculty Involvement in Decision Making and Impact of Committee Work					
(source: HERI Faculty Surveys 2007-08, 2010-11, 2013-14).					
Wooster Faculty					
% agree or strongly agree		Men	Women	All	N
Faculty are sufficiently involved in campus decision-making					
	2013-14	87%	80%	83%	53
	2010-11	75%	79%	77%	79
	2007-08	86%	71%	79%	91
Committee Work is a source of "some" or "extensive" stress					
	2013-14	83%	86%	85%	46
	2010-11	78%	76%	77%	74
	2007-08	69%	67%	68%	91

## Faculty Time Spent in Committee Work

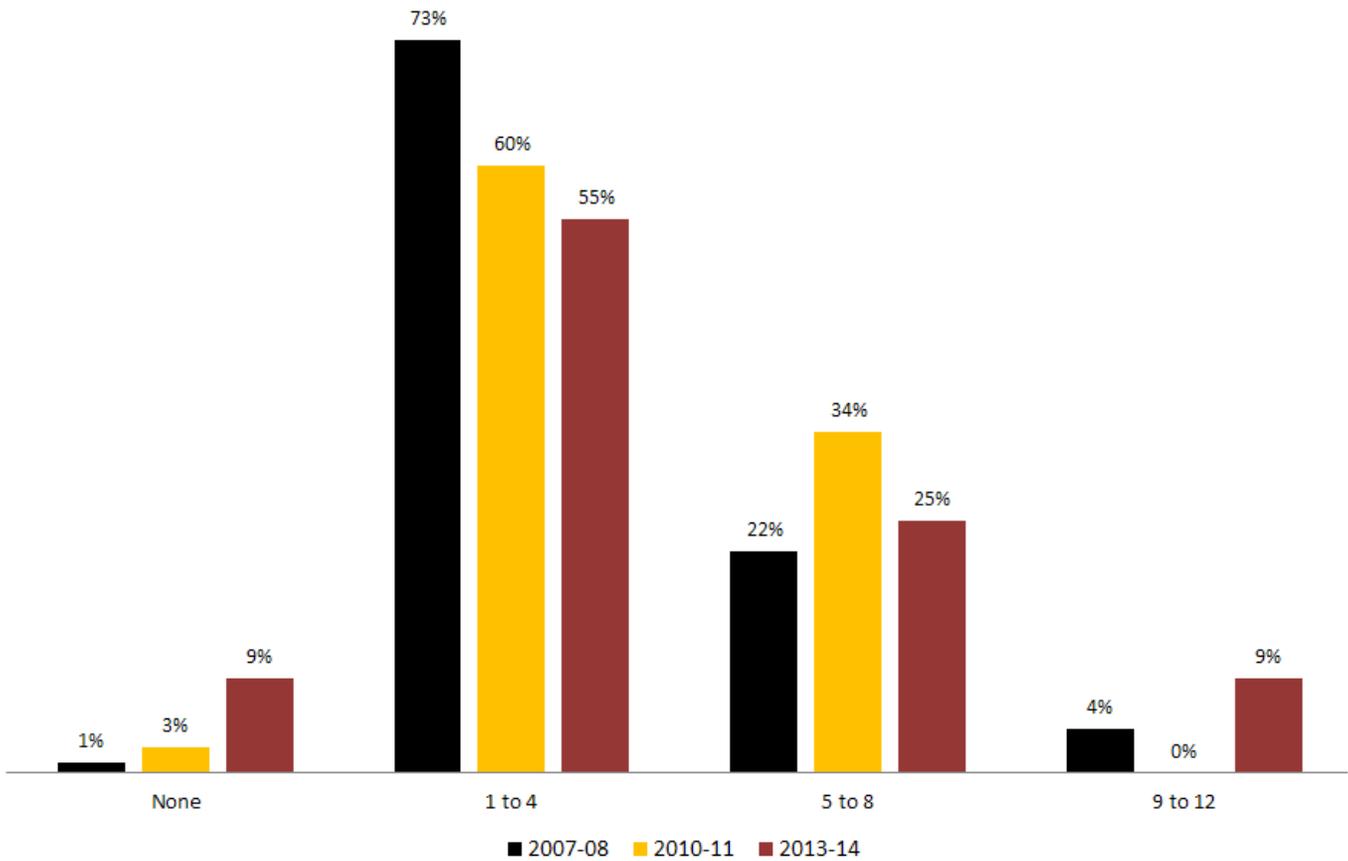


Figure 2.1: Faculty time spent in committee work and meetings each week (source: HERI Faculty Survey)

### Administration

The administrative structure is described in the [Bylaws](#) and outlined in Article IV of the *Statute* (p.38). Academic administrators' responsibilities are also described in the *Statute*. The President and Provost are evaluated on a rotating basis, typically every three years, by a committee of faculty members appointed by the Committee on Committees (Faculty Handbook, p.48]. The Dean for Curriculum and Academic Engagement and the Dean for Faculty Development are reviewed annually by the Provost, with review by an appointed faculty committee in the spring semester of the second year of each term of service.

### College Campus Community

[Campus Council](#), a campus-wide governance committee, is charged to (1) support and forward Wooster's commitment to intellectual growth through liberal education; (2) promote the welfare of all members and organizations of the College; (3) discuss, legislate, and make recommendations on issues affecting and/or related to the campus community, the College's mission, or the College's strategic plan; and (4) establish means through which students, faculty, and staff can express their views and better understand the opinions of others. Campus Council is composed of nine elected student representatives and nine appointed faculty, staff, and administration members. Four of the student councilors are elected at-large by the students to represent all students, and five are elected to represent key constituency interests on campus. These interests are: racial and ethnic diversity, gender and sexual orientation, international students, service and civic engagement, and Greek organizations. Council completes most of its work in five established committees that are composed of members of Council and relevant members of the campus community. In the past, such committees have worked to rewrite and update the student policy book the Scots' Key, create a manual for College club sports, and rewrite the budget process for student organizations. In addition, Campus Council is responsible for the allocation of student activities funds to student organizations based upon well-outlined budgeting guidelines. Councilors are required to be responsive to their constituencies by actively meeting with constituents to hear their questions and concerns so that they can effectively advocate on their behalf.

### Staff

Support and administrative staff are governed by the [Handbook of Benefits, Policies, and Procedures](#). There is a College of Wooster Staff Committee (CWSC) composed of eleven representatives from all divisions of the College. The membership includes both exempt and

non-exempt staff. Established in 1972, the [mission of the CWSC](#) is “to serve as an advisory body between all hourly and salaried staff members and other college constituencies.” The CWSC has taken an active partnership role with Human Resources in recognizing staff work groups, policy reviews, and appointments to College advisory committees. In the fall of 2015, President Nugent charged the CWSC to gain information from staff members, in peer-to-peer conversations, about compensation and broader perceptions of the College as a workplace. The [report](#) finds that staff value their benefits very highly. Staff also reported that the best aspects of working at Wooster include the interactions with students, relationships with colleagues, and the sense of a common, worthwhile purpose. The primary concerns were management training, compensation, and new staff orientation. The results were presented in Spring 2016 to SPPAC, the Board of Trustees, and shared with the campus community and serve as priorities for the Human Resources department and the College. Many of the concerns raised through this process [have now been addressed](#).

## Students

Students are governed by the Codes of Community and Individual Responsibility as found in [The Scot's Key](#). Students have their own organization of [committees and organizations](#), one of which is the [Student Government Association](#) (SGA) (<http://sga.spaces.wooster.edu/>) . “The main goal of SGA is to keep the student body informed, while ensuring that student input is heard by the administration.” SGA is also responsible for identifying and designating student representatives to various College committees and student observers to the Board of Trustees meetings.

## Alumni

The [Alumni Association](#) includes all graduates and recipients of an honorary degree from The College of Wooster. The primary purpose of the Alumni Association is to serve as a liaison between alumni and the College. The Alumni Association seeks to foster awareness, communication, and support for the College while providing opportunities for alumni engagement with the College and with other alumni. The [Alumni Board](#) governs the Alumni Association and participates in meetings and a variety of activities to support students, alumni, and the mission of the College. The Board meets on campus semi-annually. The president of the Alumni Board is an observer at Board of Trustees meetings.

We hold that communication and transparency are essential elements of engaging the College community in shared governance, planning, and informing decision making. This is most evident in our practices. For example, the President holds post-Board meetings to inform the campus about Board activities. The Provost's office makes public the [information on faculty activities and Academic Affairs' accomplishments](#) that it provides to the Board at its [June meeting](#). Minutes of all elected committees, except TS&T (for confidentiality reasons), are provided to the faculty in the [faculty meeting agendas](#) and are posted on the campus intranet (wiki). The Conference with Trustees Committee provides regular reports to the faculty of its observations of Trustee meetings. The College's planning process has included regular engagement of all campus stakeholders, an active [blog](#), and [campus-only intranet site](#). Our HLC decennial self-study process included an [active blog](#), community forum discussions around questions posed by each of the working groups, regular updates at each faculty meeting, and a “read in” where students, faculty, and staff could provide comment and feedback on outlines of the self-study document. The process for preparing this Assurance Argument involved various College committees, departments, student leaders, administrators, and senior leadership.

## Sources

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- 1-Statute of Instruction (page number 33)
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- Wooster's Promise Case Statement

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

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

### Argument

Our [Core Values](#) of "Independence of Thought" and "Social and Intellectual Responsibility," discussed in Criterion 1, are the evidence of our commitment to academic freedom, freedom of exchange of thoughts and ideas, and the standards to which we hold ourselves in our pursuit of our core mission. These core values are reflected most notably in our academic and student policies, which are outlined in the College Catalog and on the College website.

*The Statute* includes a section on "Academic Freedom" (Section 9, p.18). *The Statute* also describes the policy in the event that there is question about whether a person (or group) should speak on campus. The [Handbook of Selected College Policies](#) includes policies that address partisan political activity on campus, non-discrimination and complaint procedures, and professional conduct. In 2017-18, we will convene a group of students, staff and faculty to discuss a more explicit articulation of the College's commitment to free expression and to an equitable and inclusive learning environment. We anticipate this will result in some clearer policies regarding on-campus protest, invitation of speakers and performers, and related matters.

### Sources

- 1-Statute of Instruction
- 1-Statute of Instruction (page number 18)
- Core Values \_ The College of Wooster
- handbook-policies (PRES)

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

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

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

### Argument

#### 2.E.1.

The College has a Human Subjects Research Committee (HSRC) (our institutional review board); its [policies](#) and [procedures](#) are outlined on its website. We also have an Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) (Faculty Handbook, Section 7,p.42) composed of three faculty members and the Provost. This committee works to ensure ethical practices in experiments involving animals.

We continually enhance our resources and revise our guidelines to assist faculty and students in understanding the requirements relating to the practice of research. For example, faculty serving as principal investigators on grants are guided by a "[Proposal Checklist for Principal Investigators](#)" that outlines the steps in the process, pertinent reviews by campus committees or external agencies, coordination points with College offices, and timelines for review. [Departmental Independent Study handbooks](#) outline the process and requirements of completing an I.S. within a [specific department](#) or program, including points at which review by the department or a College committee, such as the HSRC or IACUC are necessary.

We have been actively focused on raising awareness of "Research Ethics" among faculty, students, and staff, with our initial emphasis in the sciences and social sciences. Prompted by requirements established by the NSF for funding of student research, STEM chairs and the Dean for Faculty Development explored more robust training in research ethics and adopted the National Center for Professional & Research Ethics "Ethics CORE" (<https://nationaalethicscenter.org/>). We now have a two-pronged approach to research ethics education, including presentations by Wooster faculty and completion of the on-line course. We are integrating this ethics training into Junior Independent Study courses in the sciences. This training is one element of our "[Responsible Conduct of Research Policy & Resources.](#)"

#### 2.E.2.

The Libraries "[LibGuides](#)" online resource site provides information on citing sources correctly. Most first-year students are introduced to library and information resources and the principles of appropriate use during their First-Year Seminar classes, where they participate in sessions with the Libraries faculty. Students in discipline-specific research courses may attend sessions with Library faculty who have expertise in that discipline. In addition, they sometimes attend sessions conducted by their professors on research and information resources.

Each fall, the College provides students with information about "[Copyright Infringement](#)," our policies and guidelines regarding illegal acquisition or sharing of copyrighted media. This information, coupled with significantly enhanced firewall capabilities and more affordable media streaming options, has resulted in few, if any, "RIAA" notices to the institution.

#### 2.E.3.

The College has a [Code of Academic Integrity](#) that requires faculty to communicate expectations in the classroom. The Dean for Curriculum and Academic Engagement has suggested syllabus statements to inform students of the policy and the procedures to be followed in the case of a violation of the Code of Academic Integrity. The Code also clearly states that "each faculty member shall develop and maintain an academic atmosphere conducive to academic integrity."

The *Faculty Handbook-Statute of Instruction* denote a range of acts that are grounds for faculty dismissal, among them are plagiarism and academic fraud (*Statute*, p.12). Faculty members are required to acknowledge work contributed by students to scholarly products. The *Faculty Handbook* also includes information related to copyright (p.52). The College's [Intellectual Property policy](#) provides a comprehensive list of the types of works or inventions that maybe considered under the policy, definitions of common terms used when referring to intellectual property, and it describes the rights and responsibilities of both the College and the inventor or author. The Intellectual Property policy applies to faculty, staff, and students.

The College's policies on academic honesty and the [Code of Academic Integrity](#) are outlined on the website and in the *Scot's Key*. Our code expects that each student and member of the faculty has an individual responsibility to uphold the Code of Academic Integrity. Therefore, each individual has the responsibility for confronting an issue of academic dishonesty personally. The Code of Academic Integrity provides students and faculty with resources for counsel and a variety of means for addressing the alleged violation of policy.

The Staff Handbook outlines a range of policies involving integrity. For example, there are policies prohibiting harassment, nepotism, sexual relationships with students, hazing, and assault (p. 25+). Procedures for addressing alleged violations of these policies are outlined in the Staff Handbook.

## Sources

- 1-Statute of Instruction
- 1-Statute of Instruction (page number 12)
- 7-Selected College Policies
- 7-Selected College Policies (page number 42)
- 7-Selected College Policies (page number 52)
- Code of Academic Integrity (DCAE)
- Faculty Grants proposal-checklist (ACAF)
- Human Subjects Research Committee (ACAF)
- Human Subjects Research Committee\_policy (ACAF)
- Intellectual Property Policy [CoW]
- IS Handbook [PSYC]
- IS Handbooks (ACAF)
- ITPolicy\_CopyrightInfringement\_HEOA (I&P)
- LibGuides citation [LIBR}
- ResponsibleConductResearch Wooster (DFD)
- Staff Handbook 2011 rev March 2015-1 (HR)
- Staff Handbook 2011 rev March 2015-1 (HR) (page number 25)

## 2.S - Summary

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

### **Summary**

The College of Wooster acts with integrity and our actions are both ethical and responsible. We value being a community of independent minds who work together, with this work guided by our Mission, Core Values, and the Wooster Ethic. We evaluate and strengthen our governance structures and processes and we review and revise our policies and procedures, particularly those around inclusion, equity, and student safety. Given the centrality of research to our educational approach, we continue to raise awareness of research ethics among faculty, students, and staff. In 2013 we observed that “we have many policies” and recommended that we take a comprehensive look to determine whether they are achieving their intent. Also, we may be “missing” policies, for example, as we reviewed this Criterion, we found that we lack a clearly articulated process for students who wish to file complaints about faculty members. except as regards Title IX, where reporting to the Title IX coordinator is clearly defined. And as in 2013, our and our constituencies’ dependence on electronic repositories for our policies, procedures, and information has grown, not only posing the challenge of “cluttered” websites, but also confusion as to where to find what one is looking for.

### **Sources**

*There are no sources.*

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

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

- [3.A - The institution's degree programs are appropriate to higher education](#)
- [3.B - The institution demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition...](#)
- [3.C - The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services](#)
- [3.D - The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching](#)
- [3.E - The institution fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment](#)
- [3.S - Summary](#)

## 3.A - The institution's degree programs are appropriate to higher education

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

### Argument

#### Courses and programs are current and appropriate. [3.A.1.]

The process of assuring the appropriateness of the courses, programs, and degrees at The College of Wooster occurs at several levels. Each course that is added to the curriculum undergoes a review process. An [application form](#) is completed that requires not only a description of the course, but also a "Proposed *syllabus*, including learning objectives for the course and typical readings, assignments, and method for calculating final grades. A *rationale* for how the course aligns with the program's or department's objectives, helps to fulfill the College's Mission, and works toward one or more of the College's Graduate Qualities. A *Chair's support letter*, which should include: (1) a schedule indicating how frequently the course is to be taught and whether it will replace any of the current offerings in the department or program; and, if this course is not replacing an existing course, (2) a model of department or program staffing for a three-year period indicating any effect the changes will have on course rotation, teaching load, and the ability of the department or program to meet its responsibilities to majors, non-majors, and the College's interdepartmental programs." Importantly, chairs are asked to include a description of any effect the course may have on *other department and interdepartmental programs* and they are required to ask chairs from those departments or program to write a letter support for the changes. Similarly, they are asked to consider what College resources (library, software, lab, etc.) will be needed to support the course. Finally, the chair's statement must describe the proposed course *demographics*. Is it intended for majors or non-majors? If it is for majors, is it required or elective? The application is submitted to EPC, and if approved, it is taken to the entire faculty for a vote. Similar processes take place for any significant change to the curriculum.

Departments and programs undergo an [extensive review](#) every ten years. The review is part self-study, part review by external experts in the field, and part review by EPC. In addition, departments and programs have been asked to create a [mission statement](#), [a set of learning goals](#), and a [map](#) of how their learning goals and the Graduate Qualities link to the specific courses offered. The ten-year review and its role in assessment is described in much greater detail in Criterion 4.

Finally, three departments receive accreditation from outside agencies and their course offerings are reviewed as part of that process; the [Education Department](#) by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, the [Chemistry Departments](#) through the American Chemical Society, and the [Music Department](#) through the National Association of Schools of Music.

#### The College of Wooster articulates learning goals for undergraduate programs. [3.A.2.]

The College of Wooster offers undergraduate degrees only – there are not graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate, or certificate programs offered.

#### The College of Wooster is a residential liberal arts college. [3.A.3.]

The College of Wooster does not have branch campuses, nor does it offer online courses. We do not accept credits from dual credit or on-line courses. The College does not give credit for experiences or non-academic work that students engage in prior to their arrival at Wooster

### Sources

- ACS Approval Letter
- changes in curriculum form
- Dept-Program Assessment and Review Guidelines
- Mapping Memo
- Mission Statements and Learning Goals
- NASM Response to Response
- NCATE Accreditation Document

## 3.B - The institution demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition...

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

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

### Argument

#### **The College of Wooster's general education program is appropriate to the mission of the institution. [3.B.1.]**

The College of Wooster developed a philosophy of education that is captured in *A Wooster Education (Catalogue, p. 17-18)*. Implemented in the 2001-2002 academic year, this document outlines our philosophy of a liberal arts education, a rationale of the educational theme "from FYS to I.S." (i.e., First Year Seminar to Independent Study), and the Bachelor of Arts degree requirements. The curriculum seeks to create independent learners who "appreciate the nature of academic disciplines" and prepare them "for lives of responsibility in a pluralistic society." The program is designed to foster both a depth and breadth of learning.

The general education program requirements (*Catalogue, p. 241-242*) include a First-Year Seminar in Critical Inquiry, Writing Proficiency, a Writing Intensive Course, Proficiency in a Foreign Language, Studies in Cultural Difference, a course on Religious Perspectives, a course that emphasizes Quantitative Reasoning, and at least two courses each from the Arts and Humanities, the Social Sciences, and the Mathematical and Natural Sciences. These courses are in addition to those required for the major or minor.

The entire general education curriculum is currently under review. Although aspects of the curriculum are regularly examined and modified, a complete review of the curriculum has not taken place since 2001. We began the current review in the academic year 2014-2015 with discussions in EPC, the selection of a committee to discuss general issues and principles of a general education, and several meetings with external speakers who were brought to campus to discuss various models for general education. At the time of this writing, it is not clear what changes might occur, but a [great deal of work has been completed in the past year](#) and a set of [guiding principles](#) for possible changes has been approved by the faculty. A portion of the activities is summarized in the attached [report to the Teagle Foundation](#) (p. 3-4), which supported some of our work.

#### **The College of Wooster articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess. [3.B.2.]**

It is important to note that Wooster's Graduate Qualities offer a clear articulation of the expected outcomes described in *A Wooster Education*. The Graduate Qualities additionally connect our general education requirements to our Mission. The specific outcomes detailed in the Graduate Qualities are also intended to facilitate assessment. All departments and programs have learning goals and most of our departments and programs have [mapped learning outcomes](#) to both the Graduate Qualities and specific courses.

*A Wooster Education* contains not only the graduation requirements for each degree but also the goals of a liberal arts education. Each department's degree requirements and learning outcomes are grounded in that document.

The College of Wooster Catalogue outlines the degree requirements for each major, minor, and program (p. 20-215). Departments provide brief philosophical approaches to their discipline, along with a list of courses that can be applied to the major, minor, or program. Each course description contains a succinct summary of that course and a notation for the College's general degree requirements that are fulfilled by enrolling in that particular course.

FYS syllabi are required to contain learning goals, as is explained in [FYS faculty training](#), which occurs every year for faculty teaching in the program. The Dean for Curriculum and Academic Engagement reviews syllabi to ensure this requirement is met.

Although we are the most explicit about the need for learning goals on FYS syllabi, most faculty members include the goals on syllabi for all of their courses. By [College policy](#), faculty members initiating new courses at the College are required to submit a full course proposal along with a draft syllabus and learning goals to the EPC. Currently, there is no mechanism in place to ensure that faculty who are teaching already-approved courses continue to list learning goals, although most do so.

[New faculty members](#) attend a workshop on "How to Write a Syllabus" as part of the New Faculty Orientation. In addition, all senior members of the faculty are asked to submit syllabi to Academic Affairs as part of their biennial reviews, and junior members of the faculty are required to

submit to the Office of the Provost all syllabi for courses taught as part of the tenure review process. Finally, departments review syllabi as part of assessment, program review, and faculty review.

The College's learning goals, as expressed by the Graduate Qualities, are clearly stated on our website and in the catalogue. They are also widely distributed and discussed with incoming students and their families during the College's summer advising and registration program, ARCH. Virtually all students and parents who completed an evaluation form after their ARCH session said that they either "strongly agreed" or "agreed" that the [programming helped them understand the Mission and Graduate Qualities](#).

Data from seniors reported in the NSSE (2015) report indicated that Wooster seniors [evaluated their entire educational experience](#) (p. 1) as between "good" and "excellent" with the modal response being excellent (the highest rating available). When asked whether they would go to the same institution if they could choose again (p. 2), the modal response was "definitely yes."

### **The College of Wooster engages students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments. [3.B.3.]**

The College's Graduate Qualities are reflected in the various degree requirements, and these degree requirements aid in developing the ability in our students to collect, analyze, and communicate information, along with developing the initiative for critical inquiry. All of this is done with the awareness of a diverse and ever-changing global community.

The College takes a developmental approach to engaging students in a process of critical inquiry. Our approach begins during [First-Year Seminar](#) when students receive purposeful faculty mentoring with a focus on the development of their writing skills. During the sophomore year, students are eligible to apply for the [Sophomore Research Experience](#). This program provides students with an opportunity to work with a professor on a research project. The Sophomore Research Experience is a large program with up to 100 positions available during the academic year and summer. In the junior year (*Catalogue*, p. 16-17), we require a one-semester course that focuses on the research skills, methodology, and theoretical framework necessary for [Senior Independent Study](#). The structure of the junior-level course depends on the discipline and includes a variety of pedagogical formats, such as one-on-one mentoring experiences, small seminars, and labs. Senior I.S. provides the final tier, and it focuses on sustained creative inquiry in order to bring an individual project to completion through written, oral, or digital communication. Many other courses and opportunities on campus also help to provide students with the background knowledge and experience to transition from First-Year Seminar to Senior I.S.

In large part because of the required I.S. program, all Wooster alumni reported participation in Independent Study or faculty research projects when enrolled at the college. IS is, of course, the signature program of the College and it is not surprising that our seniors are more likely to [participate in research with a faculty member](#) (p. 1) and [complete a senior capstone experience](#) (p. 2) than those students at peer institutions (NSSE 2015).

### **The College of Wooster recognizes the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live and work. [3.B.4.]**

The College of Wooster's Mission Statement specifies that a common institutional goal is to "prepare students to become leaders of character and influence in an interdependent global community." Several of our Graduate Qualities directly emphasize the message of diversity. Two key graduate qualities are **Global Engagement** - which focuses on the historical, cultural, religious, and language-based diversities in the world today and **Justice and Civic/Social Responsibility** - which emphasizes an understanding and respect for the diversity and complexity of human identities, including race, class, gender, sexuality, ability, culture, and religion

Generalized curricular goals are outlined in *A Wooster Education (Catalogue, p. 17-18)*, which includes a discussion of liberal arts educational objectives such as responsible citizenship so that students can meaningfully contribute to their communities. A key component of these goals is to increase awareness of different cultures both outside the United States and within the United States. Courses, therefore, are initiated that directly address these liberal arts education goals, provide students with needed skills to impact global engagement, and increase knowledge of diversity. The Fall 2017 [course offerings](#) included 66 courses from 13 different departments/programs that explicitly addressed cultural differences. Degree Requirements (Bachelor of Arts) mandate student enrollment in courses in a Foreign Language (unless the student is already proficient in a second language), Cultural Difference, Religious Perspectives, and Learning Across the Disciplines. HERI (2013) data provide a gauge for the College's Strategic Priority of Global Education. Most members of the faculty believe that our focus on global education is effective: 88% either agree or strongly agree that the College has a long-standing [commitment to diversity](#) and 96% agree or strongly agree that the College promotes the [appreciation of cultural differences](#).

There is evidence that The College of Wooster has achieved a high level of success in meeting the goal of the recognition of human and cultural diversity in a global context. For example, in the 2013- 2014 academic year, 181 students studied off-campus for a semester or a year. Off-campus experience allows many of our students to live and study in a country and culture different from their own. These programs are regularly evaluated for their quality. (The process for approving a program is evident in the proposal for adding [a new program](#) to study Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies abroad that was approved by the faculty at the May 2016 faculty meeting). The 2015 NSSE report indicated that 42% of our responding [seniors had studied abroad](#). This is a slightly lower percentage than that reported by our peers. The College of Wooster has seen a decrease in the number of [students who major](#) in areas within the arts and humanities (and which tend to send students abroad frequently) and an increase in the number of students who major in STEM departments and some of the social sciences (which tend to send fewer students abroad). Students in STEM majors are less likely to go abroad because of the sequential nature of the structure of the curriculum, and the requirement of lab courses (which are more difficult to obtain when abroad). Additionally, the three-semester sequence of I.S., which is required of all students, makes scheduling a semester abroad more difficult. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the costs associated with study abroad and concerns over safety have reduced the numbers somewhat.

In addition to traditional study-abroad semester programs, The College has also increased the number of [TREK](#) (formally called *Wooster-In*) programs it offers. TREK programs are College programs designed and taught by Wooster faculty that include both a regular on-campus class as

well as an extended trip to another country. The Office of Off-Campus Study has been working with the faculty to develop short programs in which more students may participate.

The [Ambassadors Program](#) promotes an understanding of global issues by selecting five international students or global nomads each year to create presentations on their countries, cultures, and current events. Ambassadors give their presentations in local schools, at community functions and in Wooster classes and events at no cost. They average about one presentation a week throughout the academic year.

In our most recent (2016) Senior Survey, 78% of seniors reported that “My Wooster experience contributed” either “very much” or “quite a bit” to developing both the Graduate Quality of [Global Engagement and Respect for Diversity](#) and the Graduate Quality of [Intercultural Knowledge and Competence](#). (Note: these are older versions of our Graduate Qualities). The trends from recent senior surveys indicate that, if anything, the percentage has increased from 2013 and 2014 to 2015 and 2016.

Data from alumni surveyed as part of the department reviews indicated that about 80% of our alumni responded that the College sufficiently or considerably contributed to their [development of Global Engagement and Respect for Diversity and Intercultural Knowledge and Competence](#). These percentages are high, but not as high as for traits such as Critical Thinking, Effective Writing, and Problem Solving, which were all above 93%. Thus, there is more work to do in this area and, in fact, the CDI is a reorganized and updated version of the former Center for Diversity and Global Engagement (CDGE). A review of CDGE indicated areas of weakness in terms of its structure. The structure of the new CDI strengthens and clarifies the function of the Center and its offerings.

Wooster data from the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) Faculty Survey (2013-14) underscore Wooster’s commitment to cultural diversity. Over 88% of our faculty agree or agree strongly the College has a commitment to [diversity](#). Similarly, 96% of the faculty agree or strongly agree that the College promotes an appreciation of [cultural differences](#).

The [Hales Fund](#) was established in honor of President Emeritus Stanton Hales by the College’s Board of Trustees to encourage faculty members (and more recently staff) to incorporate a more global perspective into teaching and college life. Each year a group of faculty and staff select a global topic and meet every three to four weeks to discuss readings. In the summer, they are given an opportunity to travel as a group to further their understanding of the issue. Group members are then expected to use this experience to update an existing course or develop a new course so that students may gain a more international perspective on the topic. More than 90 faculty members have participated in the program. The destinations for faculty benefiting from this fund have included South Africa, Cuba, China, and India, among others.

Our participation in the [Global Liberal Arts Alliance](#) has also helped faculty members to become more familiar with global issues. The Global Liberal Arts Alliance “is an organization of 25 liberal arts colleges and universities, located in 13 nations, whose purpose is to strengthen education in the tradition of the liberal arts through the exchange of experience and the development of mutually beneficial programs.” Alliance programs fund international visiting fellowships as well as leadership meetings for deans and presidents on global liberal-arts issues.

### **The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge. [3.B.5.]**

The College’s Mission Statement reflects the importance of having a faculty and a student body who actively contribute to research and scholarship of a variety of types: “Wooster graduates are creative and independent thinkers with exceptional abilities to ask important questions, research complex issues, solve problems, and communicate new knowledge and insight.” Wooster’s *Strategic Framework* outlines the College’s Core Values, one of which is “A Focus on Research and Collaboration.” One of our Strategic Objectives is to build on the strengths of our I.S. program.

Faculty and students, therefore, are both immersed in a culture that values achievement in research and scholarship. Faculty must be actively engaged scholars, as is evident in the [Criterion of Evaluation](#) available in the *Statute of Instruction*; students must contribute to new knowledge or creative works through I.S. in order to graduate.

Faculty achievements are documented annually by the College. Toward the end the academic year, half of the faculty are required to submit a [Biennial Report](#) that includes a current curriculum vitae and the syllabi of any courses they have taught over the period. The following year, the other half of the faculty submit their reports. The report contains all completed, ongoing, and new research, scholarship, performances, and exhibitions undertaken by each faculty member during the most recent two academic years. Although not comprehensive, the [Faculty Achievements Website](#) provides a listing by academic year of faculty awards, publications, exhibitions, and grants. Further, the Office of the Provost compiles a Tenure Review Document, given to junior faculty each year. This Tenure Review Document provides junior faculty a glimpse of all of the scholarly accomplishments of faculty receiving tenure during the previous five years.

Because of The College of Wooster’s tradition of mentored student research, we document student achievements in the realm of research and scholarship. By keeping track of the various I.S. theses, the College has constructed the “[I.S. Database](#),” available on the College website. I.S. documents are available online to the campus community. Each April since the spring of 2008, the [Senior Research Symposium](#) has celebrated the I.S. accomplishments of the senior class. For an entire day, senior students present their I.S. projects as oral, digital, poster, or visual art presentations to the greater campus community. During the 2016 symposium, 80% of the seniors presented their I.S. work.

## **Sources**

- 2015ARCHsurvey
- 2017 Senior Symposium Program
- Biennial Faculty Report Form
- C Courses Fall 2017
- changes in curriculum form

- Course Catalogue 2016-2017
- Course Catalogue 2016-2017 (page number 16)
- Course Catalogue 2016-2017 (page number 17)
- Course Catalogue 2016-2017 (page number 20)
- Course Catalogue 2016-2017 (page number 241)
- EPC Principles Guiding Curricular Change
- EPC Timeline - Curriculum Revision
- Faculty Achievements \_ The College of Wooster
- Faculty Promotion Reporting and Evaluation \_ The College of Wooster
- Faculty Review Process - FAQ's \_ The College of Wooster
- First-Year Seminar \_ The College of Wooster
- FYS Workshop
- Global Liberal Arts Alliance
- Grad Qual Tables Graphs
- Hales Funded Faculty International Trav
- HERI commit to diversity
- HERI commit to diversity
- HERI Cultural Appreciation
- HERI Cultural Appreciation
- Mapping Memo
- New and Prospective Faculty \_ The College of Wooster
- NSSE 2015 Overall Wooster Experience
- NSSE 2015 Overall Wooster Experience (page number 1)
- NSSE 2015 Overall Wooster Experience (page number 2)
- NSSE 2015 research and capstone
- NSSE 2015 research and capstone (page number 1)
- NSSE 2015 research and capstone (page number 2)
- NSSE 2015 Study abroad
- Request Approve New Study Abroad
- Results from the 2016 Senior Survey Intercultural
- Search the I.S
- Senior Independent Study \_ The College of Wooster
- Sophomore Research \_ The College of Wooster
- Statute of Instruction part 1
- Teagle Report January 2017
- Teagle Report January 2017 (page number 3)
- Wooster Ambassadors Program \_ The College of Wooster
- Wooster Majors 11-16
- Wooster TREKs \_ The College of Wooster

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

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

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

### Argument

#### **The College of Wooster has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members. [3.C.1.]**

The [student/faculty ratio](#) at Wooster in Fall 2016 was 11.25/1.

In 2005 the faculty and administration engaged in a thorough analysis of the workload of its faculty, ultimately recommending a small reduction in the teaching expectation of faculty (from 6 courses per year to 5.5). This reduction was, in part, to accommodate for increased expectations in other portions of their work, including committee service and assessment. Since that time we have monitored faculty workloads more carefully with an eye toward ensuring that we have the proper number of faculty given our mission and our distinctive approach to a liberal education. Specifically, we review HERI data on faculty work, faculty willingness to serve on committees, and internal workload calculations.

The HERI (2013-14) data indicate that our faculty members are fully involved in the work of the College, but not markedly more so than at other institutions. Wooster faculty report spending about the same amount of time on [committee](#) (p. 1) and [administrative](#) (p. 2) work as their peers at other institutions and about the same amount of time in scheduled [teaching](#) (p. 3). Our faculty report spending slightly more time than those at other institutions [advising](#) (p. 4).

Annually our Committee on Committees is in charge of running elections for the six elected faculty committees and appointing members to the other committees. The committee regularly reviews the number of committees to determine whether we have the committees we need to attend to the governance of the College and whether we have the correct number of members on each committee. The committee asks faculty to indicate the committees on which they are willing to serve and then makes recommendations for appointments. While committee service is expected of each faculty member, there are mechanisms in place for expressing a preference on both elected and appointed committees. There does not appear to be any shortage of eligible and willing faculty to serve on committee positions. The vast majority of eligible faculty provide service to elected and appointed committees. Thus, the indications are that there are sufficient numbers of faculty to carry out the committee work at the College. The [Committee on Committees](#) has recently taken on a multi-year study of faculty governance and faculty commitments to better understand the trends in willingness to serve across gender, division, and rank so that they might make recommendations if disparities exist.

Each year the Dean for Faculty Development analyzes the [teaching load credit](#) of each faculty member for purposes of job performance, equity, and salary consideration. During the past eight years, the average faculty course load was 5.68, just slightly higher than the 5.5 expected load

We have increased our faculty presence in oversight of curriculum and expectations in a number of ways. In 2009, we divided the responsibilities of the Dean of the Faculty into two positions: Dean for Curriculum and Academic Engagement (Faculty Handbook, Section 1, p. 39-40), and Dean for Faculty Development (Faculty Handbook, Section 1, p. 40). This increase has allowed us to augment our attention to curriculum and assessment, and to develop more robust programs in faculty development and support of student and faculty research. Each of these positions is staffed by current faculty members, but their classroom work is fully replaced within their departments. Additionally, we have created associate dean and director positions, including the Associate Dean for Academic Advising, and the Associate Dean of Experiential Learning.

#### **All instructors are appropriately qualified. [3.C.2.]**

When instructors [apply](#) (p. 4) at The College of Wooster, we carefully check references and require the submission of graduate school transcripts. The Office of the Dean for Faculty Development maintains a listing of all instructors, with verification of receipt of transcripts. We also engage in a thorough audit of faculty files to ensure that transcripts are present. If a faculty member's file lacks official transcripts, the Dean for Faculty Development formally requests the faculty member to provide them. Finally, our faculty hiring documents require that department chairs hire faculty with *at least* a degree level beyond the B.A. The only exception to this requirement is for highly-specialized areas such as physical education skills courses and music lessons.

#### **Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures. [3.C.3.]**

Continuing faculty members are reviewed on a regular cycle, depending on whether they are tenured or pre-tenure. Under a normal schedule, pre-tenure members of the faculty are reviewed for contract renewal in their second and their fourth year and then for tenure in their sixth year. The review process, as outlined in the Faculty Handbook (p. 8-11), includes classroom observations by department members and members of the

Teaching Staff and Tenure (TS&T) committee, a review of teaching evaluations, publications, and course syllabi. In addition, students provide letters detailing the strengths and weakness of the faculty, and for those in their fourth or sixth year we solicit letters from outside evaluators regarding research and scholarship.

For tenured faculty, the evaluation process consists of the biennial review (described above). Faculty members considering promotion to Full Professor are normally reviewed in their eighth year of serving as Associate Professor. For this review, TS&T and department members read course evaluations and receive letters from students and outside evaluators. Promotion to Full Professor is not automatic.

We have various procedures to ensure that [faculty evaluation criteria are understood](#). All procedures and criteria are outlined in the *Faculty Handbook*. The TS&T committee meets annually with all faculty members under review to outline the procedures. The Provost meets with faculty and their chairpersons undergoing review both prior to the review to discuss the process and after the review to make sure the decision is clear. The Dean for Faculty Development also meets individually with all pre-tenure faculty members to discuss the process.

In the most recent (2014-15) HERI survey, 81% of faculty members responded "strongly" or "somewhat agree" that [criteria for advancement and promotion are clear](#). This percentage is substantially higher than was indicated in our 2013 report (54%) and reflects positively on the changes that have been made to both making the criteria for advancement more explicit and improvements in the transparency of the process.

Full-time instructors are required to solicit [student evaluations](#) for their courses and submit at least one course evaluation each semester to their department chair and TS&T. (Adjunct members of the faculty are required to submit evaluations for all courses). Student identity is concealed in the evaluations. Faculty members are required to turn in their summarized course evaluations to their chairperson. As part of this summary, instructors are asked to discuss how they plan to change their courses and teaching in response to the evaluations. The Chair comments on the summarized evaluations and will sometimes make further suggestions. He or she then sends the evaluations to the Provost's Office. TS&T uses course evaluations as part of the review process for junior faculty. The committee makes suggestions as to how instructors can improve their teaching and, at the time of the instructor's next review, check to be sure that there has been a follow-up on the recommendations. In addition to the course evaluations, chairpersons and the TS&T committee review annual reports and curriculum vitae to determine merit raises.

### **The College of Wooster has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines, adept in their teaching roles and it supports their professional development. [3.C.4.]**

A number of [workshops, seminars, and discussions](#) are held each year, primarily under the direction of the Dean of Faculty Development, to keep professors up to date on a variety of teaching and research matters. In addition, the Office of Academic Affairs maintains a number of funds to provide on-going professional development for faculty. Given our emphasis on mentored research, we believe that faculty needs to be well supported in their research efforts. The key sources of support are described below.

The College of Wooster maintains a very generous [research and study leave program](#) whereby pre-tenure and tenured faculty members are eligible to apply for a semester or a year-long research or study leaves (salary is fully supported). Eligibility is outlined in the *Statute of Instruction* (p. 25-26). Reviewers noted in our 2013 evaluation that, in large part due to the leave program, the IS experience was variable for our students. Hiring short-term replacements for faculty on leave resulted in inexperienced faculty guiding students. We have taken steps to ameliorate this issue. Specifically, several large departments have added a faculty member in order to make them "leave-proof." The idea is that larger departments will almost always have a faculty member on leave and the new position in the department will cover one leave. The result is that experienced faculty advise IS students. Additionally, departments have been asked to look ahead and anticipate leaves and other faculty needs. In these cases, three-year positions have been created to aid in continuity of the faculty and allow new faculty to gain experience in guiding IS.

The [Faculty Travel Benefit](#) (p. 1-3) fund guarantees one conference per faculty member annually. Faculty presenting papers receive a higher level of funding. Roughly 120 members of the faculty take advantage of this benefit each year.

The Office of the Dean for Faculty Development maintains an additional [Faculty Development Fund](#) (p. 3-4) for professional development that may be used to fund an additional conference, a workshop, or additional research costs. This fund is administered by an appointed Faculty Research and Development Committee. Approximately \$50,000 is allocated to about 50 faculty members each year.

The [Faculty Development Fund for Advancing Strategic Priorities](#) (p. 4-5) allocates approximately \$40,000 per year to support faculty in their work related to strategic priorities. Most notably, the fund supports efforts toward greater global engagement and digitally-based work. This fund is also administered by the Faculty Research and Development Committee, chaired by the Dean for Faculty Development.

The [Hewlett-Mellon Presidential Discretionary Fund](#) for Institutional Renewal is a program funded in 1992 by The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to endow a presidential discretionary fund for faculty and curriculum development and institutional self-renewal. Proposals may be submitted from individuals, departments, and programs that promise innovations in any area central to Wooster's core mission. Preference is given to those projects which seek to advance one or more of the strategic initiatives as described in the College's Strategic Framework. About \$120,000 is available annually.

The [Luce Fund](#) (p. 5) supports a number of larger research projects (about 8-10 annually), most generally for work during the summers or on research leave. Luce Funds are granted on a competitive basis. Approximately \$60,000 is available each year.

The HERI (2013-14) surveys indicate that faculty members take good advantage of the [professional development funds](#), and they feel well supported. Faculty from The College of Wooster are more likely to report to have taken a sabbatical leave, used travel funds provided by the institution, received an internal grant for research, received training for administrative leadership, and received incentives to develop new courses than faculty at our peer institutions. Additionally, 77% of faculty stated that there is [adequate support for faculty development](#), compared with 58% at our peer institutions.

### **Instructors are accessible for student inquiry. [3.C.5.]**

Every senior at Wooster works one-on-one with a faculty mentor to conceive, organize and complete a significant piece of original research,

scholarship or creative expression. This Independent Study project (*Faculty Handbook*, Section 3) is the cornerstone of Wooster's commitment to faculty mentoring of student inquiry.

All of our faculty are expected to maintain weekly office hours and are required to be [accessible to students](#).

Many of our courses are [student-inquiry driven](#): according to HERI (2013-14) data, 73% of faculty report that they use student inquiry to drive student learning in "all" or "most" of their courses. Our faculty rank higher than faculty at comparable institutions in a number of [advising related activities](#). Another way Wooster demonstrates its commitment to engagement with students is through our [course evaluation forms](#), most of which ask students to comment on the availability of faculty.

### **Staff members are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development. [3.C.6.]**

The College of Wooster has published [policies and procedures](#) for the recruitment, hiring, and responsibilities of all staff. Our procedures to accurately generate a list of the qualifications needed to fill an open position, including a new or revised position description, and our procedure to verify that applicants meet those qualifications are described on the Human Resources web pages. In addition, we supply in hard copy supplemental materials such as [guidelines for interviewing](#) potential hires. A variety of [training and leadership seminars](#) are available to staff to aid in their professional development.

Within the general College guidelines, each department or program determines the appropriate qualifications for its hires. The Writing Center, for example, requires all members of the center that teach the Writing Studio course to have a degree beyond the BA degree. All of these staff have an MA, MFA, or Ph.D. degree.

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- Student evaluation of courses memo
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## 3.D - The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching

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

### Argument

#### **The College of Wooster provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations. [3.D.1.]**

There are a wide variety of support services available to College of Wooster students. Many of these are clearly presented in a pamphlet titled [Resource Guide 2016-2017](#). The pamphlet lists about 40 offices and programs on campus that provide help and services to students. A one-sheet listing of the [key educational support services](#) was distributed to all faculty. The sheet lists the primary forms of assistance that are available as well as a contact person for each.

Any students who are deemed at risk either academically or personally may be referred to First Watch, a group of faculty and staff who meet on a regular basis to address the problems and issues individual students are facing.

Faculty members are encouraged to submit [Interim Reports](#) for any students receiving low grades or who are otherwise having difficulty in a course. The reports are sent to the Dean of Students office, and remediation is suggested on a case-by-case basis.

#### **The College of Wooster provides learning support for its students. It has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared. [3.D.2.]**

The College does not offer remedial or "pre-" classes. Wooster does, however, offer .25 credit Writing Studio, Global Engagement, and Stem Studio [seminars to help students to adjust](#) to college-level work. These seminars are part of larger programs that include access to advising, workshops, and tutors so that all students are prepared to succeed at Wooster.

Students take [placement exams](#) in one or more subjects (Math, Biology, and Chemistry) prior to the summer advising and registration (ARCH) program. On the first day of the ARCH program, language placement tests [Spanish, French, German, Latin] are given to determine appropriate entry levels for those courses. Results are shared with faculty advisors and the ARCH staff.

Scores on the ACT/SAT writing tests are used to identify students who may need additional work in writing. Many of these students enroll in the Writing Studio (*Catalogue*, p.132). In addition, during their first semester, students' academic advisors (who teach their First-Year Seminar class) and other course instructors are able to identify any student they feel may need additional writing help as a result of the work produced for their classes. These students are typically referred to the Writing Center (*Catalogue*, p 228-229).

Students whose first language is not English often enroll in the Writing Studio. There are several other programs available to those who need extra work [learning English](#) including tutoring, workshops, and a summer English Engagement Seminar.

Each department has in place a list of prerequisite requirements for its classes, which are noted in the department section of course listings (*Catalogue*, p. 20-215) within the *College of Wooster Catalogue*. New students are also provided with a list of suggested courses for first-year students.

The advising process also requires students to meet with their advisor before each course selection period to discuss their course selection plans. Students cannot be cleared for registration until the advisor notes, within the registration system, that this conference has occurred.

Policies on the transfer of credits and advanced placement credit (*Catalogue*, p. 262-265) are also in place at Wooster and can be found in the *College of Wooster Catalogue*. Upon receipt of transcript or credit documents, the Registrar, with the assistance of the appropriate department, determines how credits will be awarded.

Throughout the academic experience, both the advisor and course instructors can direct students toward a variety of services to help the individual address areas of weakness or need. Among the services available to students are the Learning Center, the Math Center, the Writing Center, and peer tutoring.

The [Learning Center](#) functions as a support service for any Wooster student seeking academic assistance. The mission of the learning center is to enrich, enhance, and support students' educational experiences and to help them achieve their academic goals. The center is also the first contact point for students with learning disabilities and helps the College comply with the American Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, which prohibits discrimination based on disability.

The [Math Center](#) is available to students five days a week to help them understand concepts, examples, and homework problems that they encounter in their math courses at the College. It functions on a walk-in basis and offers free assistance to students in virtually all introductory-level Math classes.

The [Writing Center](#) is available to help students develop their reading and writing skills by encouraging them to think critically about the processes involved in both. The center is a free resource staffed by experienced professionals and trained peer tutors. Services available to students include planning, drafting and revising their written works, but do not involve editing or proofreading. The Writing Center offers one-on-one tutorials, independent study support, international student tutorials, and in-class writing workshops. Appointments are usually required for students and the center is open six days a week. The writing center is a frequently used resource.

### **The College of Wooster provides academic advising suited to its programs and the needs of its students. [3.D.3.]**

Wooster has developed a comprehensive advising program, unique to the institution, which encourages students to develop a clear sense of purpose in their educational programs and builds upon strong student-faculty and student-staff relationships.

In 2011, the Advising Center was renamed the Advising, Planning, and Experiential Learning Center, or [APEX](#), to better reflect the mission of the center. This center is the outcome of an initiative begun in 2005 to create a comprehensive program to strengthen advising. In addition, an Associate Dean (a senior faculty member) for APEX was put in place to enhance further the advising experience for entering students. He or she serves in that capacity for three years. These steps were taken to help strengthen advising during the first and second years. The move to APEX took place in the summer of 2012 and the [activities it oversees](#) have grown rapidly.

The developmental advising process begins at Wooster during the student's first summer through the [ARCH](#) program. The program consists of a two-day introduction to the educational program at Wooster. An advising team composed of faculty, staff, and students meets with the incoming first years in small groups to introduce them to the academic program, help them prepare for course selection, and take them through the registration process. The program allows the student and parents to have a better understanding of the overall academic experience at Wooster, and students to arrive on campus for the fall semester with their course schedule already in place. The student is then assigned a regular faculty advisor in the fall through the First-Year Seminar in Critical Inquiry (their instructor for this course). This faculty member serves as the student's advisor until a major is declared. A new faculty advisor is then appointed from the major department to serve as a mentor for that discipline. Finally, a senior I.S. advisor is appointed to guide the student during the completion of his or her senior capstone project, the Independent Study.

As part of their role at the College, faculty members are integral to advising, whether during ARCH, FYS, or in the department major. Section 2 of the *Faculty Handbook* is the *Handbook for Faculty Advisors*, which not only outlines the College's philosophical approaches to advising but also outlines faculty areas of responsibility in their role as advisors. The *Handbook* also provides a list of identified, college-wide offices and individuals who can be contacted when referrals for specific needs arise. Resources can also be found within the APEX Resource Guide and faculty advisors have access to the *Faculty Advising Booklet*, which is a summary document that includes the Mission Statement and Core Values, curricular goals, selected academic policies, and department-specific advising notes.

### **The College of Wooster provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning. [3.D.4.]**

As part of our Strategic Objectives, The College of Wooster completed a revision to its [Campus Facilities Master Plan](#), which the Board of Trustees adopted in June 2012. As this plan was guided by the College's Mission, Strategic Objectives, and Strategic Initiatives, the suggested areas for facilities and campus enhancement are principally those supporting our community of learners (residential and student activities facilities), our academic program particularly in the sciences, and our commitment to environmental sustainability.

Over the course of the past ten years, a variety of renovations and additions have been made on campus:

The addition of the Collaborative Research Environment (CoRE) in January of 2012 has provided the college with a "vibrant, exciting place for creative, collaborative work by students and faculty." CoRE is a place to brainstorm ideas, develop projects using digital and traditional media, sketch out a new concept, or practice a presentation. Students can consult with a research librarian on their topic, work with consultants at the writing center on the text, then move to the digital media bar and get help from the tech tutors to create a blog, put together a multimedia presentation, or edit a video on one of CoRE's media computers.

The Longbrake Commons and Collaboration rooms, added to Andrews in 2016-2017, have provided a new space for seminars, meetings, and they have increased the opportunities for APEX programming. In February 2017, a [Digital Studio](#) was added in Andrews which allows for the creation of a variety and video and audio projects. The Writing Center was extensively renovated during the 2014-2015 academic year.

The [Scot Center](#) also opened in January of 2012, providing the campus community with space to gather and work out. It has a new fitness room, a renovated weight room, a new indoor track, new office space for the Physical Education Department faculty and staff, as well as new meeting spaces [conference room, two meeting rooms, and a governance room]. The Conference Room and the Wilson Governance Room provide both small and large spaces with high-tech capability that allow the facility to accommodate classes, student government meetings, Board of Trustee and Alumni Board meetings, and presentations of many kinds. The Scot Center is Wooster's first facility constructed with environmental sustainability as a guiding principle. It achieved LEED Gold certification.

Currently under construction is the \$40 million [Ruth W. Williams Hall of Life Science](#). The new building will house state-of-the-art classrooms and labs for the life sciences as well as work and collaboration spaces for the entire Wooster community.

### **The College of Wooster provides to students guidance in the effective use of research and information resources. [3.D.5.]**

The I.S. experience at Wooster results in the demonstration of students' abilities to use research and information services. Much of our curriculum and much of students' efforts prior to their senior year is designed to prepare them for the I.S. experience. As a result, Wooster students receive extensive guidance in the use of research and information services.

A variety of resources is available to students to provide guidance in effectively using research and information resources. Faculty members

mentor students in the use of research within the curriculum. This process begins with the First-Year Seminar and continues with methodology course offerings as well as Junior and Senior Independent study within the majors. [HERI \(2013-2014\) results](#) indicate that 72% of faculty members involve Wooster students in their own research projects, 90% work with students on a research project, and 92% advise a thesis. All percentages are substantially higher than those of comparable institutions.

Outside the classroom, there are a variety of resources available to students to help them to more effectively use research. For example, the Writing Center offers students information on evaluating sources, the mechanics of quoting, how to paraphrase, and how to avoid plagiarism. Instructors may arrange workshops to cover many of these areas within their classes.

In addition, the library is staffed by several librarians, each specializing in a [set of curricular areas](#), as well as by trained student assistants. The library's primary purpose is to guide students, faculty, staff, and the general public in conducting effective research using resources available to them. Librarians work individually with students and work with faculty to develop workshops specifically for faculty members' courses. Individualized research consultations with librarians in their areas of expertise are available, by appointment, to all College of Wooster students, faculty, and staff. Whether students are just starting their First-Year Seminar project, are working on their I.S. projects, or are just having difficulty locating relevant material, librarians are available to discuss and review appropriate research strategies and library resources.

The College of Wooster library shares a catalog with Denison, Ohio Wesleyan, and Kenyon (the [Consort](#) consortium) and Consort is a member of [OhioLINK](#) (a statewide library consortium). These consortia provide students with easy access to a rich set of library materials. The library also participates in the [Oberlin Group](#).

Because more students are beginning to integrate technology into their I.S., we have augmented assistance services available in CoRE. Students can receive individual help from [Digital Media Assistants](#) on the full range of software used for digital media production. Instructional Technology also holds several [workshops](#) each semester focused on tools that can be used to incorporate digital media into I.S. projects. Students are also able to consult with Instructional Technology staff to help them brainstorm and plan the most appropriate tools to use for introducing digital media into their I.S. Faculty can also request Digital Media Assistants to act as technology tutors in courses with digital media assignments.

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- [Student support services list for faculty](#)
- [Technology Workshops for Students](#)
- [Writing Center \\_ The College of Wooster](#)
- [Writing Center Activities](#)

## 3.E - The institution fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment

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

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

### Argument

**Co-curricular programs are suited to The College of Wooster's mission and contribute to the educational experience of its students. [3.E.1. and 3.E.2]**

The importance of co-curricular programs at The College of Wooster is clearly articulated in our *Community of Learners* Core Value:

*Wooster is a residential liberal arts college. As such, we believe the learning process unfolds on our campus and beyond, in conversations in classrooms and residence halls, libraries and studios, laboratories and on playing fields, and through the relationships that develop between and among students, faculty and staff and which endure long after graduation. We recognize that the very process of living together educates, and that much of the learning that is part of our mission takes place through artistic expression, the performance of music, theater, and dance, athletics, community involvement, and in the myriad student organizations that infuse vitality in campus life. We embrace a holistic philosophy of education and seek to nurture the physical, social, and spiritual well-being of our students.*

Through co-curricular involvement in athletics, music, student organizations and other activities students are able to acquire and learn skills and become "leaders of character and influence" (Mission Statement). The most recent senior survey asked students if co-curricular or extra-curricular activities contributed to their development of graduate qualities. The percentage of students who indicated that these activities contributed "frequently" or "a lot" to several of the graduate qualities was quite high. In fact, the percentage was as high as or higher for [co-curricular and extra-curricular activities](#) than for classroom activities for the graduate qualities of Teamwork, Civic Engagement, Intercultural Knowledge and Competence, Ethical Reasoning, and Global Engagement and Respect for Diversity.

The number of activities available to students is very large, so only a selected group is discussed below.

The College fields 23 Division III athletic teams, and approximately 470 students participate in these sports each year. The Athletics Department, the NCAA and the North Coast Athletic Conference (NCAC) are leaders in articulating how a student's athletic experience contributes to the educational environment and the student's overall experience at the College. Both the [Mission of the NCAC](#) and The [College of Wooster Athletic Mission](#) emphasize the role of athletics in the overall academic mission of the college.

In addition to our intercollegiate athletic program, over 1000 (about 50%) students participate in [intramural sports programs](#).

There are [120 organizations](#) (p. 1-6) on campus for student involvement. These organizations cover a range of interests and they include an improvisational [comedy group](#) (p. 7), a [psychology club](#) (p. 10), the [Scottish Arts Society](#) (p. 13), [Model U.N.](#) (p. 16), the [cricket club](#) (p. 20), and a [student-run investment club](#) (p. 23) that manages, with some guidance, a small portfolio for the College's endowment. Students also have the option of [creating a new organization](#) (p.26).

Students participating in [Moot Court](#) prepare arguments like those that might be presented to the Supreme Court. College teams compete in regional and national tournaments and are judged on the quality of their arguments. At The College of Wooster, an average of 40 students participates in the program per year. The students have performed very well at the national tournament, averaging over seven All-American Placements per year including three national runner-up teams and one national champion team.

Students participate in large numbers in the [music and the arts](#). Almost one-third of all Wooster students participate in a musical group on campus. Options for participation include three choirs, symphonic and marching bands, a jazz ensemble, four a cappella groups, and other ensembles. Typically, over 300 students each semester have participated in a music group for academic credit. Many students also participate in the theatre and dance programs at the college. The opportunities for students are impressive. As just one example, a production of *Women of Ciudad Juárez*, has been staged not only at Wooster, but it was selected to be presented at an international festival in Belgium and at the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival (KCACTF) Region III competition in Milwaukee

Wooster seniors report allocating approximately [nine hours per week on co-curricular activities](#), which is very similar to the amount of time spent on these activities by seniors at comparable institutions (NSSE 2015 data).

Most of the co-curricular organizations on campus include leadership positions. Many organizations are eligible for funding from the college. [Funding](#) requires an application and review process.

### Sources

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- Student Organizations (page number 20)
- Student Organizations (page number 23)
- Student Organizations (page number 26)

## 3.S - Summary

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

### Summary

The educational program at The College of Wooster has traditionally been strong, and the program is evaluated and updated regularly. Changes in the program are made explicitly in the context of our Mission. The hallmark of our educational system is a mentored educational experience that culminates in I.S. The I.S. program and an active faculty have resulted in a high level of research at Wooster.

Similar to the education system as a whole, the advising process at Wooster has long been good and it has improved. The addition of the ARCH program has assured an early introduction to the programs at Wooster. APEX now integrates a variety of services at Wooster in a fashion that allows students to be more deliberate in the way they plan their four years at the College. The result is a robust model for advising that integrates the academic and the student life components of campus life.

The Mission Statement of The College of Wooster emphasizes the importance of diversity and this emphasis is clearly reflected in the educational program.

Co-curricular and extra-curricular programs are an important component of the educational experience at our residential, liberal arts college. We have worked to ensure that these experiences align with our mission and thus contribute to the education of Wooster students in an effective manner.

*A Wooster Education* is 13 years old, but it is currently being reviewed.

A new Life Sciences building is under construction, and it promises exciting opportunities in terms of enhancing Wooster's mission and the education of Wooster students.

The educational program at The College of Wooster continues to be exemplary. The program is mission-driven, and this focus has enhanced an already strong program. Processes to improve the program are in place, and there is every reason to believe that Wooster will continue to strengthen, innovate, and improve the educational experience for its students.

### Sources

*There are no sources.*

# Criterion 4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

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

- [4.A - The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs](#)
- [4.B - The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning](#)
- [4.C - The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement](#)
- [4.S - Summary](#)

## 4.A - The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs

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

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

### Argument

The College of Wooster is committed to using assessment as a tool to achieve our mission. In 2013, we provided evidence that assessment was infused widely across campus and that we were using its findings to make decisions about our curriculum, programming, and budget. Today, we continue to find assessment embedded in our culture. The hire of a new Director of Educational Assessment (DEA) three years ago has helped us keep our forward momentum. The campus has also recently embarked on an effort to evaluate our general education curriculum and to assess how well students are achieving our Graduate Qualities. Importantly, we have responded to signs (identified in our last self-study) that our assessment system needed updating. The changes we made are described in the sections below. Please note that because there is significant overlap between 4A and 4B, we have chosen to describe our whole assessment approach in this section and to describe how we use the findings from assessment in 4B.

**Course-Level.** Course-level evaluation at Wooster takes place in a variety of ways. Our newest initiative to increase and improve course assessment has been made possible through a [collaborative project](#) with the AAC&U and the Great Lakes Colleges Association. With funding from the Sherman Fairchild Foundation, this multi-part project enables departments to directly assess courses using the [VALUE \(Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education\) rubrics](#). There are rubrics measuring sixteen different outcomes including critical thinking and civic engagement. Ten Wooster departments and programs have volunteered to use these rubrics to assess their classes. Faculty members attended workshops on assignment development and rubric scoring during the summer of 2016 and are currently collecting data. The Department of Physics is a [good example](#) of the use of the rubrics to rethink curriculum.

The Sherman Fairchild project supplements our other course assessment methods. Faculty members conduct assessment of their classes through [course evaluation forms](#). Each form is somewhat different, allowing faculty members to choose the questions they feel are most appropriate for their courses. They can also tailor evaluations through the use of add-on self-designed questions or [those that come from a repository of questions](#). Two years ago, faculty members reaffirmed their desire to have a range of options for course assessment, but they also voted to require that every evaluation form (even those that are self-designed) contain two specific questions about the quality of the instructor and the course. These questions allow us to achieve some consistency across forms and provide a way for instructors to use multiple forms but still assess change in student opinion over time.

In addition to required end-of-semester evaluations, many instructors ask students to complete evaluations at the midpoint. They are not required to use a common form but we have created a [core form](#) for those who wish to use it. Forms are also available for [academic advising](#) and for [IS advising](#).

Another type of course evaluation takes place as part of departmental assessment. For example, the Environmental Studies program [used a test of knowledge and attitudes](#) created by the National Environmental Education Training Foundation to assess the impact of their core course. Similarly, Africana Studies developed a [pre/posttest covering major topics in the discipline](#) and administered it in their introductory course. Today they are using the findings to revamp the syllabus to ensure that it is current and relevant. Individual faculty members also take the initiative to evaluate courses. For example, a psychologist assessed different methods of teaching students how to interpret statistical tables. [His study](#) was published in the journal *Teaching in Psychology* (2013).

**Academic Department and Program Assessment.** Prior to 2007, departments and programs conducted their assessments almost exclusively through ten-year curricular reviews. This review was (and continues to be) an opportunity for departments to analyze whether their courses and programs are appropriate to the standards established by their discipline. In recent years they have also been used to check how well the curricula are in line with the College's Mission Statement and Graduate Qualities (see EPC's [guidelines](#)). As part of the ten-year review, most departments/programs conduct a survey of graduates as an indirect measure of their success in meeting their learning goals. In addition, EPC requires that departments and programs bring in consultants from other institutions to review the curriculum based on disciplinary standards and make recommendations.

Ten year reviews are extremely useful and often have a strong impact on our curriculum development. At the same time, they occur too infrequently to help departments fine-tune their classes or IS process and it is difficult to measure multiple learning goals at once. For these reasons, in 2007 we began requiring that assessment be conducted each year, with required reports turned into the Educational Assessment Committee (EAC). As a first step, academic departments were asked to develop a comprehensive assessment plan with learning goals, direct and indirect measures, and a feedback loop. At the time, we did not explicitly tie the yearly assessments to the ten-year review, although some

departments did make a link. One of the hallmarks of the way we embedded assessment into the culture was to give departments a great deal of autonomy to design their own learning goals and measures. This process proved beneficial as many departments engaged in meaningful conversations about their goals and why they engage in particular practices. The Department of Philosophy was particularly notable in the way they aligned their curriculum with their learning goals. This process was described in an award-winning essay by a faculty member—[reprinted and commented on by other scholars](#)-- in a 2014 book.

From 2008 through 2016, departments and programs selected at least one of their learning goals to assess annually. Most selected a new goal each year, although some chose to conduct a more in-depth analysis of the same learning goal in the second year. The EAC encouraged the use of at least one direct and one indirect measure or two direct measures for each goal. Among academic departments and programs, the most common direct measure of learning was an Independent Study rubric, and the most common indirect measure was a senior exit survey. Other measures included pre- and post-tests, standardized tests, specialized rubrics, focus groups, and alumni surveys. Several assessed multiple selections of students' work in electronic portfolios (see for example the [Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies plan](#)).

Until 2012 we had high participation in our assessment program. For example, in 2011/2012 over 80 percent of departments and programs submitted reports. Most of the missing reports were from programs that did not offer majors. Because students can declare a minor as late as their senior year, it is difficult to identify these students for the purposes of assessment. EAC reviewed all the reports they received and [provided feedback](#) to the departments. This process was noted as a good practice in Trudy Banta's *et al.*'s 2009 book, *Designing Effective Assessment: Principles and Profiles of Good Practice*. As we described in the 2013 self-study, however, we sensed that these procedures needed updating. This belief was reinforced by the fact that, starting in 2012, participation in departmental assessment began to decline. Last year, for example, 22 departments and programs (out of 40) were [not current with their annual reports](#). Because of this, EAC made it a priority to analyze the system and propose changes. In 2016, they developed a new model that was based on feedback from the HLC and the academic departments.

Our new assessment model (summarized in [Department/Program Assessment and Review Guidelines](#)) addresses a number of issues: it more closely ties the process of curricular assessment to ten-year reviews, it alleviates assessment burnout departments were reporting, and it more clearly delineates responsibility for assessment. Departments are asked to create one comprehensive plan with yearly assessment activities feeding into ten-year reviews. In year one, departments create an assessment plan that builds to their ten-year self-study. They continue to assess their learning goals using direct and indirect measures but are only required to submit assessment reports in years 2, 4, 6, and 8. We believe that reducing the report-writing requirement will alleviate burnout and will also allow more thoughtful assessment and a longer window in which to collect data. In year 9, departments finalize their ten-year self-study plan. At the completion of the ten-year review, they start over, developing an action plan to address the concerns raised in the self study, refreshing their learning goals, and creating a new plan for assessment. Importantly, this new assessment model requires much more coordination with EPC and the DEA. Departments and programs meet with EPC and the DEA in year one as they refresh their learning goals and develop the assessment plan. They meet again at year five to review their plan and the reports they have turned in to that point. In years nine and ten they meet with EPC to plan and then analyze the ten-year review. When departments decide to make changes to their curricula, they will, as in the past, submit their plans to EPC.

Another area of change involves clarifying administrative roles and responsibilities. In our last self-study, we pointed out that the administrative structure of assessment was not well-defined, leading to confusion. The new model more clearly lays out the responsibilities of committees and administrators in assuring that high-quality work is conducted. For example, the EAC charge used to be vague and the committee's relationship with EPC was not clear. Because of this, the Provost was put in the awkward position of enforcing assessment requirements. Our [new model](#) explicitly charges the EAC to work in concert with EPC. This, plus the changes in our department and program assessment process, opens the door for EPC to take a role in working with departments to ensure compliance.

Because assessment is important and can be complex, we increased the terms of the faculty and staff serving on the EAC from one to two years. In the past, members would leave the committee just as they caught up to speed. Now we will have a mix of new and experienced members, all with longer terms, who can work together to make knowledgeable decisions.

As we move forward with our new assessment model, we recognize that we need to offer continuing training to faculty and staff. To this end, our DEA provided a [series of five workshops](#) during 2016/2017. The topics were designed to increase skills and confidence in a wide variety of assessment topics. For example, one session was devoted entirely to how to align course learning goals with departmental goals and with the Graduate Qualities. Because assessment is a College priority, those employees who attended all of the sessions received monetary compensation. Forty nine faculty and staff members attended at least one workshop, and twenty attended at least four of the five. In addition, the EAC offered a [workshop](#) on integrating learning and assessment practices by the Assistant Provost for Teaching and Learning at Virginia Tech. Thirty participants attended.

In the spring of 2017, the Dean for Curriculum and Academic Engagement (who is also a member of EPC) [contacted all departments and programs](#) who were behind in submitting annual assessment reports. He offered them the chance to become current and start anew by either joining the Sherman Fairchild project or by attending the Doolittle workshop. By this metric, all but one department and one program ended the year current in assessment. We believe that our new model, with its biennial reporting and increased oversight, will keep compliance very high.

**Academic Affairs Services and Student Affairs.** Because student learning on campus occurs both inside and outside the classroom, we are committed to involving Student Affairs and Academic Affairs in our educational assessment. To date, this effort has been more successful in Academic Affairs, where all offices developed mission statements and learning goals. They began collecting data in 2010 and were required to submit their first assessment report the following year. All continue assessment work today. For example, in 2015, Career Services [linked its student learning goals to the Graduate Qualities](#). During the same year, the director of the Art Museum assessed three learning goals by administering a survey to the classes who attended one of the museum's visiting exhibits. The Center for Diversity and Inclusion offers a number of partial credit courses including the LEAD Team Practicum and the Global Engagement Seminar. All these courses have student-learning goals and instructors collect [assessment data](#).

In addition to (or instead of) annual assessment reviews, many Academic Affairs offices have undergone extensive reviews in recent years, similar to the academic departments' ten-year reviews. EPC is charged with overseeing these kinds of reviews as well as any proposed changes in programming. The Writing Center, for example, brought in external reviewers to [assess its overall operations](#). Similarly, an AMRE (Applied Methods Research Experience) group [assessed the success of APEX](#) in helping Wooster students obtain summer internships and employment.

For a number of reasons, Student Affairs has been a more difficult area to engage in assessment. First, there has been significant staff turnover

over the last four years. We have trained staff members in assessment only to see them leave the College before they were able to set up a maintainable system. Second, the EAC was in charge of overseeing assessment in so many places, they did not have the time and energy to provide sufficient support to Student Affairs. Student Affairs is considerably different in focus, structure, and staffing than other divisions and may require us to reformulate our assessment processes. Our new Vice President for Student Affairs/Dean of Students is planning a complete review of assessment procedures. To further aid this effort, we have added a staff member from Student Affairs to the EAC. Finally, it should be noted that, while Student Affairs has not been engaging in yearly assessment of learning goals, some offices have conducted other kinds of evaluations. For example, in 2015, the Office of Intercampus Ministries brought in an [outside reviewer](#) to help formulate plans to better serve students.

**General Education & Graduate Qualities Assessment.** We adopted a set of Wooster-specific Graduate Qualities in 2011. This has given us a way to focus our institutional assessment efforts.

The first step in assessing the Graduate Qualities involved the EAC linking each quality to a list of potential assessment tools and measures (for example the [National Survey of Student Engagement](#)). The Provost then selected “global engagement and respect for diversity” as the first graduate quality to assess. The EAC administered the [Global Perspectives Inventory](#) which provided evidence that seniors who had at least one off-campus or multi-cultural experience during college had significantly higher scores across the subscales of the survey. In 2015, the Office of Interfaith Ministries also assessed aspects of the engagement/diversity goal when they administered the [Campus Religious and Climate Survey](#) to 547 of our students. It found that that students report that both their classes and co-curricular activities lead them to explore various worldviews.

A second large-scale effort to assess the Graduate Qualities is a joint effort among EPC, EAC, and academic departments. Since 2012, departments have used a common set of questions on alumni surveys. These questions were selected from the HEDS (Higher Education Data Sharing) Alumni Survey and the AAC&U LEAP learning outcomes because they were a close measure of the Graduate Qualities. [Data collected between 2012 and 2014](#) suggested that our alumni do link their experiences at the College with development across all of the Qualities. The average response to all but one of the questions was over 3 (on a scale from one to four) and the scores for critical thinking were particularly strong with over 80 percent of respondents reporting that the College helped them “considerably” in this area. The one area with a mean lower than three (2.8) was civic engagement.

In 2013, EPC used data from both the NSSE and our own “five years out” survey of alumni to assess the Graduate Qualities. We selected questions from NSSE that formed five subscales aligned with our graduate qualities. In a [comparison between first year and senior scores](#) for the class of 2012, we found strong gains across these subscales, particularly in the areas of independent thinking, integrative thinking, and effective communication.

While survey data is one important indicator of the College’s success in meeting the Graduate Qualities, it tells us little about where in the curriculum growth occurs. For this reason, EPC required that departments and programs create a map linking each of their courses and learning goals to the Graduate Qualities. This was an excellent opportunity for departments to think about how they contribute to the College’s mission and where they could be more intentional in helping students meet the Graduate Qualities. The mapping also led to other kinds of outcomes. For example, the Department of Chemistry used their map to shape a [position request](#). Ultimately, twenty-seven departments and programs completed the mapping task (most of the missing twelve were programs with minors but no majors). In addition to high departmental participation, the [Art Museum](#), the [Libraries](#), and the [Writing Center](#) linked their work to the graduate qualities.

Our most recent effort to assess the Graduate Qualities involves the Sherman Fairchild grant. Above we described the departmental component, but the project also has an [institutional component](#). We are working alongside other colleges to directly assess student learning gains across the four years in the areas of critical thinking, written communication, and intercultural knowledge competence (all of which are included in our Graduate Qualities). This effort involves the submission of student works to an online depository for scoring (using the VALUE rubrics) by raters from outside the College. We are also assessing papers on campus using the same methodology. So far, about 25 Wooster faculty and staff members have been trained in the scoring process. The Sherman Fairchild project is exciting because it provides a direct assessment of student learning and because it has had the unanticipated effect of re-engaging a wide constituency of the College in assessment. Faculty and staff members have felt qualified to critique the rubrics and propose modifications to assessment procedures. The GLCA is planning two meetings during the 2017/2018 year to talk about how to strengthen the project and make assessment more useful for each of our campuses.

**Writing Assessment.** Prior to 2012, we experimented with a number of different ways of assessing writing, none of which proved to be very reliable or effective. In 2010, the EAC recommended that we pilot the Collegiate Learning Assessment test as a way to measure gains in writing over the course of a Wooster degree. The [first administration of the test](#) was in the 2011/2012 academic year. The response rate was lower than we had hoped (154 first years and 37 seniors) and our first year scores were high enough to indicate possible ceiling effects. Based on the pilot, the EAC decided that the CLA was not a productive use of our money or time.

There have been a number of recent initiatives to assess our writing curriculum. First, in 2014, EPC [reviewed the syllabi of our sophomore-level writing courses](#) to see if faculty members were following the guidelines. The majority of courses met the guidelines but we did find courses that failed to meet each criterion, particularly the requirement that students write and submit drafts of three of the four major assignments. Second, as mentioned above, faculty members from Princeton and Bowdoin came to Wooster in the spring of 2015 to provide an external assessment of the Writing Center. As part of their [report](#), they gave suggestions for ways to improve both FYS and the writing courses. Following that report, EPC convened a committee of faculty and staff members to think about how we might assess the entire writing curriculum in more depth. The committee made a [number of procedural suggestions](#) and also recommended that we focus first on FYS. These three reports are being used to inform evaluation of *A Wooster Education*.

In addition to assessing our programs and curriculum, we have been using data to examine how well Wooster prepares students in writing. Our [five years data](#) show that alumni highly value the writing skills they learned at Wooster. They also report that these skills are a crucial component of their jobs (mean for the contribution of the College was a 3.56 out of 4, the mean for the importance of effective writing in their jobs was a 3.54). NSSE data also suggests that our students improve on four of six writing indicators over the course of their Wooster education (for example, they write more and longer papers that required more integration of ideas as they progress from first to senior year).

**Research Abilities.** Because mentored undergraduate research is central to our pedagogical philosophy, we regularly engage in assessment of student research skills. For example, in 2016, the Libraries participated in the [Measuring Information Services Outcomes Survey](#) (MISO), a web-based questionnaire that was distributed to students, staff, and faculty across the country. The response rates at the College were high, with

48% of faculty members, 35% of staff members and 48% of selected students participating. While the primary goal of the survey was to assess the match between library services and the needs of their constituents, the survey also looked at how skilled constituents believe they are in utilizing various research tools. For example, the survey asked students to assess their own skill level in finding and evaluating information, data display, and using search engines. These skills are related to two Graduate Qualities: "Devise, formulate, research, and bring to fruition a complex and creative project" and "Demonstrate quantitative, textual, visual, and digital literacy." The library staff members are currently analyzing the data and will meet regularly during the 2017-2018 school year to discuss possible changes. Their initial discussions have already been used to shape the educational workshops provided to students in 2017. The data have also encouraged the staff to increase the promotion of digital scholarship services.

**Engagement in Consortial and National Assessment Programs.** The College participates in a number of national and consortial assessment programs, some regularly and some periodically. For example, the results from the Higher Education Research Institute's First-Year Student Survey (CIRP) and Faculty survey, the College Board's Admitted Student Questionnaire, and the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) are available to faculty, staff, and students in the institutional data repository. We also make available the data from our Senior Survey. Faculty and staff use these results for research, program assessment, or grant or foundation proposals; students who request the data are often using it for their Independent Study projects. Our most recent consortial project is the Sherman Fairchild initiative.

**Credit Transfer Policies.** *The College Catalogue* (p. 262) and the website clearly explain the various ways students can and cannot receive course credit at Wooster. We do not, for example, accept credits from dual credit or on-line courses. The College does not give credit for experiences or non-academic work that students engage in prior to their arrival at Wooster. We do, however, accept credits earned from high scores on Advanced Placement tests, British Advanced-Level Exams, the International Baccalaureate, and the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Exams. Wooster students are also allowed to petition to transfer in courses they have taken at other accredited colleges and universities or at any of our endorsed Off-Campus Study programs (all of which meet the standards set by the Forum on Study Abroad).

The Registrar makes the initial decision about whether courses [meet our requirements for transfer](#). For example, transferred courses must be in an area of study available at Wooster. The Registrar also determines the number of course units that we will award (based on the number of course hours). If students request a course to be used as either a general education course credit or a departmental course credit, they are required to meet with the chairperson of the appropriate department. The chairperson evaluates the course's quality and its match with our curriculum. While many schools require students to get preapproval for transfer courses, we do not. This means that one could take an off-campus course and not be allowed to transfer it back to Wooster. To minimize this occurrence, the Registrar, chairs and advisors *urge* students to get preapproval for transfer courses. The advantage of our policy is that it allows students to apply retroactively for credits if they do not remember to get preapproval or if they take courses prior to their acceptance at Wooster.

**Specialized Accreditation.** The institution maintains three specialized accreditations/approvals for its programs: The Education Department is accredited through the [National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education \(NCATE\)](#)/Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) and the Music Department holds accreditation through the [National Association of Schools of Music \(NASM\)](#). The Chemistry Department is *approved* through the [American Chemical Society \(ACS\)](#).

**Evaluation of the Success of our Graduates.** The College, through the Career Planning Office, collects data on the further education and employment of alumni. Response rates are somewhat low but they provide a glimpse of what our graduates are doing about six months after graduation (the "[First Destinations](#)" survey) and again after five years (the "[Five Years Out](#)" survey). First Destinations data for the class of 2015 showed that 67 percent of respondents were employed or in a volunteer program (like Teach for America or AmeriCorps), 27 percent were in graduate school, and 6 percent reported either seeking employment or not being in the workforce/graduate school. Our data indicate that the most common fields for our most recent graduates are nonprofits and human services, communication (like media and advertising), financial services (including banking and insurance), and research. At five years out, 74 percent of the class of 2010 report being employed and another 18 percent report being in a full-time graduate program.

Wooster students have notably high levels of participation in different kinds of volunteer programs, internships, and fellowships. In 2014, for example, Wooster ranked ninth (tied with ten other schools) among small schools in the number of people accepted into [Teach for America](#). In addition, in 2016, we were ranked 23<sup>rd</sup> on the national list of small schools contributing the most alumni for service in the Peace Corps. This number may increase over time as we have instituted a [Peace Corps Preparation Program](#) on campus. We are also proud that, since 2010, ten Wooster graduates have received NSF graduate fellowships.

Data about law school admissions indicate similarly high levels of success of our alumni. Between 2010 and 2015, [data provided by the Law School Admissions Council](#) indicate that 86 percent of the 80 applicants to law school were accepted and of those, 86 percent matriculated. This compares favorably with the 74 percent of law school applicants nationally who were accepted during the same period. Our students have gotten into many top-tier schools such as University of Chicago, Berkeley, University of Michigan, New York University, Georgetown, and University of Pennsylvania. In terms of medical school, [data from the Association of American Medical Colleges \(AAMC\) and the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine \(AACOM\)](#) show that 47 percent of the Wooster alums who applied to MD programs between 2013 and 2016 were accepted (compared to 41 percent nationally). In 2016, 73 percent of our students who applied for DO programs were accepted.

Many Wooster students apply to graduate school, perhaps in part because they feel confident about their ability to succeed. In our [Senior Survey in 2016](#), three quarters of our graduating students reported that their Wooster education prepared them "considerably" for graduate school. Data from the Baccalaureate Origins of Doctorate Recipients produced by the National Science Foundation supports this belief. An [analysis of their 2012 data](#) reveals that Wooster ranked 49<sup>th</sup> out of all baccalaureate institutions in the US in terms of the percentage of students who go on to get a Ph.D. By 2012, about 77 out of every 1000 Wooster students graduating between 1998 and 2007 had received a Ph.D.. Between 2010 and 2014 alone, 139 Wooster graduates received doctorates. Our graduates received these degrees in a wide range of fields, with 12 percent in chemistry, 25 percent in biology, about 9 percent in non-science education, 8 percent in psychology, and about 6 percent in history. While Wooster did well in all areas, it is particularly notable that we ranked sixth in the nation in chemistry, ninth in physical sciences, fifteenth in political science and public administration, and eighteenth in history.

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

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

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

### Argument

**Departments and Programs.** The use of assessment findings to improve student learning occurs widely at the departmental level. One example is the Department of Communication. They joined the Sherman Fairchild internal assessment project and [used a rubric to assess oral communication skills](#) across various levels of their curriculum. They established benchmarks for each level and found that their students were meeting the benchmarks in the lower-level courses but not in all of the upper-level courses. They revised their curriculum in those classes to help students develop stronger oral communication skills (see their [presentation to the Board](#)). The Department of History is another interesting example of the use of assessment results. They began [tracking three learning goals](#) in 2012, using both direct (an IS rubric) and indirect measures (a student survey). They are now able to see areas of strength, weakness, and change across time and they can gauge the effects of curricular changes. For example, prior to 2015/16, students were encouraged, but not required, to take a writing-intensive methods course. Today, all students must take the course. Because of their longitudinal data collection, the History Department will be able to evaluate if their students' abilities in historical thinking and critical thinking increase as a result of the new requirement.

As these examples show, we use departmental and program assessment to change existing courses or requirements. We also see references to yearly assessments in requests for new faculty positions. For example, the Department of Sociology and Anthropology conducted an alumni survey as part of a ten-year review. They asked respondents for suggestions on how to strengthen curricular offerings. The most common response was that statistics should be required. Based on this finding, the Department changed the curriculum to require statistics for all majors. To support the new requirement, the Department [reframed a faculty position request](#).

**Academic Affairs and Student Life.** Academic Affairs offices often use assessment data to make changes to their programmatic offerings. For example, Wooster participated in a [multi-institution study](#) to measure how well students understand the curriculum, why they select particular courses, and how they feel about the advising they receive. Wooster's results were very strong. For example, about 88 percent of respondents said they felt they were well informed about Wooster's curricular requirements. At the same time, we discovered that students rate their advising experience in their first year less positively than in the subsequent years. For this reason, in summer 2016, the College commissioned an [AMRE group](#) to explore ways to improve advising, particularly for first-year students. Through in-depth interviews with students, staff, and faculty members, they found that students do not just want advising on academic matters; they are also interested in help with professional and personal matters. Further, the team found that satisfaction with advising increased dramatically when students met with their advisors once or twice per month rather than once or twice per semester. Finally, the data showed that students appreciate advisors who require them to attend campus events as part of their first-year seminars. These findings led the College to change the training for FYS instructors to encourage them to meet at least monthly with their advisees and to discuss a wide range of issues. They are also encouraged to require attendance at a number of campus events.

Another example of a data-driven change by Academic Affairs involved ARCH (our summer weekend orientation program for incoming students). Each year, first-year students and their parents are asked to complete an evaluation survey and rate the various sessions that take place during the two-day event. [Analyses of the surveys](#) made it clear that the session on selecting courses and community engagement was very popular but that students felt it covered too much ground and did not cover co-curricular activities well enough. To address this, we created a new session so that community engagement and co-curricular activities could be covered in more depth. This change also made sense because our Alumni and five years out survey data (described in Component 4A) indicated that community engagement is one of the weaker points in our educational program.

Although Student Affairs offices are not on a regular assessment cycle, they do use data to make decisions whenever possible. For example, for many years Residence Life used the Myers-Briggs Personality Inventory as a tool to help match roommates. The staff became increasingly convinced that it was not effective however and they found [research](#) to support this position. They have now discontinued use of the test.

**Our Institutional Uses of Assessment Findings.** In our 2013 report, we commented that, "our institutional feedback loop for taking action on educational assessment findings is less well developed than the process at the departmental level." We believe that this is still the case but that we have made considerable progress. One way we have done this is to improve communication between campus constituencies. As described above, for example, we have created a closer and better-defined link between the EAC and the EPC, allowing for a more coordinated response to assessment data. All five major faculty committees get together on an as-needed basis to talk about important initiatives. EPC also now [meets yearly](#) with our Strategic Planning and Priorities Advisory Committee (SPPAC). These meetings inform both groups about educational priorities stemming from assessment and strategic initiatives, the resource requirements of these priorities, and the implications of allocating resources to these priorities.

In 2015, EPC formed a subcommittee to begin to discuss modifying or replacing *A Wooster Education*. This subcommittee convened weekly lunch meetings for faculty, held educational events, and [wrote a report](#). This year we have been continuing the discussion and data has been central to our efforts. For example, we are using data collected as part of a unique course (“Weaving a New Tartan”). The goal was to study issues facing the campus in a methodologically rigorous way. For example, one student group provided [data about experiential learning](#) and its importance in the curriculum. Another group focused on our [culture \(“C”\) requirement](#) and whether it was meeting its intended goals. These groups’ findings are being used by EPC in its work. Additionally, EPC is drawing on our HEDS and five years out data to identify the strengths and weaknesses in the current curriculum.

Assessment is central to the planning and implementation of new projects. The new STEM Zone, for example, was created based on data that followed student course selection and majors over time. We learned that minority and low-SES students who entered Wooster with an interest in math and the sciences disproportionately ended up in majors in non-STEM fields. A group of science faculty and staff came together to talk about this problem and investigate solutions. After considerable research, they created the STEM Zone. It is a teaching and learning community (housed in a physical space on campus) where all students can go to receive extra help and support from student interns and faculty members. Faculty members in the learning community meet weekly to discuss pedagogy, recent research findings, and new approaches. [Assessment data from the first year](#) (2014) indicates that attendance increases retention in chemistry and biology (but not in math) and is associated with an increase in grades across departments. Because of these encouraging preliminary findings, the College will continue to support the STEM Zone.

Similar to the STEM Zone, the Science and Mathematics Scholars Mentoring Program (S-STEM) was a response to data showing that particular groups (like women, first generation college students, people from low-SES backgrounds, and minorities) were underrepresented in our science and math majors. We received an NSF grant to bring cohorts of math and science-interested students to Wooster and provide them with an intensive mentoring experience. Students receive a scholarship if they stay in a STEM field and maintain a minimum GPA. Since its inception in 2012, it has retained all of the students in STEM fields and has also [shown success](#) in terms of summer internships and jobs/graduate school placement after graduation.

While assessment data has helped us to enhance current programs and develop new ones, it has also been used to eliminate less effective or ineffective programs. There are two examples of discontinued programs in 4C.

**Participation and Best Practices.** We detailed our practices and the ways assessment is infused throughout campus under 4A.

## Sources

- AMRE Advising Report
- ARCH Evaluation Qualitative Responses 2015
- Communication Annual Assessment Report 2016.pdf
- Communication Dept Report to BOT
- Curriculum Report
- EPC minutes 2017-04-20
- History Annual Assessment Report 2013
- roommatematch
- Sociology Position Request 2014
- Sociology Position Request 2014 (page number 9)
- S-STEM\_NSF\_Report\_2015
- STEM Zone Impact FA14
- STEM Zone Impact FA14 (page number 3)
- Teagle Survey Results - ALL CoW students
- Weaving Report on “C” Requirement
- Weaving Report on Experiential Learning

## 4.C - The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement

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

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

### Argument

The College of Wooster has established its attention to persistence and completion rates in many ways. In March of 2011, the President set a retention goal of 90 percent from first year to sophomore year. In the fall of 2011, the Board of Trustees formally adopted this goal for the College. The 90 percent goal was higher than we had ever achieved previously. The goal was set based on analysis of our peer institutions—those who enroll students of similar academic and demographic characteristics to Wooster students. The College [attained the 90 percent goal](#) for the classes of 2016 and 2017 but dropped back to just under the goal after that. This year we retained 87.5 percent of our first years (the class of 2020). We are currently working to get back to our 90 percent goal.

Wooster works hard to maximize the number of our students who graduate. We keep detailed records of both [four-](#) and [six-](#)year graduation rates. Looking at both these measures, we see strong improvement since the late 1990s. At that time, the four-year rate was in the low 60s and the six-year rate was in the high 60s. Today, using a three average, we see that the percent of students who graduate in four years is 71 and in six years is 78.

We have many mechanisms in place to collect information on student persistence and completion of programs. The resources we have used to inform our retention efforts have included:

- IPEDS Graduation, Enrollment (including first to second year retention), and Completions surveys
- Exit Surveys that are administered when students transfer
- POSSE retention data
- Student Withdrawal Surveys
- TORQ (Termination of Registration Questionnaire) Report
- Benchmark book – Retention & Graduation
- Two AMRE team studies on retention

Over the last four years, we have used the listed sources as well as other data to create a number of new programs to improve student retention. For example, in the summer of 2014 an [AMRE project](#) identified a number of variables associated with an increased probability of graduating. These included studying abroad, a high rank in high school, and a high first year GPA. They also found that “engagement” (as defined by involvement in extracurricular activities) was a strong predictor. Consequently, the College piloted “Connections” to reach out to students who were identified by their First-Year Seminar instructors as not being engaged in any activities. These students were assigned a mentor and invited to a number of on- and off-campus activities. We studied the effects of this program and ultimately found that it did not have a significant impact on retention. This led us to commission a [2016 AMRE project](#) to look further into what engagement means, and how we should help students who are not engaged in campus life. Results from this project will be used to start further programming initiatives.

A second example of data-driven retention programming began when the Dean for Curriculum and Academic Engagement (DCAE) developed a project to help identify students who might be headed for serious academic trouble. He analyzed data from students who had been asked to leave the College for academic reasons and found that virtually all of them had failed their first-year seminar. FYS is designed to help students orient to the College and to develop the skills they will need throughout their four years with us. Once a student failed FYS, they would need to wait a full year to retake it, delaying their acquisition of important skills and causing some to feel embarrassment when they were enrolled with younger students. This realization led us to pilot an FYS section in the spring semester. We believed this would improve the students' academic skills and their confidence. Our evaluation of the program, however, showed that it did not help with retention and the pilot was discontinued. We continue to use the retention data, and what we learned from the FYS spring pilot, to try and find ways to better support students who are at academic risk. For example, although our new Vice President of Student Affairs/Dean of Students has been at Wooster less than a year, he has already started identifying components of a [retention plan](#).

### Sources

- 4 year graduation rate 2016
- 6 Year Graduation Rate 2016
- AMRE Retention Report 2014
- AMRE Retention Report 2016
- Draft Retention Plan
- First Year to Sophomore Retention Rate 2015-1

## 4.S - Summary

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

### Summary

The last four years have been a time of change at Wooster. Just a few examples include the inauguration of a new president, the construction of a new building, and the creation of a new STEM learning community. Assessment has undergone significant change as well. As described in this chapter, we have recently launched a new assessment model that we believe improves on the old in significant ways. This new model asks departments, programs, and offices to think about assessment as a process rather than as a series of unrelated yearly reports. Our new plan also clarifies roles and responsibilities. We believe this will lead us to better compliance and to better quality assessment.

At the time of our last report in 2013, we had just begun asking groups on campus to tie their work to the College's mission and Graduate Qualities. We have made significant progress since then, with almost all academic departments and programs mapping their courses onto the qualities. Many Academic Affairs offices have also linked their programs. Even more importantly, the mission and Graduate Qualities have been—and will continue to be—central to our reevaluation of *A Wooster Education*. For example, when we solicited suggestions for new curricular models from the faculty, we asked that each author [tie their ideas to the Graduate Qualities](#). As we continue to engage in this multi-year process, we also plan to use assessment work from across campus to guide us.

Along with our successes, we face new challenges. Key among these involves our work with the Sherman Fairchild project. We believe that the project can give us significant insight into our curriculum—both at the College and departmental levels. This will, however, take a great deal of work from many people across campus. A second challenge involves tracking how well our new assessment model is working. Are we getting better and more useful data? Has compliance increased? Are we able to bring Student Affairs offices into a regular assessment cycle? Other areas that present challenges include retention and transfers. We are interested bringing our first-to-second year retention rate back to our previous high of 90 percent. This will require a continuing willingness to create and assess new programs and policies. Similarly, the College would like to become more “transfer friendly,” also demanding assessment of current practices. A final challenge involves our commitment to weave assessment even more tightly into strategic planning. We know that we will, in part, accomplish this by strengthening ties between EPC, EAC, and SPPAC but we must continue to seek out other methods as well. We have seen the benefits of assessment across campus and are committed to keep moving forward.

### Sources

- Call for Curricular Ideas

# Criterion 5 - Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

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

- [5.A - The institution's resource base supports its current educational programs...](#)
- [5.B - The institution's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership ...](#)
- [5.C - The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning](#)
- [5.D - The institution works systematically to improve its performance](#)
- [5.S - Summary](#)

# 5.A - The institution’s resource base supports its current educational programs...

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

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

## Argument

### 5.A.1

#### I. Fiscal Resources

##### Financial Statement Analyses

Key balance sheet financial ratios derived from the College’s [audited financial statements](#) demonstrate the stability and strength of Wooster’s overall financial position (Table 5.1). While our balance sheet remains stronger than most of our GLCA peers, some of our FY16 ratios now reflect the effect of recent losses in the financial markets that have impacted the College’s annual return from operations. This has led to a short-term decline in the Composite Financial Index (CFI).

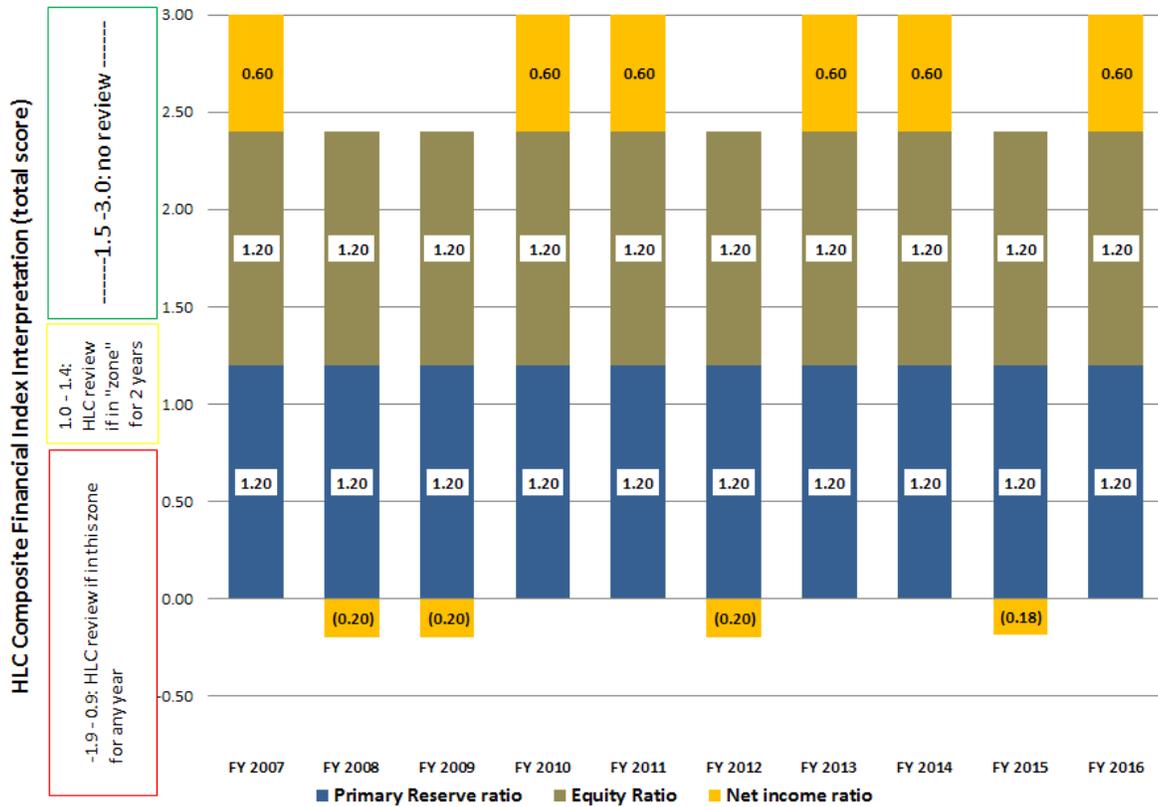
Table 5.1.

Selected Financial Ratios

KPI or Metric	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	Goal or Threshold	GLCA Medians (FY16)
Composite Financial Index (KPMG): overall financial well-being	8.1	7.8	7.3	6.2	7	4.7
Viability Ratio: availability of expendable net assets to cover long term debt and resources available for more debt	6.0	7.4	8.8	8.6	1.25	2.1
Primary Reserve Ratio: measures sufficiency and flexibility of resources (how long expenses are covered with no new resources)	2.0	2.3	2.4	2.1	.40 or better	2.2

Since 2007, the HLC’s Composite Financial Index (Figure 5.1) calculated from the College’s audited financial data submitted in the Annual Institutional Data Update (AIDU) has consistently fallen in the “no review” range, being either 2.2 or 3.0.

**Figure 5.1: HLC Composite Financial Index**



In preparation for the issuance of the Series 2012 Bonds in May of 2012, Moody’s Investors Service’s [financial analysis](#) allowed a continuance of the College’s A1 rating with a stable outlook. In October 2015, Moody’s conducted their routine [bi-annual review](#) and reaffirmed our rating of A1 with a stable outlook. The report indicated Wooster has robust liquidity, significant expendable financial resources for a low amount of debt, and a disciplined approach to funding projects and borrowing. The report characterized Wooster’s market position as “[a] small, residential college holding steady in a highly competitive Midwest market.”

The College’s [FY16 audited financial statements](#) show total assets of \$508.6 million and net assets of \$450.3 million. From FY12 to FY16, there was solid growth in long- and short-term investments with a decline in cash and equivalents (Table 5.2). The decline in cash is due to the measurement of cash at a specific point in time and the result of a conscious change in our [short-term cash management policy](#), resulting in lower cash balances in operating bank accounts and higher balances in our operating short-term investment accounts. The result is a fairly liquid and nimble balance sheet (Table 5.3), reduced risk, and increased liquidity for upcoming capital project needs.

*Table 5.2*

*Cash & Investments*

in \$ 000	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	5 year % change
Long-term investments	\$ 258,078	\$ 265,814	\$ 302,426	\$ 315,746	\$ 283,090	9.7%
Short-term investments	11,022	22,644	8,680	9,409	29,795	170.3%
Cash and cash equivalents	3,633	4,849	13,079	6,202	2,009	-44.7%
Total	\$ 272,733	\$ 293,307	\$ 324,185	\$ 331,357	\$ 314,894	15.5%

*Table 5.3*

*Ratio Trend - Liquidity*

	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16
Cash Expense Ratio: cash sufficiency to support expenditures	17.8%	32.7%	25.3%	17.7%	35.7%

Current Ratio: sufficient current assets to support current liabilities	1.6	2.7	2.1	2.4	3.7
Available Funds Ratio (Cushion): enough liquidity to support current liabilities	1.2	2.0	1.7	1.2	2.2
Receivables Ratio: proportion of tuition and fee revenue that are yet receivables	2.4%	4.3%	1.8%	2.6%	1.8%

Over the past five years, our annual operating results have not been a major contributor to our net asset growth because of small operating surpluses and closely balanced operating budgets. We have held our annual increase in operating expenses under 2% each year, for a cumulative increase of 8.5% for that period (Table 5.4). The primary drivers of our cost increases include additional support and investment in our educational experience for students, as illustrated in 5.C.1, moderate increases in salaries and wages, and increased health benefits costs.

Table 5.4

Operating Expenses Trend

Operating Expenses (\$000)	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	Cumulative Change (%)
Educational & General	\$ 66,521	\$ 67,741	\$ 68,793	\$ 69,718	\$ 71,480	7.5%
Auxiliary Enterprises	15,683	16,330	17,133	18,710	17,710	12.9%
Total	\$ 82,203	\$ 84,071	\$ 85,925	\$ 88,428	\$ 89,189	8.5%

The College has an [operating reserve](#) in the event of extreme exigency during the year. As of the end of FY16, the reserve contained over \$3.7 million and has not been used for any exigency purpose since it was established (Table 5.5).

Table 5.5

Operating Reserve Balance (\$000)

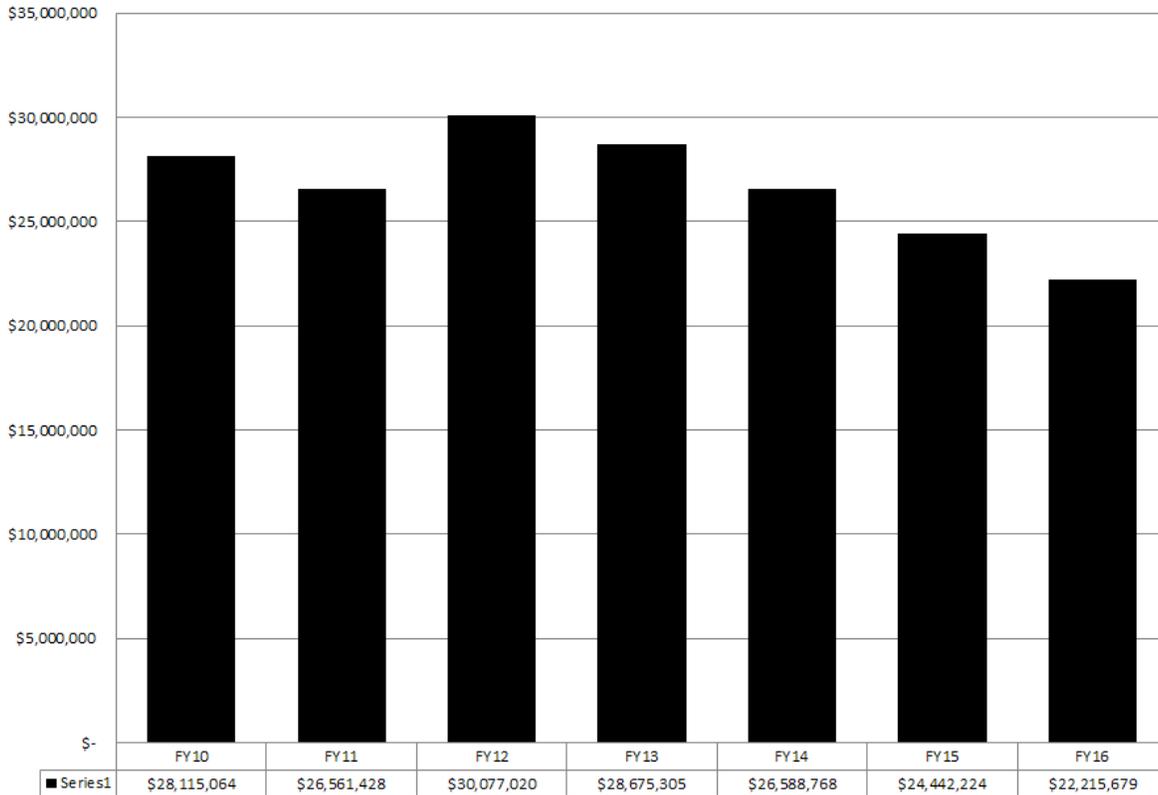
	FY10	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16
Balance At 6/30	\$ 4,230.5	\$ 4,775.7	\$ 4,241.7	\$ 4,251.8	\$ 2,775.7	\$ 3,672.1	\$ 3,700.4

\* \$1.5 million transfer for Gault Schoolhouse renovation

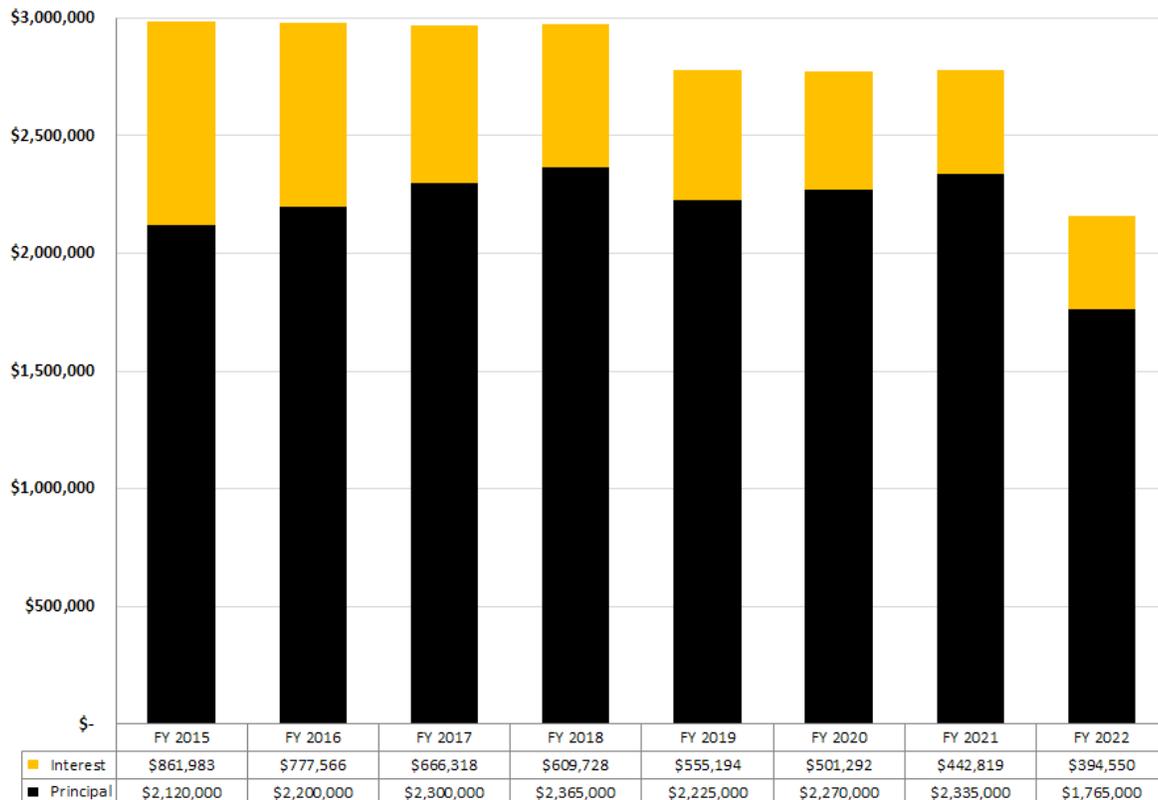
### Long Term Debt & Debt Strategy

We have steadily reduced our long-term debt over the past four years, providing for future debt capacity (Figure 5.2). Figure 5.3 illustrates our historical and projected debt service payments based on debt issued as of June 30, 2016.

**Figure 5.2: Long-Term Debt Outstanding at 6/30**



**Figure 5.3: Annual Debt Service**

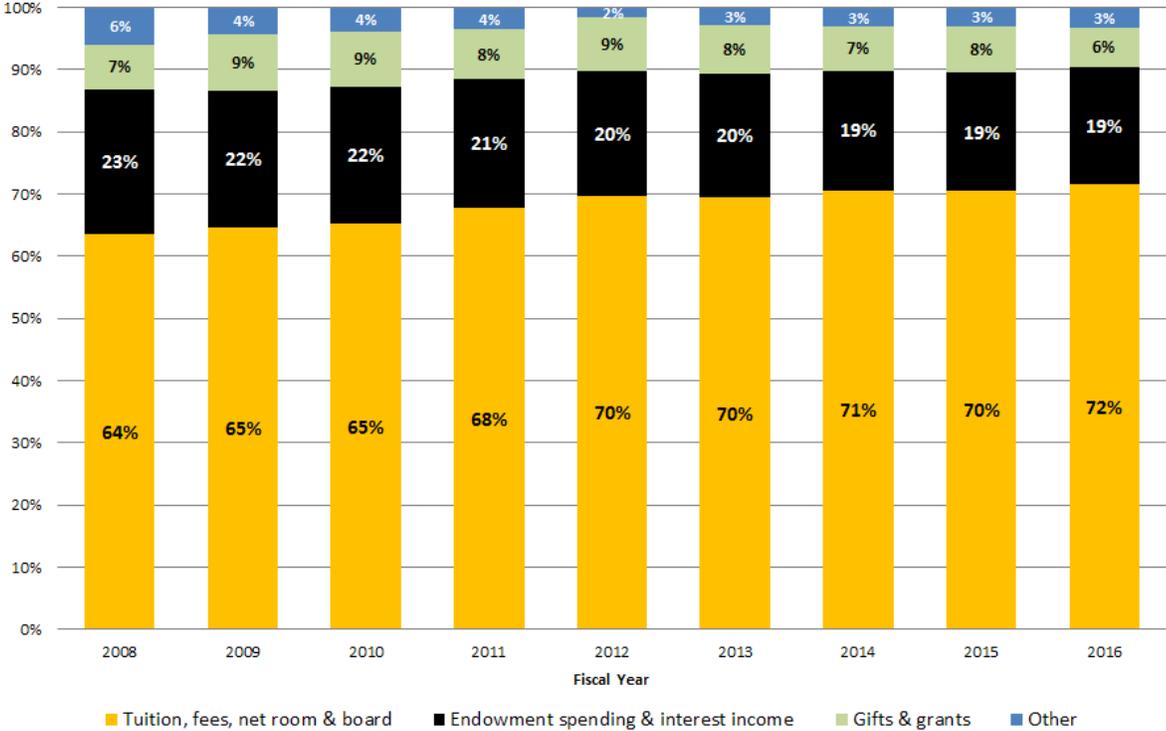


The College’s Board of Trustees has traditionally taken a very conservative approach to debt and to investing. This has led to a balance sheet characterized by strong debt ratios and smaller debt service payments allowing allocation of resources to other needs. The Board reviews and updates the [College Debt Policy](#) at least every three years and before consideration of any additional debt issuance. The Board considers the prudent use of debt as a means of advancing the College’s strategic objectives. In 2017, following [multiple discussions in the Finance Committee](#) regarding the College’s competitive advantage in the market, recruitment, and retention and [how debt could advance our objectives](#), the Trustees determined it was time to proceed with a number of the high-priority projects identified in the campus facilities master plan and corresponding campus residential housing plan. A pro forma was developed to assess the College’s debt capacity relative to the ability to maintain the current Moody’s rating of A1. The [pro forma \(Table 5.6\)](#) indicates the College would remain well within the most watched financial ratios required by Moody’s to maintain our existing rating.

**Operating Revenues Analysis**

Our operating resources come from student tuition and fees, endowment income and interest, auxiliary operations, gifts and grants, with a very small amount of income (less than 3%) from other sources. Student tuition, fees, and room and board net of institutional financial assistance provide 72% of the revenue that supports our \$83.3 million [FY17 annual operating budget](#), a proportion that has been increasing since 2008 primarily due to increases in net tuition revenue per student and an increase in enrollment of about 100 FTE from 2008 (Figure 5.4).

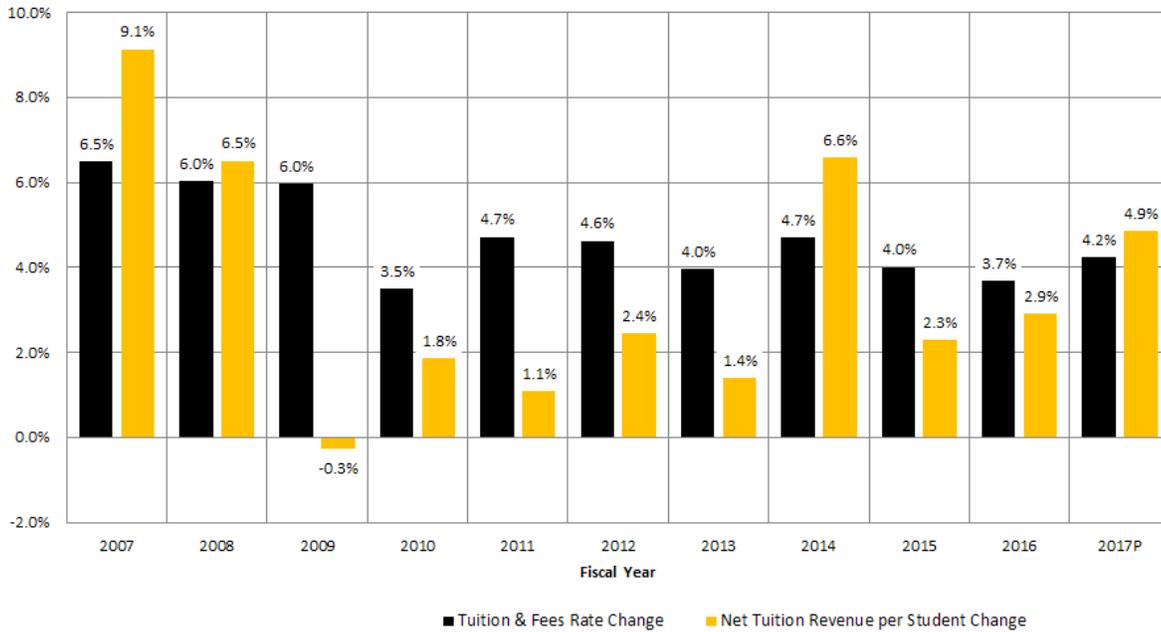
**Figure 5.4: Unrestricted Operations-Revenue Sources**



**Student Revenues**

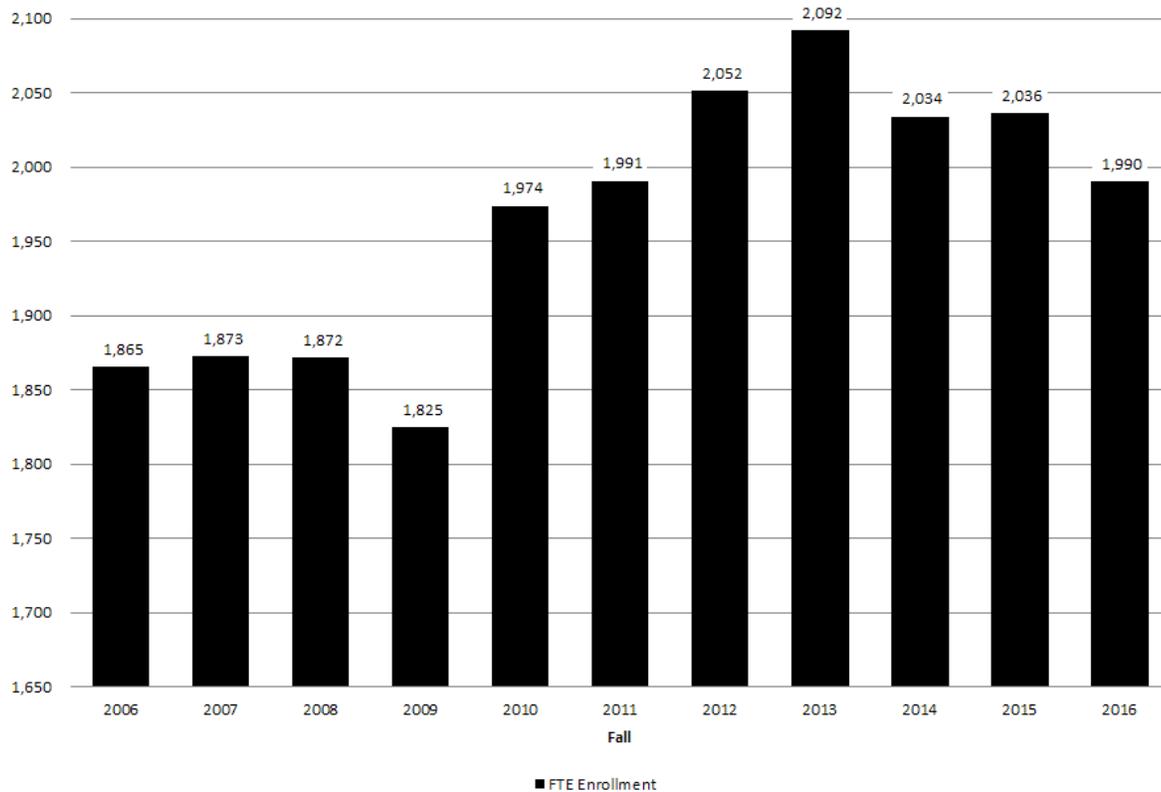
At \$46,430, our tuition rate for 2016-17 is slightly above the [median of our GLCA peers](#) (\$44,070) but is the second lowest of the Ohio5 colleges. Our net tuition rate per student has increased, though generally at a rate less than our rate of increase in tuition and fees, due to stagnant or declining family incomes and corresponding need for increasing financial aid (Figure 5.5).

**Figure 5.5: Annual % Change: Tuition & Fees v. Net Tuition Revenue per Student (all students)**

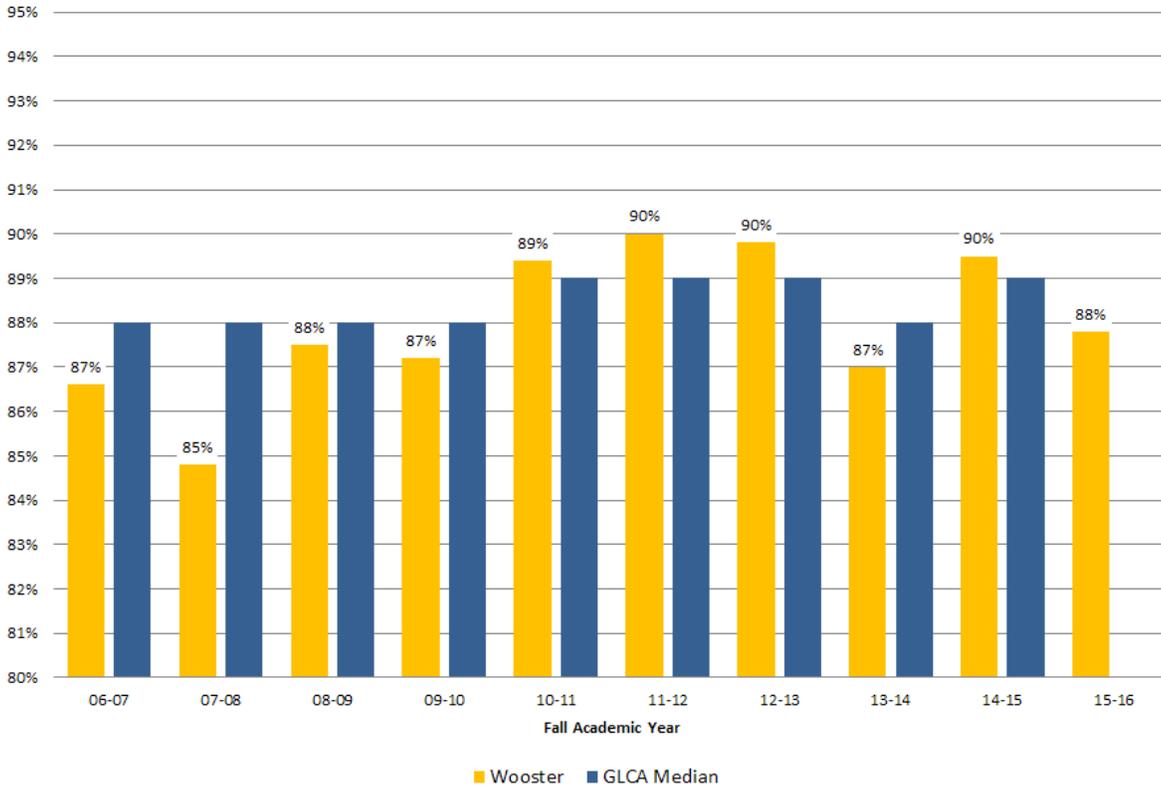


**Enrollment:** Full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment in Fall 2016 was 1,990 students (Figure 5.6). After graduating the last of our “large” incoming classes, our enrollment reflects entering classes of between 545 and 565 and a nearly 2% decline in our first-year to sophomore retention rate for the cohort that entered in fall 2015 (Figure 5.7).

**Figure 5.6: FTE Enrollment**



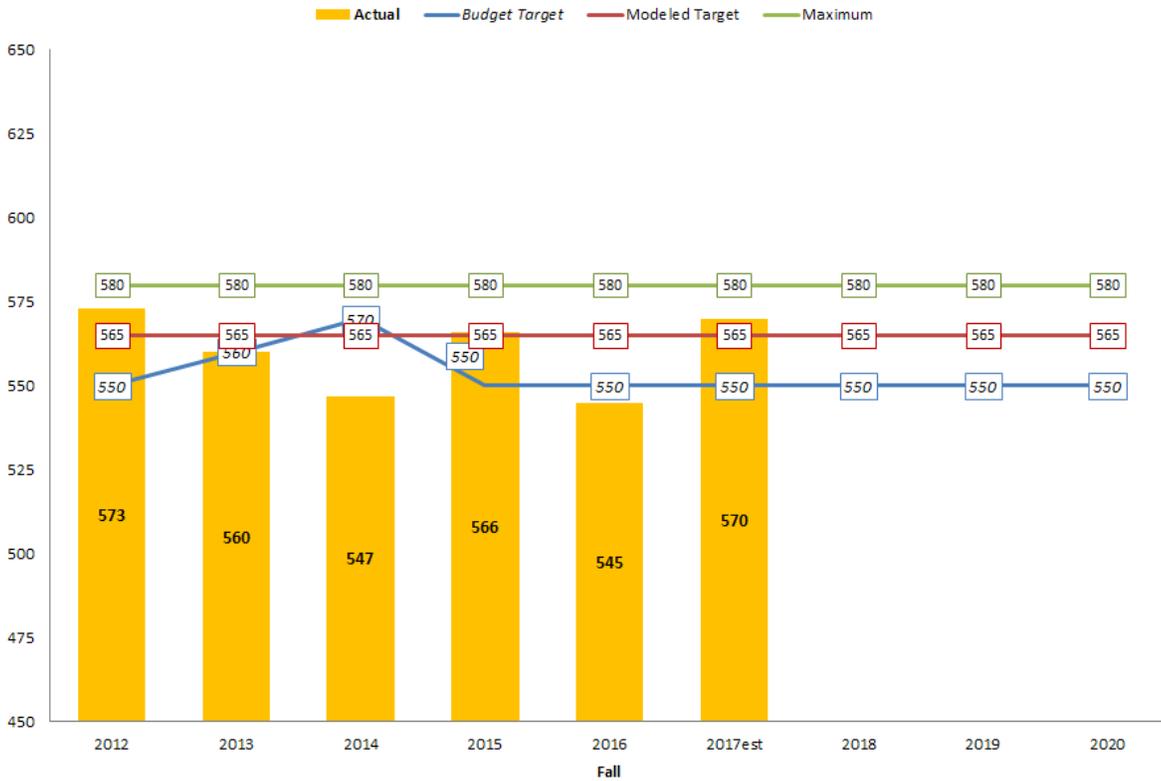
**Figure 5.7: First to Second Year Retention**



Recruitment and admission efforts have been guided by a “Five Year Enrollment Plan” that is periodically updated. An institutional [marketing plan](#) supports both recruitment and advancement initiatives. As noted in Criterion 4, our current retention efforts are focused on increasing student engagement in campus life.

We have diversified the areas from which we attract students, while still focusing intently in our core Midwest markets. We have increased student diversity through membership in the POSSE program, a partnership with the Noble Network of schools in Chicago (<http://www.noblenetwork.org/>), and recruitment in more diverse communities. We continue to attract increasing numbers of international students and “global nomads” from nearly three dozen countries annually. We are well aware that we must carefully balance the academic and diversity profiles of our enrolling classes with net tuition revenue. One goal of our enrollment strategy to grow applications and improve selectivity is to continue to improve academic profile and diversity as we manage our discount rate. Figure 5.8 illustrates our first-year student enrollment targets for 2012-2020.

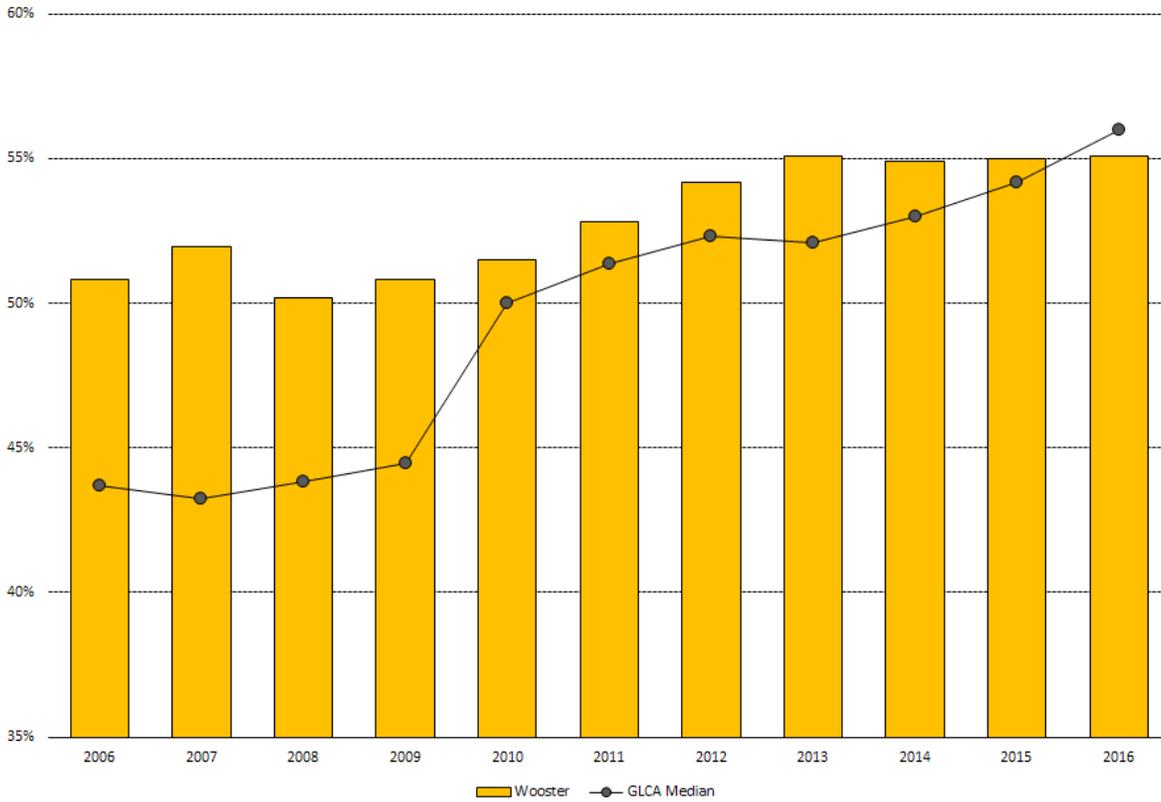
**Figure 5.8: First Year Student Enrollment**



Our enrollment plan sets enrollment targets of between 550 and 580 first-time first-year full-time students and we budget conservatively at 550. Fall 2015 and 2016 first-time first-year student classes were 566 and 545, respectively. As of May 2017, the estimate for fall 2017 is 570 students, with approximately 17% expected to be international students and 22% expected to be domestic students of color, including our POSSE cohort.

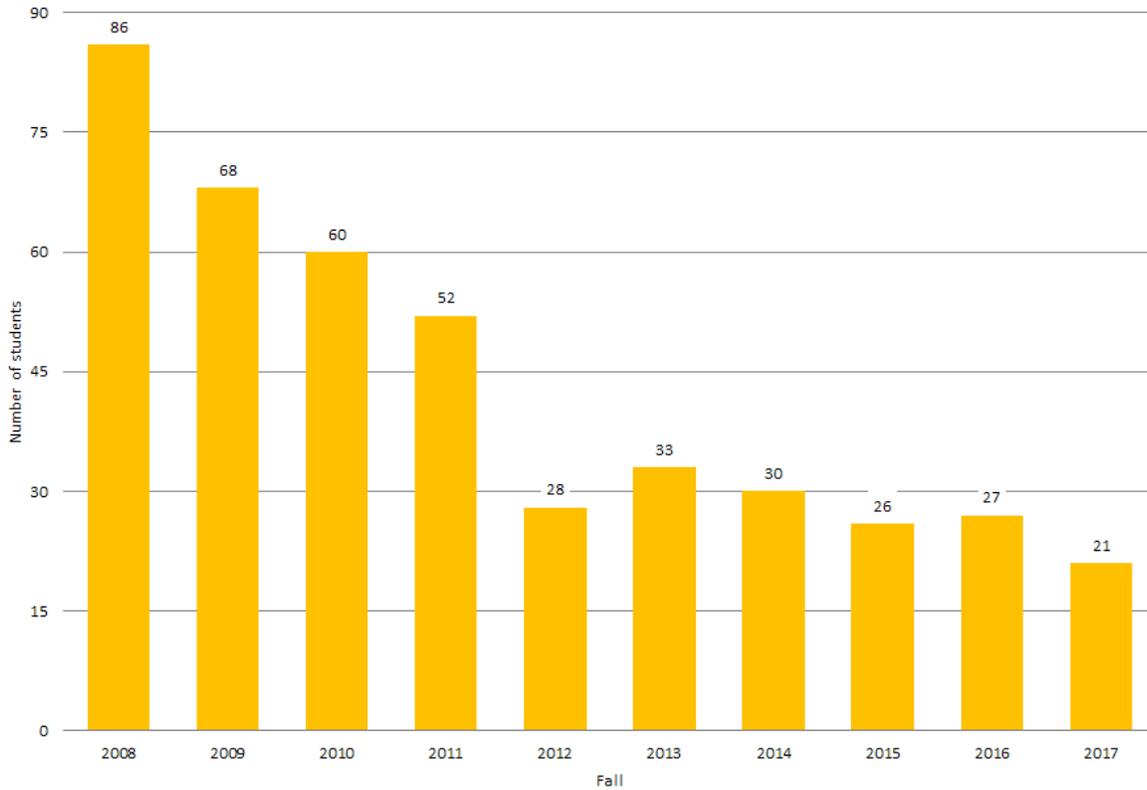
At the time of our 2013 Self-Study, our enrollment plan assumed entering classes of similar profile and our desire to reduce our tuition discount, which we had been able to achieve through Fall 2013; however, we (and our peers and competitors) have found that the “Great Recession” continues to impact more families than we anticipated. This is evident when we consider our domestic first-year student families’ “estimated family contribution (EFC)” noting that (1) a greater proportion have EFCs (Fall 2012 was 82%, Fall 2016 was 85%) and (2) while the average EFC has increased slightly, in fall 2016 it represented 45% of Wooster’s comprehensive price (reference: [Wooster’s Pricing Philosophy Update 2017](#) (p.23+)). The result has been upward pressure on tuition discount rates for Wooster and our peers (Figure 5.9).

Figure 5.9: Tuition & Fees Discount - all students



Another objective of our enrollment plan is to sustain our current student academic profile. At admission, the best overall and comprehensive measure of academic profile is our [Reader Rating score](#). Advances in retention have occurred when we had meaningful reductions in the number of enrolled students with Reader Ratings of less than 9. Figure 5.10 illustrates that for Fall 2017, we anticipate a slight reduction in enrolling students with Reader Ratings of less than 9.

**Figure 5.10: Enrolled First Year Students with Reader Rating < 9**



### Voluntary Support

The Wooster Fund, which is our annual fund, provides approximately 5% of our annual revenue budget. In addition to the Wooster Fund, annual fundraising priorities include major gifts (a gift of \$10,000 or more), foundation and corporation grants, and planned gifts. For FY17, Advancement has targeted \$3.5 million for the Wooster Fund in addition to continued progress toward the \$165 million goal of ["Wooster's Promise: A Campaign for Our Future."](#)

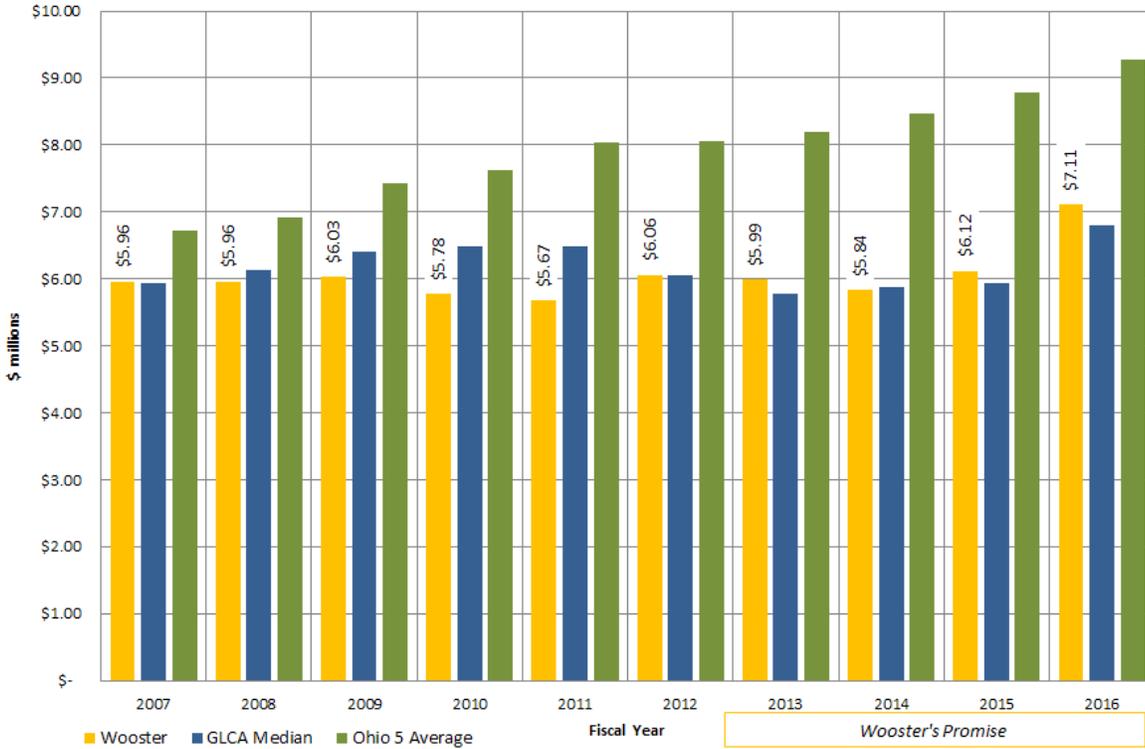
Wooster has been actively engaging its alumni and friends in fundraising and activities since the 1960s. Over the past five years, we have turned our attention to the next generation of donors, a demographic that necessitates that we adapt Wooster's approach of "personal," "donor-centered," and "consistent" to a constituency that is interested in "venture philanthropy," engaged by non-profits other than Wooster, and are less inclined to give to their alma maters as evidenced by declining alumni participation rates. Our Advancement function has strengthened its information, analytics, and research capabilities to support careful planning to achieve goals to increase unrestricted gift revenue, expand our donor base, cultivate the next generation of major donors, and execute a campaign. The result has been successive years of increasing gift revenue and three successful comprehensive campaigns, one single-initiative campaign, and a current campaign that appears to be on target to meet its goal (Table 5.7).

Table 5.7. *College of Wooster campaigns 1979-2017*

Campaign	Goal	Result
Wooster's Promise	\$165 million	<a href="#">Result to date:</a> \$157.7 million (as of April 30, 2017)
Scot Center Campaign (2009-2013)	\$25 million	\$23.5 million (\$18.5 million plus \$5 million undesignated gifts from prior campaign)
Independent Minds Campaign for Wooster (2000-2007)	\$122 million	\$147.9 million
Wooster's Campaign for the 1990's (1989 – 1996)	\$65 million	\$75.3 million
The Campaign for Wooster (1979-1984)	\$32 million	\$36 million

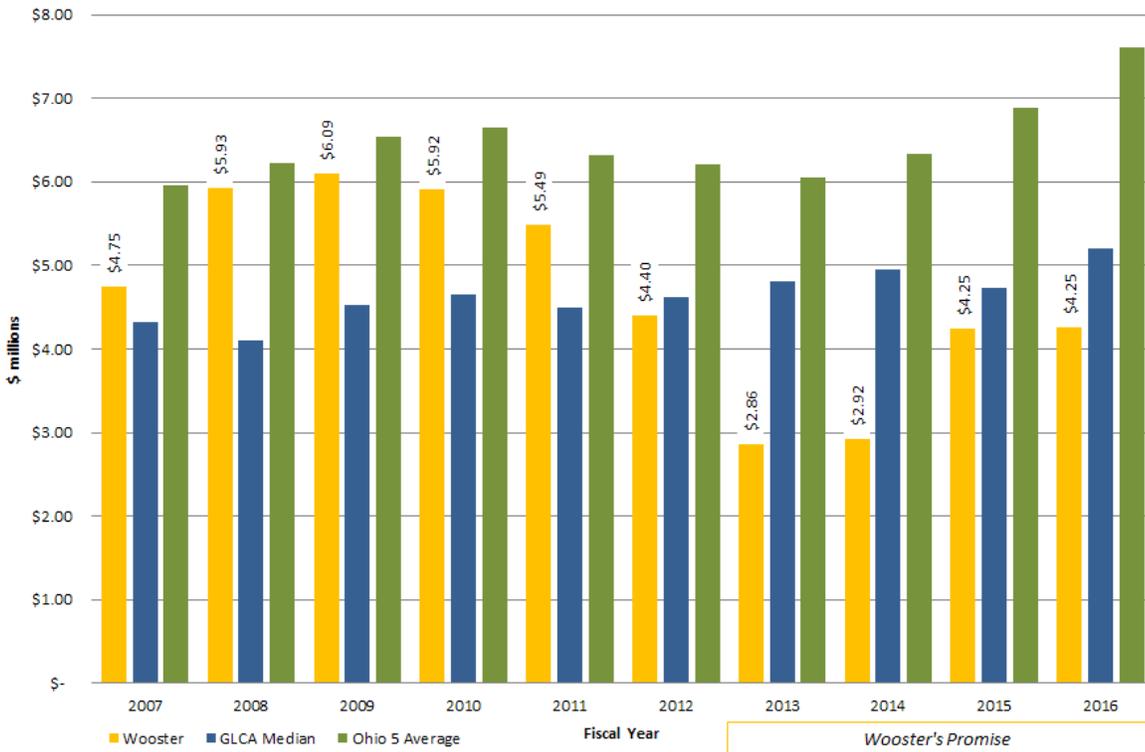
The effect of our strategy can be seen in our voluntary support benchmark metrics. At the time of our 2013 Self-Study, our metrics generally lagged our GLCA peers; now they are comparable or slightly better. At the same time, the "gap" between our Ohio5 peers and Wooster in total gifts for current operations is growing (Figure 5.11).

**Figure 5.11: Gifts for Operations - 5 year rolling average**



As illustrated in Figure 5.12, we have lagged our peers in terms of giving for endowment.

**Figure 5.12: Gifts for Endowment - five year rolling average**



After funding our new integrated life sciences center, the goal of “Wooster’s Promise” is primarily endowment to support student financial aid, faculty development and support, and experiential education. As of April 30, 2017, 35.6% of “Wooster’s Promise” funds raised are designated for endowments.

We also seek to grow gifts to the endowment through planned giving. In 2012-13, we established a formal planned giving function. In the four ensuing years, we have grown the number of planned gifts by 31%, total planned gifts by more than 120% (from \$36 million \$80 million), and gifts received by more than 240% (from \$3.3 million to \$11.3 million) (Table 5.8).

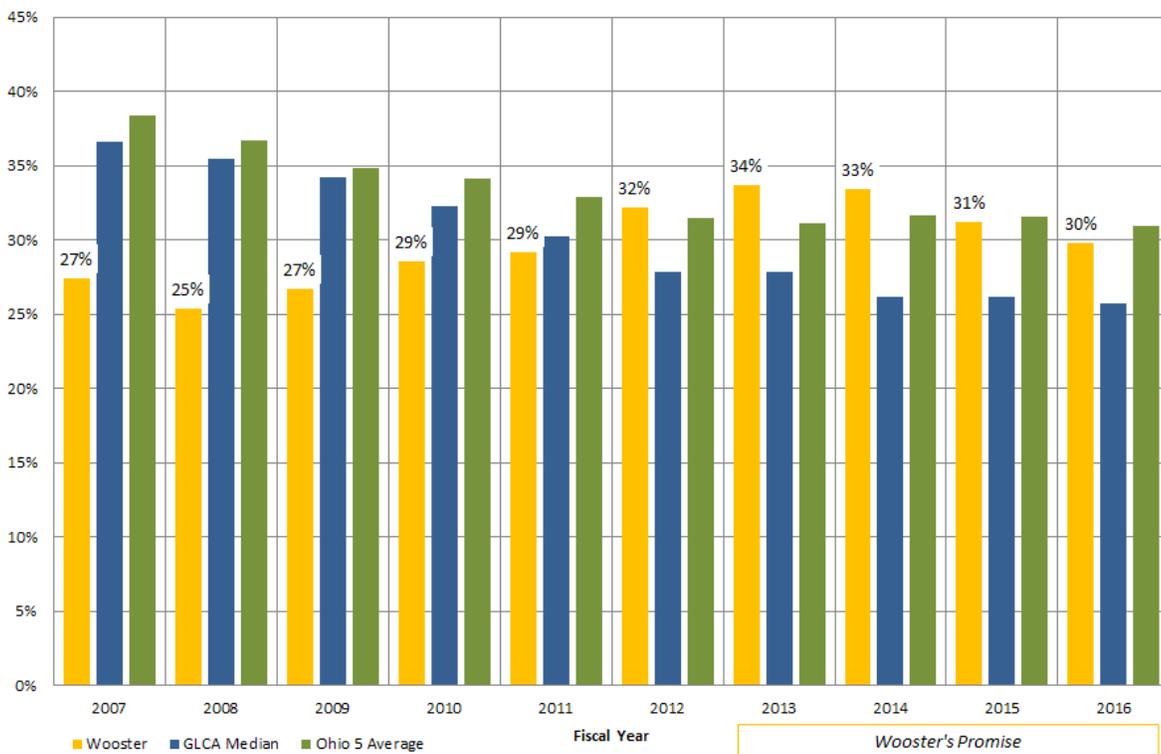
Table 5.8  
Planned Giving Cumulative Commitments as of June 30 (\$000)

	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	Change FY12-FY16
Total # commitments*	931	954	1,058	1,129	1,215	31%
Total committed amount	\$ 35,906	\$ 38,237	\$ 46,520	\$ 65,334	\$ 80,145	123%
Total gifts realized	\$ 3,293	\$ 4,394	\$ 4,690	\$ 8,721	\$ 11,343	244%

\* (bequests expected, life income gifts, bequests received)

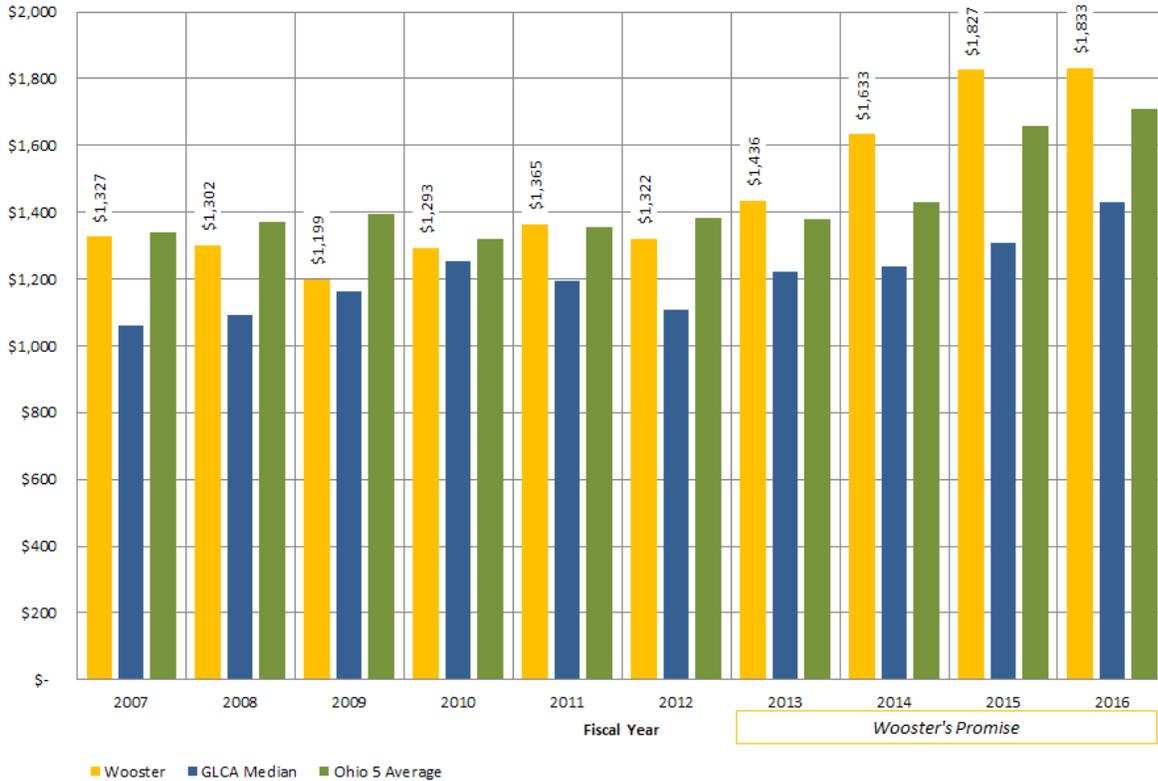
Our alumni participation rates now exceed our GLCA peers and compare with our Ohio5 peers. Also, like our GLCA and Ohio5 peers, our alumni participation rates reflect a flat to slow decline, consistent with demographics and giving habits of new generations of alumni (Figure 5.13).

**Figure 5.13: Alumni Participation - five year rolling average**



Anticipating a declining trend in our alumni participation rate, we have sought to increase the average gift per alumni donor. Figure 5.14 illustrates that our average alumni gift has not only been trending upward (and we acknowledge “Wooster’s Promise” is a reason for the trend, in part), it exceeds both the average alumni gift at our GLCA and Ohio5 peer institutions.

**Figure 5.14: Average Alumni Gift (all purposes)- five year rolling average**

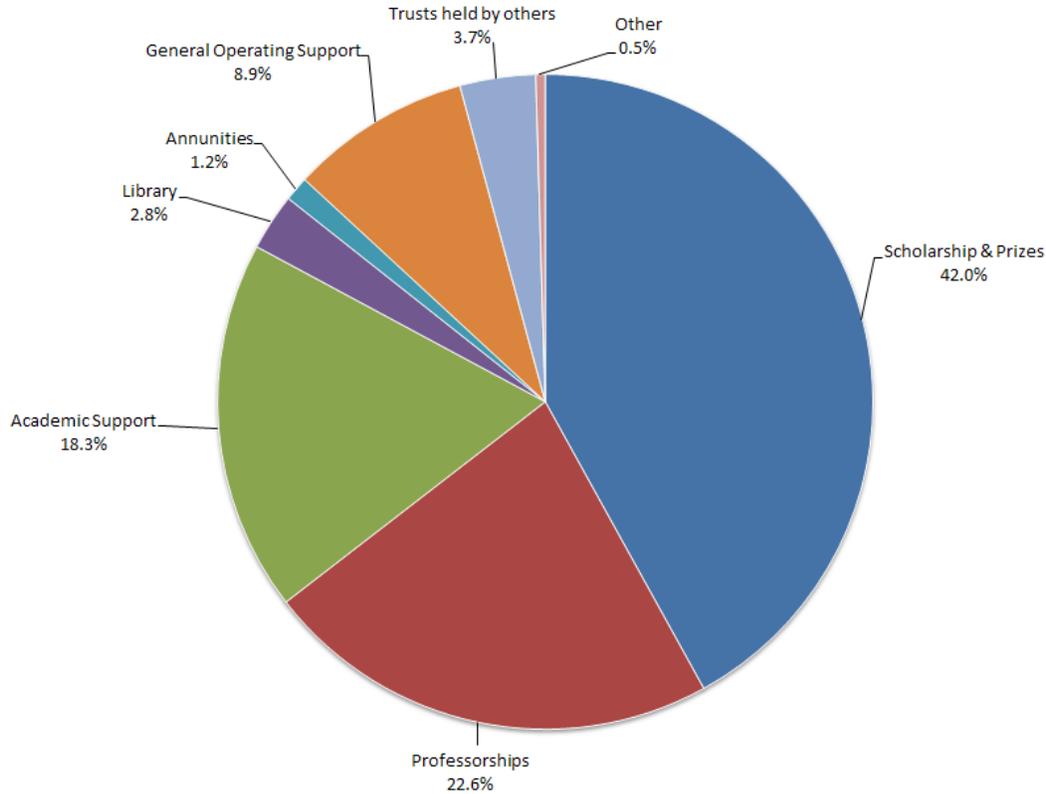


We actively solicit foundation and corporation grants, as well as research grants, to launch strategic initiatives or strengthen programs that advance our core mission. Since spring 2013, we have received or been partners in receiving approximately \$13.3 million to support faculty appointments, undergraduate research, faculty research, scholarships, new areas of program emphasis such as diversity and global engagement, experiential learning, and capital projects.

**Endowment**

**Endowment Resources:**The value of the College’s endowment as of June 30, 2016 was \$262,616,000. This reflects a net change in market value of -7.6% for the year. Wooster’s endowment supports 14% of our annual operating budget. More than 85% of our endowment is designated to support our core mission: the educational program, faculty, and our students (Figure 5.15). Scholarships and prizes are 42% of the endowment. We have a few unique endowments, including one to support the care and maintenance of the trees on our campus. Recent fundraising campaigns for major facilities, particularly the new Life Sciences building and Brush Hall, have included funding for endowments for facility maintenance.

**Figure 5.15: Endowment by Designation: - June 30, 2016**



**Performance:** As noted in our 2013 Self-Study, our historically-conservative approach to investing endowment assets has protected the College's endowment during market downturns, but slows its recovery on the upside (Figure 5.16). The Investment Committee has been working to alter the asset allocation to better reflect the perpetual nature of the endowment. In practice, this means increasing significantly the exposure to long-only equities (both domestic and international), to reduce hedge fund exposure, and to increase investments in private equity and real estate partnerships which have the potential to generate returns above our targets. The Committee has actively focused on investment costs and has moved to reduce investments with "active managers" (with higher fees) replacing them with low-cost index funds in the same asset classes. Investment Committee members are highly engaged, meeting in person or via conference call 14 times during the 2016-17 academic year.

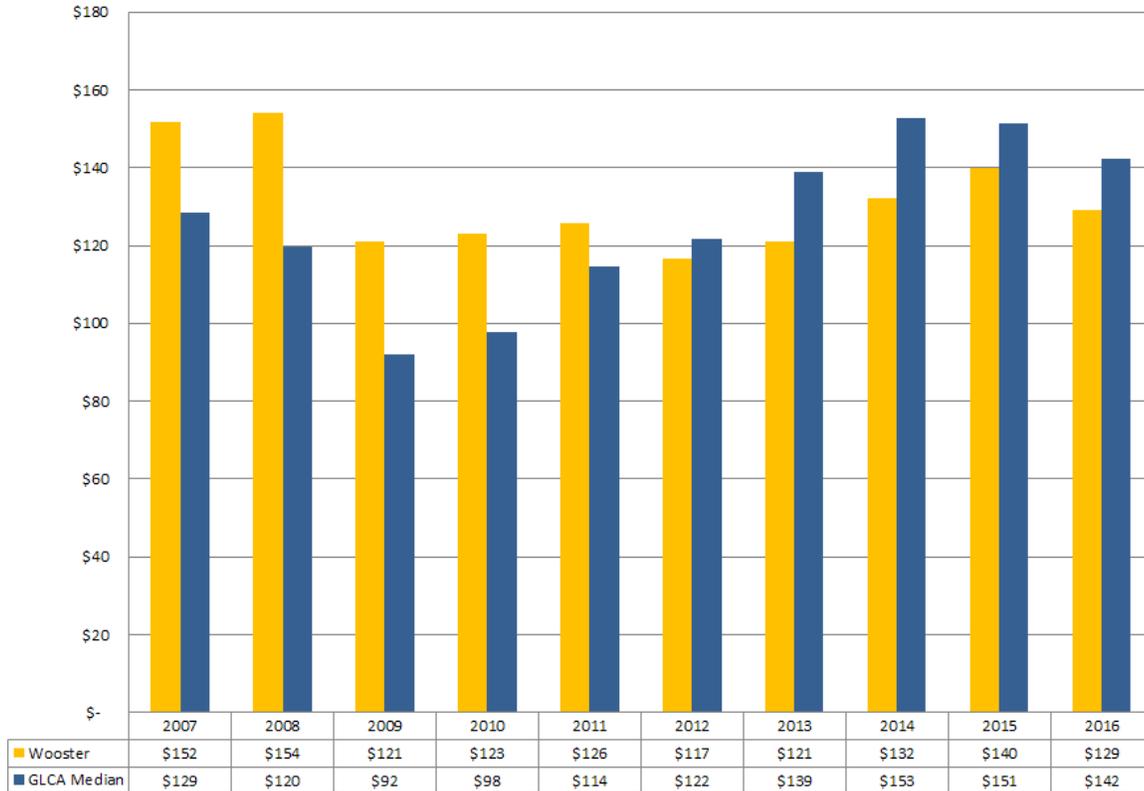
**Figure 5.16: Endowment Total Return**



**Endowment Leverage:** We know that our approach to a residential liberal arts education is resource intensive, particularly with respect to faculty, educational resources and facilities, and student support services. We consider our endowment to be a strategic asset that can be leveraged to support our approach, alleviating pressure on student-based revenues and gifts for operations, which is appropriate in the current challenging economic climate for higher education and our students' families. We also recognize, however, the importance of generating investment returns that exceed our spending rate plus HEPI inflation on a consistent basis. In the current investment climate, this is a difficult target and we recognize that a successful outcome requires both spending restraint and an appropriate asset allocation. The Investment Committee believes that the asset allocation is now close to being optimally positioned, but the College's administration along with the Finance and Investment Committees of the Board are still in active discussion about how to reduce the endowment spending rate to a sustainable level.

We use multiple lenses when considering the availability and allocation of our resources: in total, in proportion, and -- often most insightful -- per student. Endowment, like net tuition revenue, is a resource that has most meaning for us in "per student" terms. Our restrained historical investment performance and the fact that we have more students have had the compounding effect of reducing our endowment per student, thus resulting in less endowment we can leverage for each student (Figure 5.17).

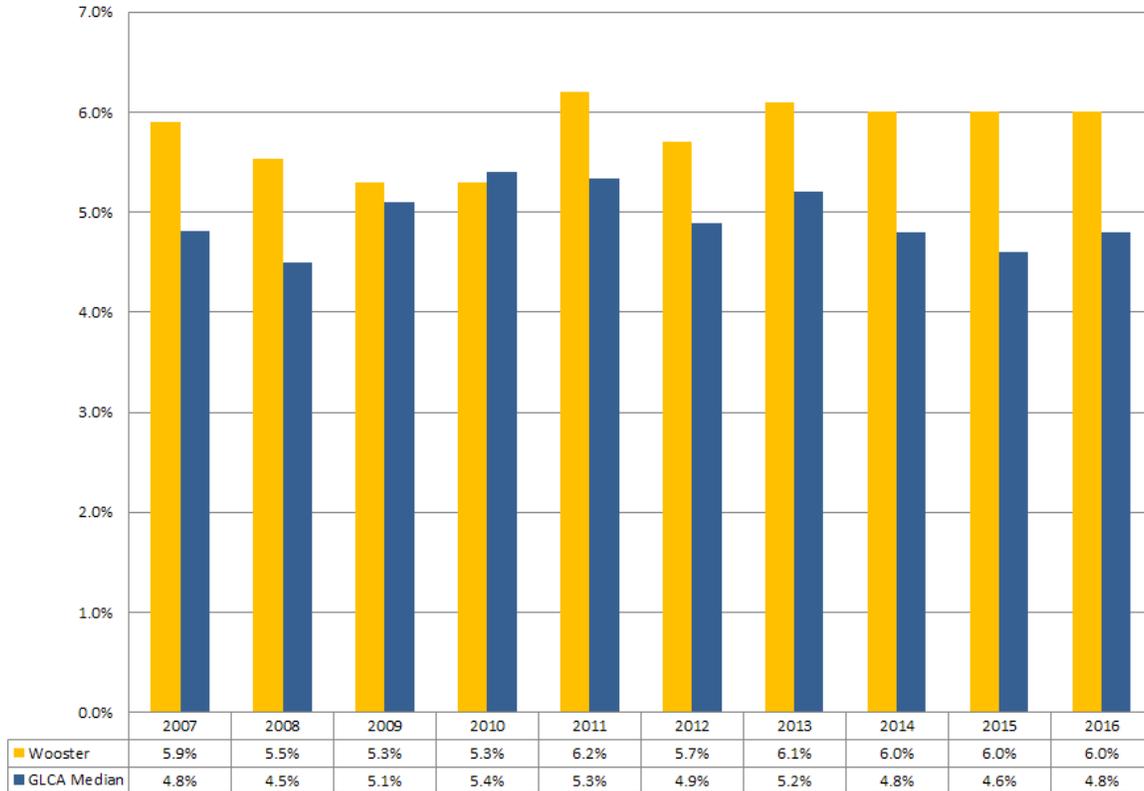
**Figure 5.17: Endowment Market Value per FTE Student**



**Spending Policy:** The College’s endowment spending policy previously approved by the Board beginning with the fiscal year 2012-13 budget was a [corridor policy](#). The annual payout was equal to the prior-year payout amount, increased by 1% with a maximum amount not to exceed 6% of the twelve-quarter trailing average of the endowment market value. In June 2016, the Board approved an [extension of that policy](#) through fiscal year 2017.

While our annual endowment spending rate, as determined by our policy, has been within the range permitted by the policy, it has consistently been above NACUBO averages and in excess of our GLCA peers (Figure 5.18). This, in combination with an investment environment over the past two years that has not permitted returns in excess of our target of the spending rate plus HEPI inflation, has led the Board to [examine scenarios to achieve a reduction in our spending rate](#) to 5% or less in the future, and in March 2017, they abandoned the corridor policy approach, [setting a fixed spending rate for the FY18 budget](#) as a starting point for reducing future spending rates and have committed to review the spending policy on an annual basis beginning fall 2017.

**Figure 5.18: Endowment Spending Rate**



**Auxiliary Operations**

The five-year trend of our auxiliary enterprise operations (housing, dining, camps, conferences, bookstore) are healthy and show continuous increases in the contributions to the bottom line of the College's operations (Table 5.9).

	Wooster				GLCA (FY16)		
	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	Median	Min	Max
Net Auxiliary Income margin on self-supporting enterprises	20.9%	20.3%	16.3%	21.6%	20.8%	2.6%	50.2%

The College of Wooster's Bookstore underwent significant changes over the past two years. It has adopted a new point of sale software application; experimented with moving the sale of textbooks online then brought sales back in-house; had significant changes in its staffing and management structure; partnered with indiCo (National Association of College Stores' Independent Campus Stores Collaborative) in June 2016 to provide reviews of finances, general merchandising, and organizational structure, and to provide onsite store oversight for a six-week period. The College has begun implementing staffing recommendations through employee retirements to improve margin. The store is managing inventory levels to provide a greater financial return by stocking various price points to accommodate customers looking for lower priced merchandise. Other recommendations will be reviewed for implementation during FY18.

In 2013-14, a comprehensive operational review of the College-operated Campus Dining and Conference Services department was conducted by the National Association of College and University Food Services (NACUFS). NACUFS identified a number of strengths of the College's program, including exceptional relationships with students. Their report provided several recommendations for both short- and long-term goals. Goals completed include participating in the NACUFS Operating Performance Benchmark Study, implementing an employee recognition program, and updating the aesthetics of Lowry Dining Hall. The long-term challenge is that the dining facilities are very outdated and are also over-taxed due to the small kitchen and very limited storage. A Lowry Center feasibility study is underway, which contemplates possible renovations which would address these issues.

The [Ohio Light Opera \(OLO\)](#) is a lyric opera that is a "supporting organization" of the College in accordance with Internal Revenue Code Section 509(a)(3). It is not considered an auxiliary enterprise for financial statement purposes. OLO receives administrative and other services from the College (such as processing of payroll, facilities, and technology support), and pays the College for housing and performance facilities during their summer season at a highly discounted rate. OLO provides performance scholarships and internships for Wooster students. OLO has a board of trustees of which one-third is appointed by the College per their [bylaws](#).

The [Wooster Inn Management Company](#) (WIMCO) oversees the lease of the College's Wooster Inn facility. Currently, the Inn operates independently of the College.

The [Wooster Technology Group, Ltd.](#) (WTG) is a single-member limited liability corporation which was formed in December 2008 in response to Professor of Chemistry Paul Edmiston's invention of Osorb, a promising material with potential commercial applications. WTG is responsible for monitoring the use of net commercialization proceeds and for advising the President, faculty, or staff about intellectual property issues. WTG seeks to obtain maximum value for the College from all intellectual property in which it has an interest, and oversees related processes, including patents and licensing. WTG also acts to monitor the distribution of any net patent proceeds according to the [Intellectual Property Policy](#).

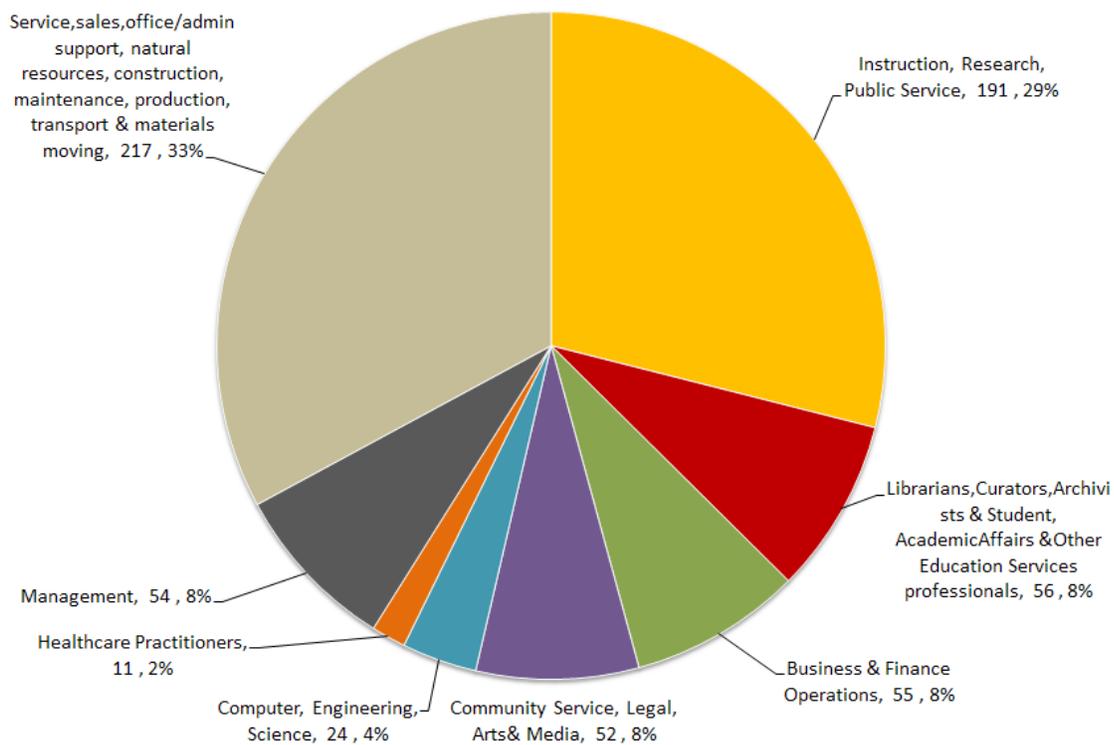
The Osorb patent continues to be the only intellectual property in WTG's portfolio and has generated approximately \$45,000 in royalties through sales made under license from us by ABS Materials of Wooster, Ohio. Under the Intellectual Property Policy these funds are retained by WTG until the original patent expense (approximately \$100,000) has been offset, after which they will be distributed according to the Policy's guidelines. The WTG Directors receive annual updates from ABS management who continue to indicate optimism about Osorb's prospects.

## II. Human Resources

### Faculty & Staff Composition

The College employed 658 individuals in fall 2016. The College operates its bookstore, dining services, and facilities services functions in-house. The distribution of employee positions by the U.S. Department of Education's occupational categories is illustrated in Figure 5.19.

**Figure 5.19: IPEDS Staffing Data - Fall 2016**



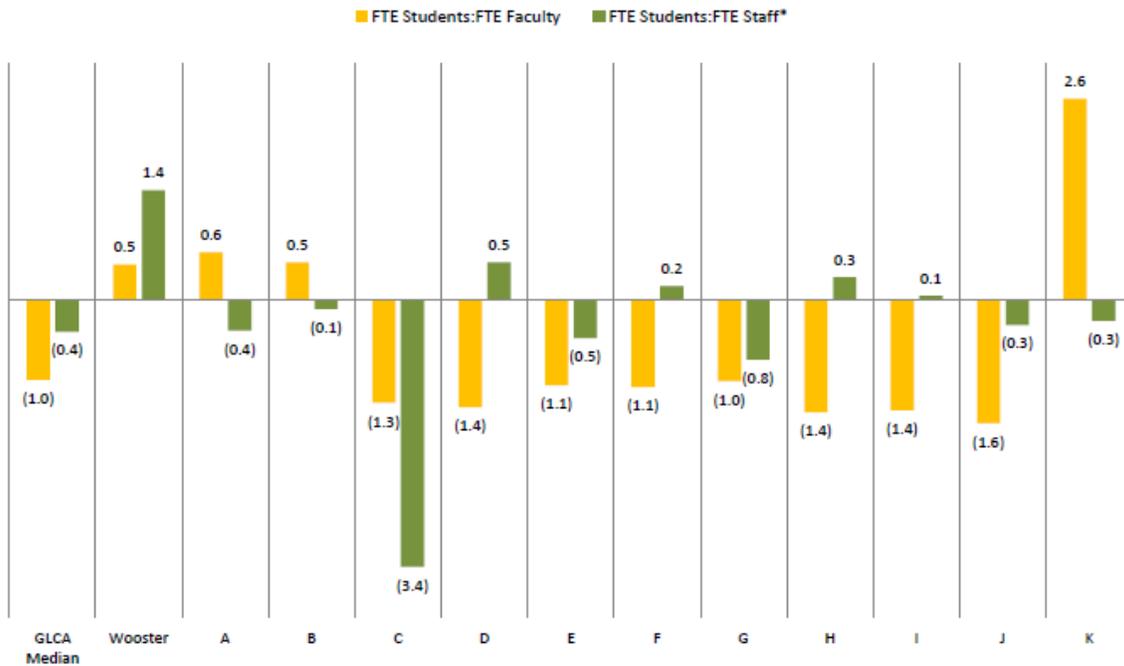
The College also employs approximately 40 individuals in on-call and seasonal positions.

While IPEDS staffing data has been useful for benchmarking in broad categories, we prefer to benchmark on a more detailed level with our GLCA peers. The GLCA has conducted two comprehensive staffing studies, one in 2009 which we referenced in our 2013 Self-Study, and one in 2014-15. These studies were undertaken to help GLCA institutions gain understanding about staffing patterns and trends both in absolute and relative terms. We use the study for those purposes and to determine whether our staffing patterns are adequately supporting our mission and strategic initiatives and priorities.

The 2013 HLC Visiting Team noted that "the college's staffing levels appear high relative to peer institutions" and suggested that "reviewing staffing levels and positions may present an opportunity to conserve and realign resources." The analyses of the 2014-15 GLCA Staffing Study indicated that we:

- Improved our student:staff ratio by 1.4 from fall 2009 while across the GLCA, the student:staff ratio declined by 0.4 (Figure 5.20)

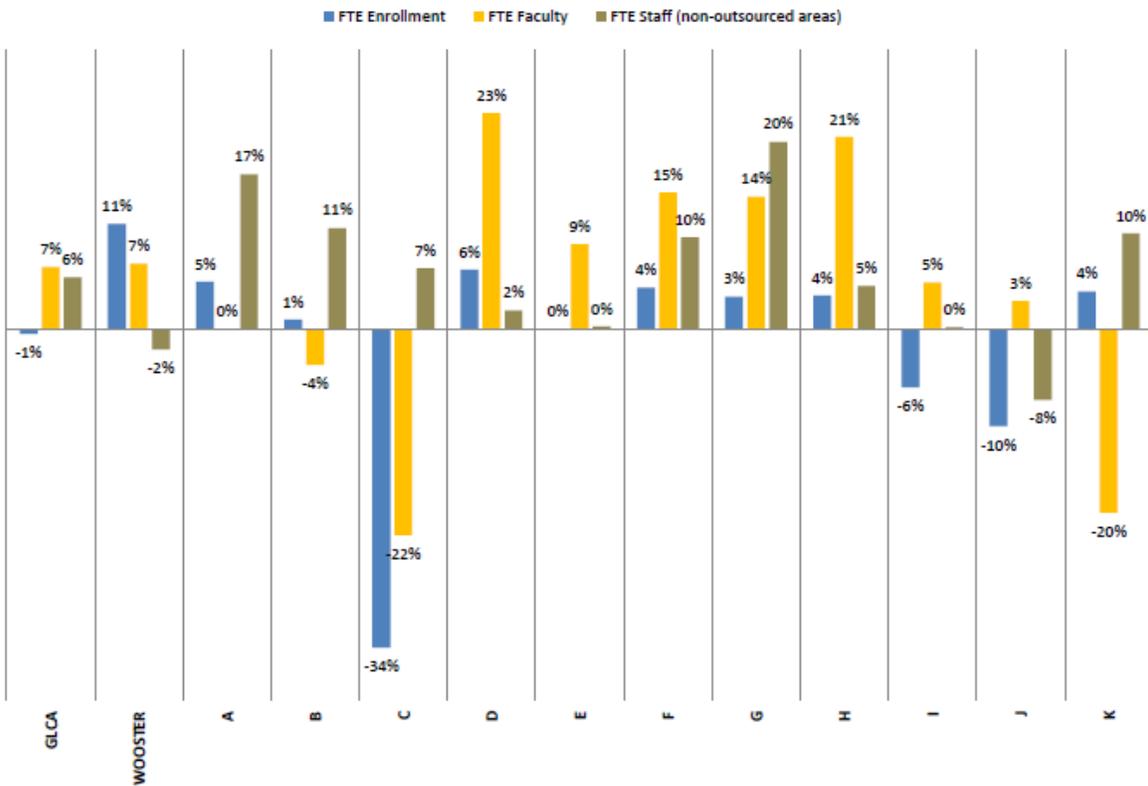
**Figure 5.20: GLCA Staffing Study  
FTE:FTE Changes - 2009 to 2014**



\* staff excludes facilities and auxiliaries services staff

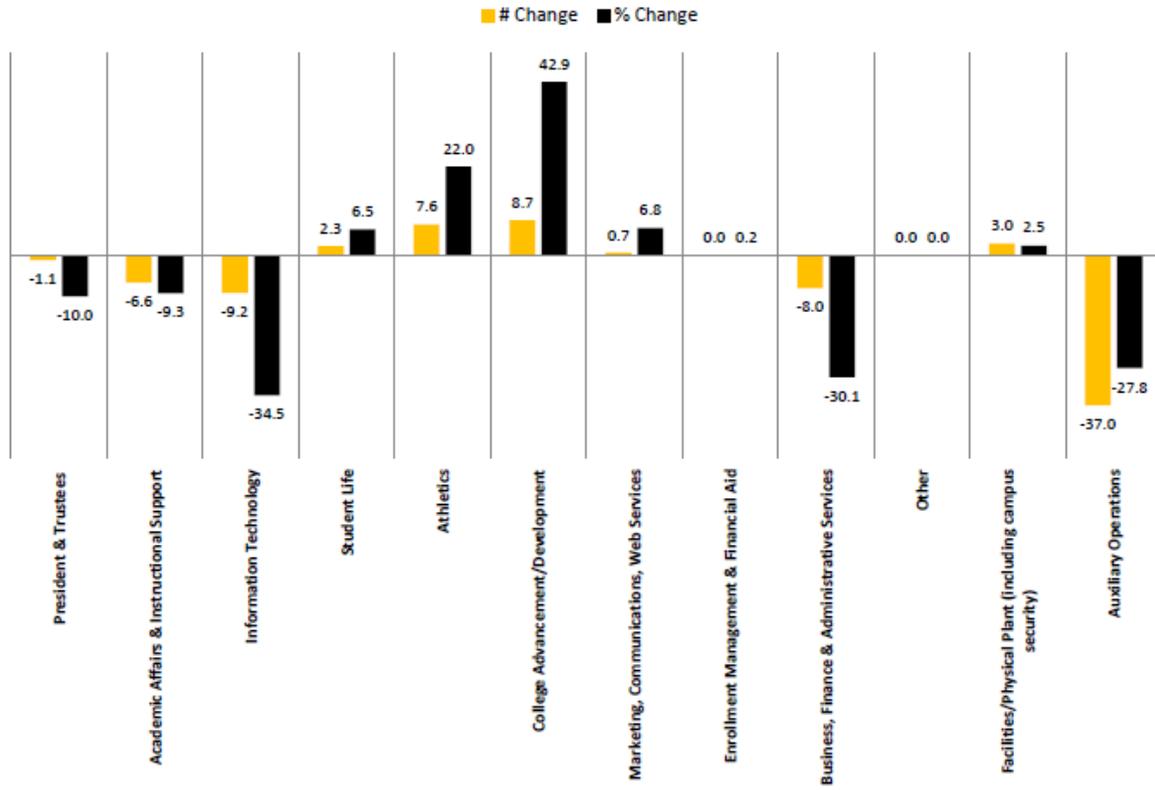
- Were the only institution among the GLCA that increased enrollment, increased faculty, and reduced staff (Figure 5.21)

**Figure 5.21: 2009 to 2014 changes-Enrollment, FTE Faculty, FTE Staff**



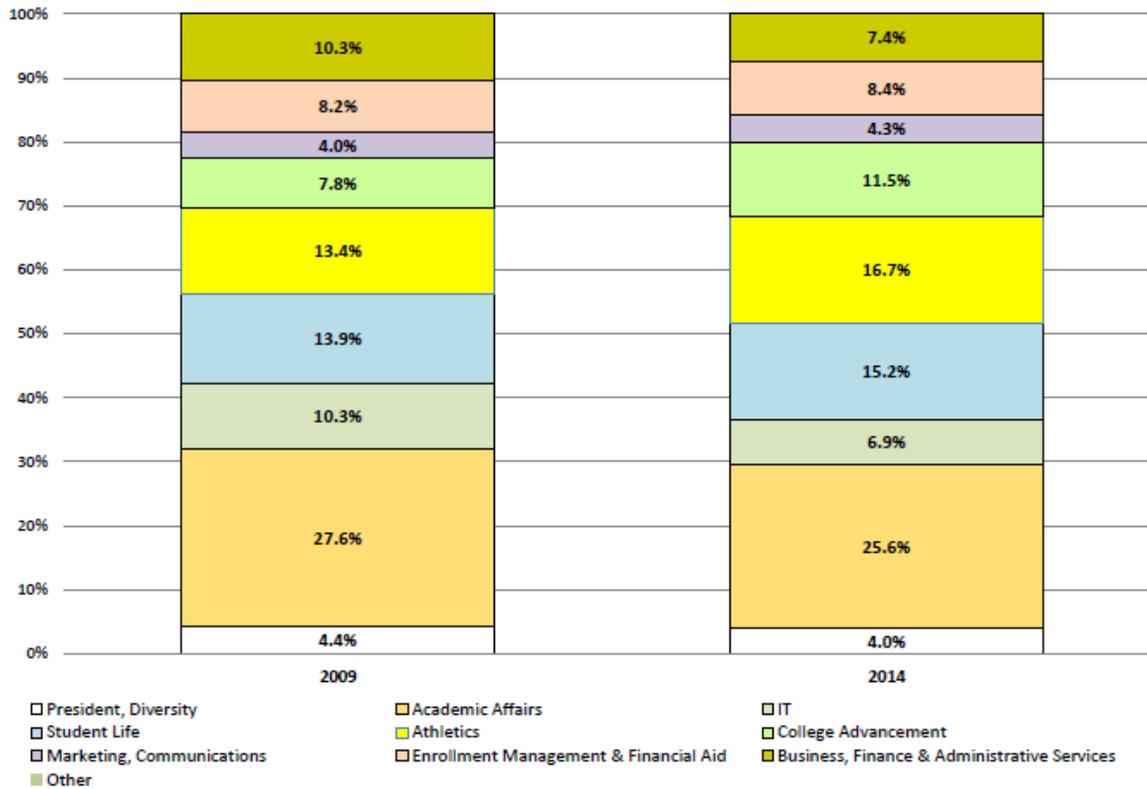
- Affected changes in staffing across the College that reflected our priorities and needs, such as appropriately staffing our Advancement function and adding staff in Student Affairs and Athletics, while restructuring other areas (Figure 5.22)

**Figure 5.22: Staff Changes by Area 2009 - 2014**



These results illustrate the outcome of the work we had in process at the time of the 2013 HLC Team visit, to realign staffing across the institution to more appropriately resource our programmatic and operational priorities (Figure 5.23). We accomplished this by taking advantage of staff turnover and reallocation of budget, grant or gift funding, and new operating budget resources.

**Figure 5.23: Wooster % of Total Staff by Area 2009 & 2014**



Despite the improvements noted, [comparison of our metrics to the median of the GLCA](#) revealed that:

- At the time, we had 88% of the annual operating resources of our collective GLCA peers
- We demonstrated more of the “efficiencies” seen in the “larger” (>1,400) colleges than we did in 2009. In most areas, having a metric that is “better” than the GLCA median is good and indicates efficiency. We have found, however, that this is not the case in Counseling Services and Security & Protective Services where our metrics for staffing turned out to be too efficient.

We used the analyses to provide insight into our staffing patterns, to prompt us to ask “does this make sense given our priorities and what we know from our assessment work?” as we considered staffing resources in our 2014-15 Sustainable Budget planning (5.C.3).

### Faculty & Staff Compensation

A strategic initiative focusing on benchmarking and addressing marketing and internal inequities in faculty and staff salaries led to two “salary projects.” The “Faculty Salary Policy” initiative and a market-based salary project for staff.

The [Faculty Salary Policy Project](#) engaged FAC and the Teaching Staff and Tenure (TS&T) Committee in developing guidelines for benchmarking faculty salaries and making recommendations about the faculty salary pool for the annual budget, and a policy statement describing how the salary pool would be administered. Above-average salary pools in FY11 and FY12 were instrumental in making progress towards closing the gap between Wooster’s average salaries by rank and the medians of the GLCA and in addressing then-existing internal equity issues resulting from market pressures when hiring new faculty. Moderating salary pools at our GLCA peer institutions, coupled with a few institutions implementing retirement incentive programs, have helped Wooster faculty salaries approach the GLCA medians in the associate and full-professor ranks (Figure 5.24).

**Figure 5.24: Wooster Average Salaries as a Percentage of GLCA Median of Institutional Average Salaries by Rank**



The “salary policy” developed in 2011 included two provisions that have guided our decision making regarding the budgeted salary increase pool for faculty and the administration of that pool:

- Minimum salary levels for each rank should be set in such a way that continuing faculty do not lose purchasing power to inflation over time.
- Beyond the minimum levels, there should be a salary trajectory that reflects a faculty member’s contribution to the mission of the College.

These provisions resulted in the practice of a salary increase pool that provides for a “cost of living” increase and merit increase. Resourcing a pool that accomplishes both objectives is proving more difficult with growing inflation and constrained growth in annual operating revenues. In Spring 2017, the [Provost brought the issue to TS&T and SPPAC and to the faculty](#). As she noted “the Salary Guidelines were developed when the raise pool was significantly above the CPI” and then posed the question “What should we do when the CPI and the raise pool are close together?” as our “salary policy” work had not anticipated such an eventuality, especially one that would continue for a period of time. At present, we plan continue to provide a “cost of living” increase only, and will revisit the salary policy when the larger economic picture changes.

In spring 2012, we introduced a [market-based salary program for staff positions](#). The College’s salary philosophy states that the staff salary program will consider both external competitiveness and internal equity and that the program will use competitive benchmark data (i.e., from the appropriate benchmark group) as a reference for creating the salary guidelines and salary ranges. The Staff Salary Administration project was completed in 2012 and portions of the merit raise pools were allocated for the final market adjustments in 2012 and 2013. A full review of the market pricing, salary structure and salary administration guidelines is slated to begin in the summer of 2017. This timing will allow for any market and/or equity adjustments to be included in the budget planning process for FY19.

In the spring of 2016, the College implemented a [minimum hourly rate for all benefits eligible staff](#). These salary adjustments and related equity adjustments were made in fall 2016.

Like faculty and staff salaries, we benchmark and assess benefits, as our intent is to provide appropriately competitive compensation for our faculty and staff. Our current work began in 2015 with Human Resources establishing a Benefits Task force to review and evaluate benefits offered by the College. The Task Force includes staff and faculty representatives and, as of 2016, a retiree. In 2016, the College engaged the broker services of Educational & Institutional Insurance Administrators, Inc. (EIIA) to assist with benchmarking and to secure improved pricing for medical, dental, life and stop-loss coverages. The Task Force meets monthly with EIIA representatives during the academic year and provides [regular updates](#) to staff, faculty, and retirees.

#### **Human Resource Allocation (non-faculty positions)**

We have adopted a [“position review process”](#) as a strategy to carefully review requests to fill new and vacant full- and part-time staff positions. The objective of the review process is to ensure that we carefully steward our human resources in accord with our strategic objectives. In its review, the Position Review Committee (PRC), which is the Cabinet, considers several criteria including whether current staff can perform the duties of the requested position, if the position serves to advance an essential College priority, and available budget. The PRC approach, budget process, and periodic benchmarking of staffing levels and compensation assure that the allocation of resources is appropriate.

### III. Facilities Resources

#### Description of Facilities Supporting Wooster's Core Mission

Our campus is comprised of approximately 240 acres including a nine-hole golf course and 110 structures. The buildings range in age from just less than one year to 145 years old. The facilities total less than 1.9 million square feet and are located in a residential section about a mile northeast of the City of Wooster's public square. Our [facilities inventory](#) includes 17 large instructional facilities, 17 administrative and auxiliary buildings, 15 large residence halls, 46 houses and apartments used that are used primarily for student housing, and 15 utility buildings.

In keeping with the [College's commitment to environmental sustainability](#) and responsibility, we converted the coal-burning central steam plant to natural gas and we entered into a performance contract to improve the energy efficiency of 34 campus buildings (to date we have exceeded the guaranteed cost avoidance every year). The Scot Center, our student recreation center, received LEED Gold certification, and at 20,000 square feet, features one of the largest solar rooftop installations on any college or university facility in the country. Our newest facility, the Ruth W. Williams Hall of Life Sciences, also will be LEED certified.

Wooster joined the American Association for Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) and participated in its Sustainability Tracking, Assessment, and Rating System (STARS) in 2013. [Our results](#) indicated that we made great progress in our sustainability efforts, and achieved a STARS silver rating. Despite not having a major in environmental studies, we earned a good number of points for our environmentally-focused and related classes and research at the time. Our rating has expired as we have not maintained our STARS information following the loss of our sustainability coordinator position in 2014-15.

Of our academic, student life, and residence halls, 725,000 SF in 13 buildings meet current ADA compliance standards. When the planned renovations of three residence halls are complete, approximately 52% of our facilities will be compliant. The campus facilities master plan includes projects that are targeted for renovation by 2025, at which point we estimate that 75% of our facilities space will be compliant. The new Ruth W. Williams Hall will comply with current ADA compliance standards.

#### Facilities Master Planning

The Campus Facilities Master Plan (<http://campusmasterplan.spaces.wooster.edu/reports>) is a means of prioritizing physical resource initiatives with respect to our mission. We have maintained an ongoing campus master planning process since the early 1990s. Several significant capital investments have been made to improve campus facilities in support of our educational mission since 2013, including the acquisition and renovation of the Gault Schoolhouse residence hall, the construction of Brush Hall residence, and the current construction of the [Ruth W. Williams Hall of Life Science](#). The current facilities master plan was developed in 2012 by Dober, Lidsky & Mathey, creators of the previous plans. This plan has served as the primary driver behind the capital improvements made on campus over the past few years, and will continue to support the plan for major capital improvements over the next few years.

Wooster's current [Capital Project Priorities](#) originate in the 2012 campus facilities master plan and were vetted through a process that involved faculty, staff, students, campus groups, committees, and the Board. The overall projects plan has been approved in concept, with each phase of projects approved on an annual basis. The projects center largely on student housing, the second most important priority identified in the 2012 plan after the life sciences facility. The student housing projects are based on a [student housing study](#) that was part of the 2012 plan and a detailed analysis of all existing housing facilities completed in 2015. A [10-year Student Housing Visioning Plan](#) was created to guide decisions on housing projects. The PEC renovation project will update those areas of the facility that were not renovated in the construction of the Scot Center including the original 1960's-era performance gym and will create all-gender locker-room and restroom spaces and include ADA compliance upgrades.

#### Facilities and Physical Plant Investment

Continued commitment to campus stewardship is evidenced in annual budget funding for repairs, maintenance, capital projects, and sustainability initiatives that have improved both facilities and infrastructure while reducing energy and operating costs. Repair and maintenance expenses are covered by resources provided from the annual facilities budget and as part of the annual capital budgeting process. As noted above, energy sustainability initiatives have reduced utility costs significantly, providing resources for other repair and maintenance projects.

In conjunction with the 2015 housing study and visioning plan, a [Campus Deferred Maintenance backlog assessment](#) was completed. The assessment, which focused on systems and equipment at or near the end of its useful life, identified nearly \$45M in deferred maintenance. The 2015 assessment is considered when developing the capital project priorities, and it informs annual maintenance and capital project funding. Over the last four years, annual capital budget funding to address deferred maintenance has increased from \$422,000 (FY15) to \$772,600 (FY18). The focus on deferred maintenance through capital and operating budgets, in conjunction with the replacement and renovation of several major campus buildings, has significantly decreased the total campus deferred maintenance backlog. The demolition of Holden Annex and Mateer Hall reduced the backlog by over \$2.5M

The [Classroom Stewards](#) is a committee of faculty charged to assess needs and prioritize projects for the refurbishment of teaching spaces on campus. The goals of this process are to improve the quality and equipping of classrooms and teaching spaces. The committee is assisted by staff from both Facilities and Information Technology (IT). The committee reviews recommendations from academic departments, prioritizes them, and submits a prioritized list to the Provost. Since FY12, we have been allocating approximately \$100,000 annually to [projects recommended by the committee](#).

### IV. Technology Resources

Wooster's students and faculty have access to emerging technologies including virtual reality, data visualization (quantitative and qualitative), 3D modeling/scanning/printing, interactive projection, wireless projection through Apple TV and AirParrot, robotics (Ozobot, Lego Mindstorm, Kilobots), and exploratory learning tools (Osmo). Students have taken advantage of the HTC Vive VR system system for coursework and research, while faculty have transformed their teaching through the use of using Apple TV and iPad Pros with Apple Pencils. We have been able to supply faculty and students with these technologies through strategic use of Educational Technology R&D funds, a thoughtful classroom refresh cycle, and our Faculty Fellows faculty development program.

Our core applications are Microsoft Office 365 (email, calendaring, document storage and sharing), Moodle (learning management system), Confluence (enterprise wiki for educational and administrative purposes), Ellucian Colleague (student and institutional information system), Entrinsic Informer (business intelligence, reporting), ImageNow (digital document management), and WordPress (blogging platform for courses, e-portfolios, some websites); and several specialized applications support educational and administrative functions.

Professional staff and Student Technology Assistants (STAs) are responsible for the strategy, planning, implementation, and support of our technology resources. The current support structure for IT [consists of three groups](#): Applications Development, Educational Technology, and Technology Services. An experiential learning program, the STA program provides opportunities for students to work in progressively responsible positions assisting IT staff or working independently to support students, faculty, and staff use technology and applications. Having the STAs has enabled IT professional staff to “delegate” to students, and for students to gain experience in professional and technical roles: for example, STAs plan and lead our [semester-series of workshops](#) for students on a range of technology applications that extend well beyond Microsoft Office to include iOS app development, poster design, data visualization, augmented and virtual reality.

Faculty and staff are provided with personal computers and College-standard software. Students are expected to come to campus with their own computer and assistance is provided to students who lack the resources to provide their own computers through the Dean of Students' Office. “Specialized (departmental)” labs exist across the campus. Nearly all classrooms are equipped with a computer and wired courtesy connections, Apple TV, and wireless projection capability, with some having additional media equipment such as document cameras, Symposia, DVD/Blu-ray players, surround sound and multi-screen projection capabilities. Interactive whiteboards are available in several academic and administrative buildings and the Longbrake Commons. Collaborative spaces in the library are equipped with large monitors for students working in small groups.

The [technology infrastructure](#) that supports our activities includes wireless network services through which we connect to applications and information resources that are hosted either on the College's servers or off-campus, a set of core applications, and specialized applications. Operating budget-funded [cycle replacement plans](#) are in place for all technology equipment that supports our activities except for our campus telephone system. The cycle replacement plan was accomplished within the existing IT budget, providing additional capacity in the annual capital budget for non-technology projects and investments. Faculty and staff are encouraged to [submit proposals](#) for new technology projects or significant upgrades of specialized technology that will advance our educational program or a strategic initiative as part of the annual capital budget cycle.

#### **5.A.2 Not applicable**

#### **5.A.3**

The College's mission statement is incorporated within the [Strategic Framework](#) (p.3). As noted in Criterion 1.A.2, academic departments and some administrative divisions have “mission statements” derived from the College's mission statement. [Administrative divisions and departments set priorities](#) in the context of the College's mission and strategic objectives and priorities. [Annual Strategic Priorities memos](#), which reflect the goals for the academic year, and divisional and departmental annual priorities, are informed by both the priorities in the [Strategic Framework](#) and annual budget.

#### **5.A.4**

Each staff position has a [position description](#) that defines required qualifications, roles, and responsibilities for the employee. All staff employees are [required to have appraisals annually](#). For exempt staff, a self-evaluation is completed and it is expected that supervisors take that into account when completing the employee's evaluation. Evaluations are reviewed and approved by the next level supervisor, if applicable, and division leader. Once the process is complete, all appraisals are filed with Human Resources.

We believe that in order to assure that staff are appropriately qualified and trained, a contemporary, professional human resources function is essential. At the time of our 2013 HLC team visit, the Human Resources Department was in a state of transition. In April 2103, the College hired a new Associate Vice President for Human Resources (AVP-HR) who is a member of the President's Cabinet. The AVP-HR partners with leaders to align HR in support of the College's and each division's strategic initiatives. The current HR staff is fully experienced in their respective areas of responsibility.

HR has strengthened its functional areas. The recruiting process provides HR support in all phases of the process including new employee orientation and a web-based applicant tracking system. An employee relations function assists managers and staff in resolving workplace concerns. The employee benefits function provides online benefits enrollment and an annual Benefits Fair with representatives present from all programs, cooking demonstrations, and health screenings. The employee wellness program now includes regular fitness contests and challenges.

Training and development services provide personal, professional and career development for staff. These services occur in several venues, including “lunch & learns,” open invitation sessions, department-specific retreats, and topical sessions. HR has also partnered with IT staff for skills development sessions and with community health resources for nutritional advice and other health concerns.

HR and the Staff Committee have established staff appreciation activities and events for many work groups/departments on campus since Fall 2013. The staff service recognition program has become increasingly vibrant and meaningful to our staff, with attendance at the annual luncheon nearly doubling over three years, to nearly 400.

The AVP-HR has undertaken a comprehensive review of HR processes. Procedural documentation now exists for payroll processing, benefits administration, and employment. Many processes have been streamlined and/or automated, including routine monthly reporting. A Colleague HRIS/Payroll audit is planned for the summer/fall 2017 to enhance HR's use of the capabilities of the system.

#### **5.A.5**

**The Financial Planning Process.** As part of the financial planning process that accompanied our 2010-2015 strategic planning work, Cabinet members developed multi-year resource projections for each strategic initiative. These were estimates of what the cost will be, in human, capital,

and financial terms to support and sustain the initiative at an optimal level. This permitted us to compare the comprehensive costs of each initiative in order to determine our best strategic investments on a short-term and a long-term basis. This process identified resource needs that were incorporated into the multi-year operating budget or considered for targeted fundraising for the upcoming campaign.

**The Annual Budgeting Process.** The College has utilized a multi-year budget model since 2010. The model was reviewed, revised, and simplified in summer 2014 by the new Vice President for Finance & Business who joined Wooster earlier that year. It remains an integrated set of “mini-models” linked to a historical, present year, and five-year budget projection summary. The model includes retention, enrollment, revenue, expenses, and other factors. The model enables the College to plan and project financial outcomes under various scenarios and is the primary tool for annual budget development.

During the fall of each year, the [annual budget process](#) starts with a review of the prior fiscal year performance by the Cabinet. Key assumptions about revenues are developed, including enrollment, retention, tuition and fee increases, financial aid, and other revenue categories. While this work is being refined, strategic priorities for the budget year and other departmental priorities are identified. Both the assumptions and priorities are reviewed by the Cabinet and the Strategic Planning and Priorities Advisory Committee (SPPAC). Later in the fall, divisions and faculty submit requests for operating funding, [capital](#), and [technology](#) projects. The Board of Trustees approves tuition and fees at the fall meeting in advance of the budget year.

During the spring, the Cabinet reviews and determines resource allocation to support strategic and other annual priorities. The [annual capital budget](#) (targeted at \$1.7 million) is also determined and funds facility enhancements, deferred maintenance, and academic and student affairs technology and equipment. The draft budget proposal, including both operating and capital budgets, is presented to SPPAC for comment.

The [budget proposal](#) is put forth to the Board of Trustees at the spring meeting for review and approval. The President has provided the context in a budget recommendation memo that outlines how the budget fulfills the College’s strategic objectives and resource priorities.

**Budget Management.** The Vice President for Finance & Business reviews the [monthly operating reports](#) with the Associate Vice President-Controller and the Assistant Controller to discuss anomalies when compared to the prior year, progress on revenue realization, the pace of expenditures, as well as focusing on [year-end operating performance](#). The Finance Committee of the Board and the Cabinet also review quarterly reports and year-end projections. Additionally, SPPAC receives a budget update at least twice during the academic year.

Budget managers have access to [web-based, real-time budget reports](#) that permit them to “drill down” from totals to details of individual expense transactions. They may also request monthly reports from the Assistant Controller.

Starting in February, the Cabinet reviews the [budget-to-actual report](#) monthly to assess where the College might end the fiscal year and to make adjustments to expenditures as needed.

## Sources

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- FY15 FY16 Budget Recommendations & Proposals

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- Operating Reserve Policy and 6.30.2016 Update (BOT)
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- SGN Budget Recommendation 2016-17 (PRES) (page number 2)
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## 5.B - The institution's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership ...

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

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

### Argument

**NOTE: See also Criterion 2 (2.C)**

Achieving the third objective of our *Strategic Framework*, "to sustain our momentum," is dependent, in part, on continually strengthening our governance processes and communication and on increasing participation and transparency in policy setting and decision-making.

Since 2008, the Board of Trustees and Faculty have been engaged in a process of careful assessment and significant revisions of our structures and processes of governance. Both the Board and the faculty have committed to periodically assessing the effectiveness of governance structures and processes.

The College's governance structure is similar to those at most residential liberal arts colleges. The roles, responsibilities, and authorities of the Board of Trustees, Administration, Faculty, their respective governance committees, and other campus committees are defined in various College documents, including the *Bylaws*, *The Statute of Instruction*, *Campus Council Memorandum*, and *Scots' Key*. Table 5.10 lists the respective governance or consultative groups for each College constituency.

Table 5.10.

*Constituencies and Governance or Consultative Groups*

Constituency	Standing or Elected Committees
Board of Trustees	Executive, Academic Mission, Audit, Buildings & Grounds, Advancement, Enrollment & Marketing Strategy, Faculty Relations & Joint Committee on Conference with Trustees, Finance, Information Technology, Investment, Student Development, Trusteeship & Governance
College-Wide	Campus Council
Major Elected Committees of the Faculty	Committee on Committees, Committee on Conference with Trustees, Educational Policy, Strategic Planning & Priorities Advisory, Teaching Staff & Tenure
Staff	Staff Committee (consultative)
Students	Student Government Association
Alumni	Alumni Board

**Board of Trustees.** The College of Wooster is governed by a Board of Trustees consisting of 45 members with one-third elected annually for a three-year term. Six members of the Board are nominated by the alumni of the College. The President is a trustee *ex officio* with vote.

The organization, responsibilities, and procedures of the College's Board of Trustees are delineated in the *Bylaws of The College of Wooster* as amended. Each standing committee of the Board has a [charter](#) that outlines the responsibilities of the committee. Faculty and student observers attend committee and full meetings of the Board. Members of the faculty's Committee on Conference with Trustees meet with the Faculty Relations Committee and students (typically representatives of student government or leaders of student organizations) meet with the Student Development Committee. These meetings are trustee-faculty or trustee-student meetings only; administrative staff members do not attend.

The Trusteeship and Governance Committee (T&G) is responsible for reviewing and recommending changes in all aspects of the Board's governance structure, including committees and the roles and responsibilities of the Board. The committee reviews the charters and annual workplans of each committee to ensure the responsibilities of the Board are being fulfilled, as appropriate, through the work of committees. T&G also recommends the proposed membership and chair of each committee. The 2013 HLC Visiting Team observed that "the Board's committee leadership does not rotate frequently." This observation, along with the sentiment of the Board that more members would like opportunities for committee leadership, led to increased attention on rotating committee chairs. Since the team visit in spring 2013, the chairs of six of our eleven

committees have changed at least once, as have the board chair and vice chair. In 2017-18, T&G plans to begin a comprehensive review of the bylaws and committees structure.

T&G periodically conducts “board skills inventory surveys” of current members; new members are requested to complete a skills inventory at the time they join the Board. The resulting inventory provides a profile of functional, strategic, and personal board member skills. The committee uses the inventory information in the processes of committee assignment and to identify skills desired in potential trustees.

The process of selecting trustees begins with identifying individuals with a strong connection to the College, whether they are alumni, parents, or friends. Of the 43 current active trustees, 36 (86%) are alumni, three (7%) are parents of current or former students, and two (5%) are members of the local community. One-third of current active trustees have joined since 2013. The Board includes six alumni trustees elected by the Alumni Association.

All new trustees participate in an [orientation program](#) that begins before they attend their first meeting. Following their election to the Board, the Secretary of the College sends them a “letter of welcome” and provides them with general information about the College and the Board, the annual strategic priorities and updates, and various College publications about faculty accomplishments and educational programs. The formal orientation program occurs on campus, when new trustees meet with the President, members of Cabinet, and Board leadership. New trustees are partnered with veteran trustees who serve as mentors. The mentor and new trustee meet prior to the new trustee’s first board meeting and then throughout the first year. The first year ends with a meeting with the Board Chair, Vice Chair, and President following the June Board meeting where the new trustees review their year-long orientation and provide feedback for improvement of the program. All trustees are guided by the [Association of Governing Board’s “Statement of Trustee Responsibility”](#).

Trustees receive a [pre-board meeting memo](#) that gives details of what to expect during the Board’s three-days on campus. Board meetings begin with the President’s update and overview of the two-day meeting in executive session. The Saturday full board meeting typically includes a one-hour “strategic discussion” that focuses on an issue of strategic importance to the College. [Recent strategic discussion topics](#) have included: “residential life and facilities,” “endowment investment strategy,” and “AGB’s *Consequential Boards* report.” An annual trustee retreat, held in conjunction with the March meeting, provides for in-depth discussion of a [strategic topic](#). Following each Board meeting, the Board Chair and President distribute a [“post-board meeting” briefing](#) that highlights board actions and major discussions of the full board and committees.

## Sources

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- Board meeting Strategic Discussion Topics (BOT)
- Board Retreat Topics 2011-17 (BOT)
- BOT Committee Charters
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- Pre-Board memos - examples (BOT)
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# 5.C - The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.

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

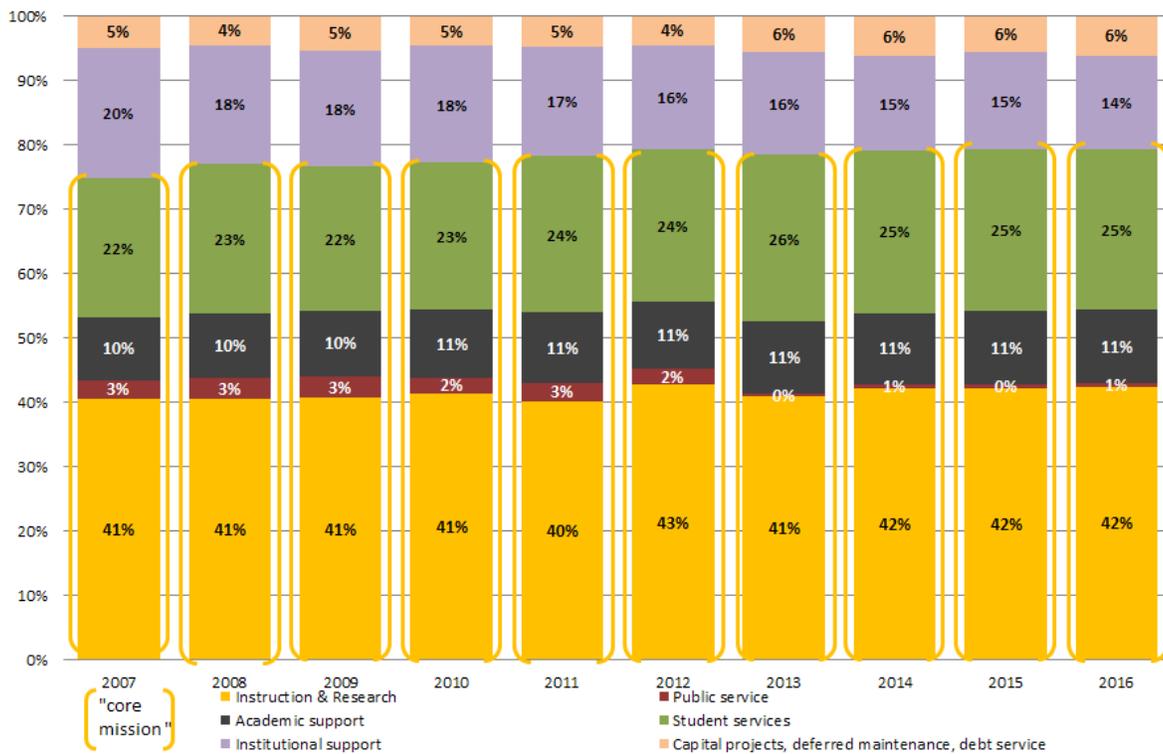
## Argument

### 5.C.1.

We track the trend in resource allocation through a multi-year analysis of our unrestricted operating expenditures aligned to our educational mission. This analysis compares expenditures (compensation plus non-salary expenditures) in the areas of our "core mission" (instruction, research, academic support, and student services), institutional support (administration, general institutional expenses), public service, and capital expenditures.

We have been allocating a greater proportion of our resources to our core mission over time. During the period FY 2007 through FY 2016, we have increased the proportion of our resource allocation to our "core mission" from 75% to 79%, and decreased resource allocation to "institutional support" from 20% to 14% (Figure 5.25). This is an intentional result of our clarity of mission, planning, and the focus on resourcing our strategic priorities as part of the annual budgeting process.

**Figure 5.25: Unrestricted Operations--Expenditures**



Note: expenditures for "operation & maintenance of plant" are allocated within the categories of expenses shown (except for "capital projects...")

Our financial statement ratios also support that resources are allocated primarily to core mission and academic support functions (Table 5.11). In 2016, the core and educational support ratios (all expenses except institutional support and auxiliary) combined totaled 84.9% as compared to the GLCA median of 77.2%. The College allocated 15.1% of its operating resources to institutional expenses compared to the GLCA median of 17.3%.

Table 5.11
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Support Ratios					
KPI or Metric	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	GLCA Medians (FY16)
Core Instruction Ratio: instructional as a percent of all expenses	45.5%	46.2%	45.3%	45.6%	45.9%
Academic Support: library, student services and other academic support	39.7%	39.2%	39.1%	39.3%	31.2%
General Support: all admin and institutional support	14.8%	14.6%	15.6%	15.1%	17.3%

### 5.C.2.

The **objectives** of Wooster's planning process have been to (a) develop an institutional culture of planning that fosters strategic thinking and influences all decision making, resource allocation, and assessment efforts, and to (b) develop a plan that is an agile, living document based on our core educational values and realities of our current and future contexts.

Our annual cycle, which typically begins in late spring of the academic year, illustrates our resolve to achieve objective "(a)" above: we assess our work, we develop plans and priorities based on our assessment and strategic plan, we resource our priorities in the form of the annual operating budget.

Throughout this Assurance Argument we note examples of how, through assessment or evaluation of our operations, we have developed plans for addressing needs or improvement. These plans are prioritized in the resource allocation process. For example, in Criterion 4 we discuss how we have integrated annual assessment of student learning with department and program "[Ten Year Reviews](#)." The "Ten Year Review" often leads to a multi-year *plan* for a department or program, often requiring resources to fulfill elements of the plan. These *resources* are requested through the *annual budget process* (e.g., [4.B Sociology position request](#)). We are using assessment data to inform our current curriculum discussions (Criterion 3) and ultimately we anticipate a strategic planning initiative centering on the curriculum with future resources to advance it.

Similarly, reviews of operational areas noted in this Criterion resulted in plans for change and prioritized requests for resources to accomplish them.

### 5.C.3.

President Bolton expects to begin a new round of strategic planning in spring 2018 coinciding with the conclusion of "Wooster's Promise." We anticipate that the characteristics of the process will be similar to those that guided our strategic planning process from 2009-15. That process encompassed all stakeholders, included both internal and external contexts, and was broad and transparent. The steps that guided our original process were outlined in a "[plan to plan](#)" document. A [blog](#), "On Purpose: Strategic Planning @ Wooster," chronicled (in near-real time) our [planning activity](#) and provides [updates on our annual strategic priorities](#).

As a "living, agile document," our [Strategic Framework](#) has served as the umbrella for corollary plans including a [marketing plan](#), [enrollment plan](#), [campus facilities master plan](#), financial plans ([example](#)), [capital campaign plan](#), and most recently, the work of our Diversity Equity & Inclusion Strategic Planning Group (DEISPG) which recently submitted its [planning recommendations](#) to President Bolton. Generally, our institutional planning process has been applied in the development of related plans, for example, the work of the DEISPG, our "Sustainable Budget" planning work, and development of the campus facilities master plan.

In 2014-15, the College engaged in a "[Sustainable Budget Planning](#)" process. The impetus for this process was the emerging challenge to our major revenue source – tuition – resulting from pressures to control the cost of college and the continued slow post-"great Recession" economic recovery. This challenge was in direct opposition to our increasing demands for enhancing our academic and support programs to meet student needs and to be competitive in our marketplace. Our objective was to bring our longer-term expenditures in line with our projected revenues.

We evaluated proposals to accomplish this using two principles: protect or enhance the integrity of our core educational mission and continue to strengthen our market competitiveness. In keeping with the character of our planning process, the sustainable budget process was both widely participatory and focused within the divisions of the College [<http://strategicplanning.scotblogs.wooster.edu/sustainable-budget-planning/>]. The process [resulted in our implementing a combination of new revenues and cost savings totaling approximately \\$2.3 million for FY16, with the intent that additional actions would be identified and implemented in FY17](#). While review of ideas generated in the planning process continued under the leadership of Interim President Nugent, additional revenues and savings were not significant.

Surprisingly, while we engaged students, faculty, and staff continually in our planning activities, we lacked a formal governance group to advise the President on matters of strategy or on the intersection of strategic planning and resource allocation. We had a Financial Advisory Committee (FAC); however, FAC's charge was limited to "advise[ing] and counsel[ing] the President on matters relating to the financial affairs of the College, and to keep the Faculty informed on these matters." At FAC's initiative the faculty considered [evolving FAC to become the Strategic Planning and Priorities Advisory Committee \(SPPAC\)](#), which was approved by the Board in 2015. SPPAC's charge is to, "advise and counsel the President on strategic planning and the determination of resource allocation, to consult with campus constituencies on strategic planning and priorities, and to regularly apprise the faculty of issues under discussion." SPPAC has been at work for two academic years.

### 5.C.4.

Our goal in developing a "strategic framework" was that it would be agile, not "fixed," as are more traditional strategic plans, permitting the College to anticipate and respond to changes in our context. Our planning process began with a realistic assessment of our context and informed

assumptions about our future.

With respect to advancing the strategic initiatives identified in our planning, our process provided for each strategic initiative to proceed through its own planning phase, during which resource requirements (human, physical, financial) would be identified. As noted in our discussion of financial planning and budgeting [5.A.5], resource needs are incorporated into the annual operating budget, campaign, or debt financing plans as resources are made available. Our experience to date has demonstrated that we have been able to advance our strategic initiatives while remaining within the realities of our resources.

### 5.C.5

Our planning, the identification of strategic initiatives, actions to implement these initiatives, and priority setting have been informed by competitive and comparative benchmarking (examples in this Assurance Argument and others, for example, [understanding our resources relative to our peers](#)), resource considerations, current and future trends, economic realities, [two strengths-weaknesses-opportunities-threats assessments \(SWOTs\) and opportunities/challenges from our 2013 Self-Study](#), and the development of a “[situational analysis](#)” (p.2).

In Fall 2011, former President Cornwell established the “[Horizon Group](#),” which was a group of faculty and staff that considered emerging longer-term trends and issues by exploring questions about the future of residential liberal arts education. SPPAC is continuing some of the work of the Horizon Group. For example, in 2016-17, SPPAC study groups explored the questions of “[Who will be our students?](#)” and “[What is the future of our resources?](#)”.

Advancement and Alumni Engagement provides regular “[trend analyses](#)” on advancement-related topics. Information & Planning provides annual interpretations based on the New Media Consortium’s “[Horizon Report](#)” and EDUCAUSE’s “[Top 10 Issues](#)” lists. The Provost offers “Current Topics in Higher Education” briefings with recent topics such as “How Robots Will Save Liberal Education,” “Driving Campus Diversity One Decision at a Time,” and “The Case for a New Kind of Core.” All briefings are made available to the Board and senior staff and shared with campus groups as applicable.

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## 5.D - The institution works systematically to improve its performance

The institution works systematically to improve its performance.

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

### Argument

The College assesses its progress on its annual strategic priorities and the initiatives in the *Strategic Framework* each year. Periodic institutional reviews, such as our 2013 Self-Study and this Assurance Argument, also serve to inform our planning and improvements institutionally.

Throughout this Assurance Argument we have provided insight into how the College, across all areas and in many ways, works to fulfill our core mission with distinction within the lens of the HLC's Criteria for Accreditation. Our third strategic objective, "we will sustain our momentum by developing a campus-wide and sustainable culture of planning as an effective, collective endeavor," is predicated on continual review and improvement, whether it is in our educational program, student support services, administrative operations, or governance.

In addition to assessment of our educational program (Criterion 4), it has been our practice to maintain a [dashboard](#) and [report on progress on our annual strategic priorities](#). We have used other periodic assessments as well. For example, during President Cornwell's tenure, select items in the Board and faculty appraisals of the president served as assessments of our institutional progress, and results were used in our formal reporting.

Individual areas of the institution use different approaches to planning, internal resource allocation, and evaluation; some are well documented and systematic, others are less formal, though [all divisions compile an annual review of priorities accomplished and recommended priorities for the upcoming academic year](#). Assessments in individual areas, coupled with the priorities in our *Strategic Framework*, serve as the basis for establishing our annual institutional priorities.

Specialized studies (e.g., [Diversity & Intercultural Communication](#)), reviews (e.g., Advancement Services), in-depth profiles (e.g., [Pricing Philosophy](#)), and ad-hoc "quick" analyses (e.g., "[Why Wooster?](#)") are used to analyze our operations, competitive and comparative positioning, and effectiveness in achieving our priorities as noted in this Criterion. Where applicable, our analyses include benchmarking to the appropriate peer group (usually the GLCA). We have also worked with AMRE student research teams to undertake [exploratory or in-depth research analyses](#) to assist programmatic areas in assessment. For example, one team examined how to improve our advising process so that students cultivate the Graduate Qualities and found that first-year students find it most useful to meet with an advisor once or twice a month and that they prefer to be required to attend on-campus events as part of FYS (as a result, we changed the training FYS instructors receive to encourage them to do these things.)

### Sources

- 2016 Why Wooster (I&P)
- AMRE Projects for The College of Wooster (VPAA)
- Dashboard 2016-17 (I&P)
- Diversity & Intercultural communication group Final Report 2016 (PRES)
- Division priorities sample 15-16 (PRES)
- Pricing Philosophy 2017 Update (I&P)
- Strategic Priorities Assessments (I&P)

## 5.S - Summary

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

### Summary

No institution has all the resources it needs to do all that it wants. We do much with our human, facilities, technology, and financial resources to advance our core mission and strategic initiatives. Despite a relatively strong balance sheet, we face the operating budget challenges that are the reality for many colleges and universities. Our goals must include sustaining and increasing student net revenue, moderating dependency on endowment income in lower-return investment markets, maintaining and growing voluntary support, and optimizing net revenue from auxiliary operations. All of this must be done in the context of increasing demands to enhance our academic and support programs to meet student needs and to be competitive in our market. Our strategic initiatives in the areas of enrollment, endowment, voluntary support, and resource stewardship seek to strengthen and leverage our resource foundation. Our unique focus on "mentored undergraduate research" is our great strength. It is also expensive and we must learn how better to communicate the particular value of this program in a way that former, current, and prospective students will appreciate and support and to keep us focused in a way that permits us to avoid activities which do not contribute materially to this value.

Our governance system reflects our commitment to collaboration and the appropriate engagement of trustees, students, staff, and faculty. We continue to assess and revise our governance processes and structures.

We remain committed to an institutional culture of planning: we plan for our future with an understanding of the dynamics of our current contexts, both externally and internally, while allowing for the agility that is essential to sustaining and advancing the College in these contexts. We have adopted planning-linked budgeting and assessment and improvement processes. Yet, it may be opportune to refresh our "culture of planning" as well. In observing the "iterative" nature of our "culture," [Interim President Nugent noted](#) that while it may be providing structure and clarity, she was not convinced it captured everyone's attention. She encouraged us to continue to strive for "strategic priorities" that provide an "energizing vision and focus."

### Sources

- SGN Budget Recommendation 2016-17 (PRES)