

Assurance Argument **Calvin College - MI**

3/10/2015

1 - Mission

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

1.A - Core Component 1.A

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

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

Argument

From its beginning Calvin College has been governed by a clear mission. During its earliest years that mission was stated as training the youth of the church for callings in the ministry and in education. Soon the mission broadened to training people, by means of a liberal arts curriculum and according to the Reformed tradition, for a life of Christian service in any vocation. (preface, [Expanded Statement of Mission](#))

The Process of Developing a Mission (subcomponent 1)

The [Expanded Statement of Mission](#) (*ESM*) is a comprehensive document outlining three fundamental aspects of the mission:

1. To engage in vigorous liberal arts education that promotes lifelong Christian service.
2. To produce substantial and challenging art and scholarship.
3. To perform all our tasks as a caring and diverse educational community.

The *ESM* was written in 1992 (and lightly revised in 2003 to make the language more inclusive and culturally sensitive) by a committee chaired by the provost and including two other vice presidents and four senior faculty. It was adopted by a vote of the full faculty and accepted by the board of trustees. The *ESM* was most recently formally reaffirmed by the board at its October 2013 meeting.

Over the past twenty years the college has supplement the *ESM* with additional missional documents. For example, in 1999 the college adopted a new "core curriculum." While that curriculum was viewed as enacting the first point of the mission statement, the faculty adopted a statement, "[An Engagement with God's World](#)," that [grounded the proposal for a core curriculum in the mission of the institution](#) and further explicated that mission. (See core component 3B for more about how the core curriculum relates to the mission.) In 2004 the full faculty adopted the document [From Every Nation](#) (*FEN*), a comprehensive plan for racial justice, reconciliation, and cross-cultural engagement at Calvin. This

statement both arose from and expands the understanding of the third point of the mission statement. (See core component 1C for the function of this plan.)

Consistency of Programs, Services, and Enrollment Profile with Mission (subcomponent 2)

Aligning programs with mission starts with ensuring that faculty, staff, and board members understand and support the mission. Prospective faculty members receive the *ESM* in the early stages of the recruitment process, and all faculty members must sign statements affirming the Reformed theological commitments that shape the educational approach of the college. (See core component 3C for further discussion of this requirement.) [The month-long seminar](#) for all regular faculty during their first January term includes a substantial discussion of the mission. A presentation of the mission is also part of [the annual new staff orientation](#). And discussion of the mission is part of the board retreat each October, at which new board members are oriented to their responsibilities.

Students are not required to sign a faith statement or profess any particular beliefs, and the college enrolls a number of non-Christian students. Although the college desires to help all students feel welcome and included, [the application for admission](#) and most other application materials clearly describe the mission and invite students to join a Christian academic community. Of the college's [student learning outcomes for first-year students](#), at least three concern students' understanding the mission of the institution. First-year student orientation in the fall is [a three-day event](#), with each day organized around one of the mission themes. First-year students also study parts of the mission in their required January-term course, Developing a Christian Mind. The textbook for this course, *Engaging God's World*, [was specifically written](#) to introduce students to the mission.

Criterion 3 will give many specific features of programs that arise from working out this mission. We call attention here to four themes:

- Unlike many liberal arts institutions, Calvin has always offered professional and preprofessional programs and considers them consistent with the desire to prepare students for lifelong Christian service (cf. component 3A).
- Calvin faculty are highly productive scholars (more productive on average than HERI peers), as faculty scholarship is an important component of the mission (cf. component 3B).
- Robust cocurricular programming and a two-year residence requirement follow from the strong emphasis on building a caring and diverse community (cf. component 3E).
- Several centers and institutes promote the mission to produce substantial and challenging scholarship that benefits the church and the world (cf. component 1D).

Planning, Budgeting, and Priorities Align with Mission (subcomponent 3)

Aligning the mission with strategic planning was an important goal of the most recent strategic planning process. [The resulting plan](#), adopted by the board in January 2014, has six strategic themes. Each of the first three themes develops goals related to one aspect of the *ESM*. The fourth theme of the plan addresses the diversity-related goals of the *FEN* document.

The approach to budgeting and strategic planning as well as a recent prioritization process and the alignment of these processes with mission are described in greater detail in component 5C.

Sources

- An Engagement with God's World

- An Engagement with God's World (page number 2)
- Application for Admission
- Board Minutes October 2013
- Board Minutes October 2013 (page number 11)
- DCM Common Material
- Expanded Statement of Mission
- Expanded Statement of Mission (page number 2)
- Expanded Statement of Mission (page number 5)
- Expanded Statement of Mission (page number 27)
- First-Year Student Learning Outcomes
- From Every Nation
- Kuiper Seminar Syllabus 2015
- New Staff Orientation Fall 2014
- Quest Schedule 2014
- Strategic Plan 2014-2019

1.B - Core Component 1.B

The mission is articulated publicly.

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

Argument

The expanded statement of mission (ESM; described in component 1A) serves the college community well. It presents a comprehensive vision of the institution and articulates the college's emphases on the various aspects of its mission. Recently, it was used to provide the framework for the current strategic plan, "[Calvin 2019: Strengthen, Support, and Secure](#) [the Mission]." This mission statement is readily available on the college's Web site.

The length of the ESM makes it less suitable for presenting the mission to prospective students or the public. The institution has developed several shorter statements for this purpose, though none has been called a mission statement. In the spring of 2013, a team was assembled to bring some coherence and consistency to these statements. Twenty-three individuals were chosen, representing faculty, staff, and students from all divisions of the college. In [a report to the cabinet and president's council](#), the team recommended that the college adopt a one-sentence mission statement identifying what we do and a short identity statement focusing on who we are. Mission and identity statements were developed during the fall semester of 2013, and the mission statement was subsequently [adopted by the board](#) at its October 2013 meeting. The new mission statement is this:

Calvin College equips students to think deeply, to act justly, and to live wholeheartedly as Christ's agents of renewal in the world.

The mission and identity statements appear on the "Who We Are" page of the college website and also in [the "Mission" section of the college catalog](#). It is important to note that these statements were not intended to change the fundamental mission of the institution; indeed, as the board adopted this new mission statement, they simultaneously reaffirmed their endorsement of the ESM.

The "Who We Are" page of the college website presents a coherent and comprehensive description of the institution suitable for a variety of audiences. In addition to the new mission and identity statements, this page contains links to longer missional documents (such as the ESM and *From Every Nation*), a short description of the Christian beliefs that shape the college's mission, background information on the Christian Reformed Church, and a link to the current strategic plan.

Many prospective students come to Calvin with some understanding of the mission of the institution. For example, 36% of Calvin students are members of the Christian Reformed Church, and 36% of Calvin students have at least one parent who attended Calvin. However, many other prospective

students gain much of their understanding of Calvin from the Web. Understanding this, the college recently engaged in a “branding” process to help ensure that its messaging (both print and electronic) is consistent and coherent. The branding process (described further in component 2B) resulted in five "[storylines](#)" to guide the presentation of the college to the public. These storylines are consistent with and highlight key aspects of the community’s shared understanding of the mission of the college.

Sources

- Board Minutes October 2013
- Board Minutes October 2013 (page number 11)
- Calvin College Master Brand
- Calvin College Master Brand (page number 130)
- College Catalog 2014-2015
- College Catalog 2014-2015 (page number 7)
- Mission Statement Report September 2013
- Strategic Plan 2014-2019

1.C - Core Component 1.C

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

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

Argument

The missional document [*From Every Nation: A Revised Comprehensive Plan for Racial Justice, Reconciliation, and Cross-Cultural Engagement at Calvin College*](#) (abbreviated *FEN*) was adopted by the full faculty in October 2003 and by the board in February 2004. This document was a successor to a similar document, the *Comprehensive Plan for Integrating North American Ethnic Minority Persons and Their Interests into Every Facet of Calvin's Institutional Life*, which had been adopted in 1985. *FEN* lays out the college's commitment to the goal of creating a truly multicultural academic community, grounding that commitment in the college's mission statement ([page 9](#)). The document itself summarizes its vision as

transforming Calvin into a college that is always vigilant in recognizing racism, always conscientious in promoting reconciliation, and always active in the work of restoring a healthy multicultural community. (p. 8)

FEN serves also as a strategic plan for diversity initiatives, laying out concrete goals and strategies to achieve these goals. The performance of the college against its goals is monitored by the college's [Multicultural Affairs Committee](#), which collects information and biennially creates a [state-of-the-college report](#), commenting on the achievement of goals. The committee periodically recommends to the college new strategies and policies for achieving goals. A major update to *FEN*, adopted by the Faculty Senate and the board in 2010, revised several of the goals and introduced new strategies for achieving them. Another update occurred in 2012. Additionally, [the current strategic plan](#), adopted in January 2014, devotes one of its six themes to diversity and inclusion and sets measurable diversity goals, consistent with *FEN*, for the 2014-2019 period. In order to carry out these goals, in spring 2014 the college engaged an outside diversity consultant to assist in drafting [a diversity and inclusion action plan](#). The college is reviewing and implementing the consultant's recommendations.

There is substantial administrative effort devoted to implementing *FEN* and strong support of these efforts at the cabinet level. Both [the dean for multicultural affairs](#) (academic division) and [the dean for the Intercultural Student Development Center](#) (student life division) report directly to their respective vice presidents. In 2013-14 President Michael Le Roy, new at the time, created a cabinet-level position, the executive associate to the president for diversity and inclusion—currently an interim position that will be converted to a regular position in 2015-16. The president is a strong supporter of *FEN* and has already delivered several college-wide addresses (e.g., [in chapel](#)) concerning the importance of these goals.

Several of the *FEN* goals ensure that the curriculum addresses the role of students in a multicultural society. A full week of students' [first-year seminar](#) is spent introducing them to the document and its themes. The general education ("core curriculum") program has [a cross-cultural engagement requirement](#). All course proposals must address *FEN* goals as appropriate. The college encourages

and promotes study in cross-cultural settings and ranked fourth among all baccalaureate institutions in the US in the number of students studying abroad in 2012-13 (Institute of International Education, "Institutions by Total Number of Study Abroad Students, 2012/13," *Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange* [2014], <http://www.iie.org/opendoors>). Educational goals are set for faculty and staff as well: each faculty, staff, and board member must complete and report on a *FEN*-related activity each year. [The 2014-15 schedule of activities](#) available to faculty to meet this requirement demonstrates the intensity of programming devoted to diversity concerns.

Since the last comprehensive review in 2005, the college has made [significant progress](#) in developing a more diverse student body. In 2005 the percentage of AHANA (African, Hispanic, Asian, and Native American) students was 5.4%; in the fall of 2014, that number was 13.1%. Similarly, the percentage of international students increased during that period, from 7.4% to 10.6%. These increases are not accidental, as the institution has devoted significant resources to recruiting these students. The office of precollege programs runs several programs designed to introduce AHANA and other precollege students to the college. The most intensive of these is [Entrada](#), a three-week residential summer program for high school students that lets them experience college living while taking a Calvin summer course for college credit. This program serves approximately 75 students each summer. Thirty-seven of the 68 students who attended the summer 2012 program eventually enrolled at Calvin. The admissions office has four staff members devoted to international student admissions.

While Calvin has been successful in increasing the diversity of its student body, a challenge noted in the the most recent MAC state-of-the-department report is the lower [retention and graduation rate](#) among these groups. Retention for the 2013 first-year class of AHANA students was 75.9%, while the rate for the class as a whole was 87.4%. (International students, however, had a retention rate of 91.7%.) The most recent six-year graduation rate (incoming class of 2008) was 53.4% for AHANA students and 73.5% for international students, while that for the class as a whole was 73.6%. The current strategic plan has identified attention to retention and graduation of these groups as a strategic goal. This is further discussed in component 4C.

Progress in creating more diversity among faculty and staff has been slower than among students. The number of self-identified AHANA faculty was 16 at the beginning of the 2004-05 academic year but just 27 at the beginning of 2014-15 (the number of faculty decreased from 307 to 275 during that time). Similarly, the number of AHANA staff at the beginning of 2004-05 was 23 but 77 at the beginning of 2014-15 (the number of staff increased from 406 to 782 during that time). Recruitment of a diverse faculty and staff has been hindered, as the college has been decreasing the number of positions over the last several years and there have not been as many opportunities to hire. For 2014 the college hired 11 new faculty, 2 of whom were citizens of other countries, but no AHANA faculty.

A wide range of programs exists for promoting the goals of *FEN* on campus. In addition to the curricular programs described above and primarily administered by the office of Intercultural Student Development, students can participate in the following:

- [Grassroots](#), a living-learning community of 35 students who occupy one floor of a dorm and participate in intentional programming, both academic and cocurricular, related to issues of race, ethnicity, and justice.
- [Unlearn Week](#), a week of educational activities devoted to helping the community unlearn racism.
- [Leadership opportunities](#), including providing multicultural activities in the dorms and serving on the multicultural student advisory board.
- Student groups and clubs such as Sister to Sister (a fellowship group for African-American

women), Puentes (a group for Hispanic/Latino students), the International Student Association Committee, and the Society of Black Engineers.

- Rangeela, an annual variety show put on by international students celebrating the rich diversity of the cultures represented in the student body (and attended by well over 2,000 people each year).
- Martin Luther King Day programming; though classes are in session on this day during the January term, the January Series usually has an appropriate speaker, and activities for the whole campus are planned.
- [Black History Month](#) programming.

In 2012 the college received [full-partner designation](#) from Partners for a Racism-Free Community, an external assessment organization. Just recently, that designation was raised to that of [level-2 credentialed partner](#).

Sources

- Black History Month Poster 2015
- Calvin Website - CCE Core Requirement
- Calvin Website - Entrada Program
- Calvin Website - FEN Activities
- Chapel Unlearn Week talk
- Dean for Multicultural Affairs Job Description
- Dean for Multicultural and Intercultural Student Development Job Description
- Diversity and Inclusion Final Report
- Fall 2014 Day-10 Report Table 1
- Fall 2014 Day-10 Report Table 8
- First-Year Seminar Syllabus
- First-Year Seminar Syllabus (page number 3)
- From Every Nation
- From Every Nation (page number 9)
- Grassroots Community 2014-15
- MAC Job Description
- MAC Report 2013-2014
- Multicultural Affairs Committee Mandate
- Partners for a Racism-Free Community Letter
- Policy to Increase FEN-Activities Requirement
- Policy to Increase FEN-Activities Requirement (page number 2)
- PRFC Level 2 Designation
- Strategic Plan 2014-2019
- Strategic Plan 2014-2019 (page number 4)
- Strategic Plan 2014-2019 (page number 9)
- Unlearn Week Event Poster

1.D - Core Component 1.D

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

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

Argument

Calvin has always considered a central component of its mission to be service to the various communities of which it is a part. The expanded statement of mission, in a section entitled "[Mission to the Community Beyond the College](#)," provides a theological argument for serving the wider community and concludes,

The college, then, does not see the world as a malevolent structure to be avoided; rather, it sees the world as God's creation and as a community of which we are a part even as we work to reclaim it for Christ. By so doing, the college has both benefited its geographical community and benefited from its involvement with other external organizations.

The importance to our mission of partnering with external communities and institutions is emphasized in the current strategic plan. The sixth theme, "[Support Calvin's Mission through External Partnerships](#)," lists several goals for extending our work beyond the college.

Serving Western Michigan

Over the past 50 years the college's engagement with Grand Rapids and western Michigan has steadily become more intentional. Two offices in particular have focused on this engagement.

- The **Service-Learning Center** has existed for over 50 years. Its mission is "to engage and equip Calvin College students, faculty, staff, community partners, alumni and other friends of the college in and for the pursuit of God's shalom in our learning together, primarily through community-based service-learning, social justice activity and civic participation in Grand Rapids and other partner communities." Staffed by four professionals and 12 student coordinators, the center helps professors connect community needs to specific learning goals. It also helps students pursue independent learning opportunities and maintains a searchable database of placements submitted by community partners. According to the center's most recent [year-end report](#), 1,965 students spent 52,745 logged service-learning hours with at least 204 different agency partners in 2013-14. At least 115 courses incorporated service-learning as a course component. Of the 2014 graduating seniors, 88% reported taking a course that required a significant service-learning component, with an average number of 2.8 such courses per graduate. Besides local placements, the center coordinates approximately ten spring-break service opportunities in other regions. [A transcript](#) documents each student's service-learning engagement. The center has maintained long-term relationships with many community partners

and regularly conducts site visits to accurately assess the needs of the community.

- The **Office of Community Engagement** (staffed by a full-time director) was established in 2004 and, according to its mission statement, is charged with "identifying strategic priorities, facilitating collaboration between college and community, challenging academic departments and encouraging faculty to use their teaching and research in focused ways to serve a larger community." In the first few years a large project funded by the Teagle Foundation, "Strengthening Liberal Arts Education by Embracing Place and Particularity," was instrumental in helping the office to assess the college's past efforts and to set goals for the next decade. The project engaged students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community partners and included 16 different case studies of Calvin's community engagement efforts in [the final report](#). The office's [latest strategic plan](#) is aligned with the college's strategic plan and identifies three goals: an educational goal, a scholarship goal, and a partnerships goal.

One of the most important ongoing community projects is the Plaster Creek Watershed project. This watershed, in which the college is located and over 3,200 Calvin alumni live, is the most contaminated of all western Michigan watersheds. The project is focused on education, research, and on-the-ground restoration of the watershed, engaging community partners such as churches, schools, and environmental action groups. This project has received several grants—most recently [a \\$1.1 million grant](#) from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality.

In 2010, as part of its efforts to assess its work in community engagement, Calvin received the [Carnegie Foundation Elective Classification for Community Engagement](#). In 2015 this designation was extended until 2020. According to the Carnegie Foundation, "The classification ... is an evidence-based documentation of institutional practice to be used in a process of self-assessment and quality improvement. The documentation is reviewed to determine whether the institution qualifies for recognition as a community engaged institution." [The application](#) requires documented evidence of institutional commitment to community engagement, mechanisms for assessment of community needs and [community engagement activity](#), and curricular attention to community engagement. An institution must be strong in both curricular efforts and outreach/partnerships to attain the designation. The process to attain the designation is elective and rigorous: of Calvin's 40 peer institutions, only [ten have received it](#). [Section VI.3.c](#) of the current strategic plan commits the required focus needed to retain this designation.

Calvin students are introduced to the Grand Rapids community and service-learning in the orientation program required of all first-year students. On one day of [orientation](#), called "Streetfest," faculty, staff, and students partner with a community organization in a service project. Beyond service-learning in individual courses, several programs have a more focused program of community engagement. The most notable of these, [the nursing program](#), centers on community-based nursing, and students are assigned to work in one of four Grand Rapids neighborhoods typically underserved by health care systems. They engage their neighborhood in several ways over the two years of the clinical portion of the program. Among other activities, students provide health assessments and educational programs and also engage these communities through research projects.

Faculty also engage local communities through their research. (59% of faculty members responding in the recent HERI survey responded that they collaborate with the local community in teaching or research.) Faculty research projects include the following:

- Nursing professor Adejoke Ayoola received a \$350,000 grant in 2012 to fund her study in Calvin's partner neighborhoods of promoting reproductive health among women of child-bearing age who are at risk of unplanned pregnancy.
- Mathematics professor Jan Koop has been awarded over \$1 million since 2005 by the state of

Michigan for her work in helping teachers from area schools to improve their mathematics teaching.

- Social work professor Rachel Venema is working with the Grand Rapids Police Department on police officer decision making in sexual assault cases. Her research led to the department recognizing a need for additional training on sexual assault cases.

Calvin takes seriously its obligation to provide educational programming for the community. Beyond opening its doors for lectures, concerts, plays, and other cultural events, the college has several programs specifically designed for the public:

- CALL (Calvin Academy for Lifelong Learning) is a learning-in-retirement institute. In cooperation with the Elderhostel Network, it provides educational opportunities for community members 50 years of age and older. Opportunities include a wide array of courses each semester (60 in [the fall of 2014](#)), travel opportunities, and a free lunch-time lecture series. In the fall of 2014, the academy had [1,864 members](#).
- [The January Series](#) is a nationally acclaimed lecture series held during the 15 days of the January term. Broadcast to remote audiences across the United States, Canada, and Europe, the series is billed as a "liberal arts education in fifteen days."
- The biennial [Festival of Faith and Writing conference](#) brings together writers, editors, publishers, musicians, artists, and readers for three days of discussing and celebrating insightful writing that explores issues of faith.
- Calvin offers environmental education programs using the [Ecosystem Preserve](#) and the Bunker Interpretive Center. Programs are offered for elementary school students, families, and adults.

Serving the Church and the Christian Academic Community

Calvin's engagement with communities beyond western Michigan focuses especially on several communities central to our mission: the church, Christian K-12 schools, the Christian academic community, and international Christian higher education.

Several centers and institutes have engagement as a central part of their mission:

- [The Calvin Institute of Christian Worship](#) is an interdisciplinary study and ministry center that promotes the scholarly study of the theology, history, and practice of Christian worship and the renewal of worship in worshiping communities across North America and beyond.
- [The H. Henry Meeter Center for Calvin Studies](#) is a research center specializing in John Calvin, Calvinism, the Reformation, and Early Modern Studies. The center awards fellowships, sponsors events, and offers summer workshops for scholars from all over the world.
- [The Nagel Institute for the Study of World Christianity](#) works to promote a deeper understanding of world Christianity, to partner with Christian scholars and study centers, and to provoke a reorientation of Christian thought in the North Atlantic.
- [The Van Lunen Center](#) was established in 2000 to provide world-class executive management education essential to the future of faith-based K-12 schools. The principal program of the center is a year-long program for approximately 20 leaders of such schools.

Other centers and institutes that serve the larger Christian academy by supporting Christian scholarship are described in component 3B.

The college actively participates in two international organizations of Christian higher education institutions:

- The Association of Reformed Colleges and Universities is an association of ten institutions in the Reformed and Presbyterian Christian tradition. These institutions seek to develop and refine the identity, worldview, and educational practices grounded in that tradition.
- The International Association for the Promotion of Christian Higher Education (IAPCHE) is a network of institutions and individuals worldwide committed to advancing Christian education through training, capacity building, scholarship, and networking in ways that reflect both the universal and the local. Calvin hosts IAPCHE's international office and director.

The college has developed relationships with several international Christian colleges and universities:

- The sociology department helped Mother Patern College of Health Sciences (Monrovia, Liberia) develop a Bachelor of Social Work program, the first in that country.
- Calvin has had visiting-scholar and visiting-administrator exchanges with several Christian universities in Korea.
- Chaplain Aaron Winkle is spending a sabbatical year at LCC International University (Klaipėda, Lithuania), serving as the vice president for student affairs.

Sources

- 2010 Partnership Grid
- CALL Catalog 2014 Fall
- CALL Membership Report 2014
- Calvin Website - Community Nursing
- Carnegie Community Engagement Application
- Carnegie Community Engagement Institutions
- Carnegie Community Engagement Letter
- CICW Dashboard 2014
- Community Engagement Strategic Plan 2014-2019
- Ecosystem Preserve Summary 2014
- Expanded Statement of Mission
- Expanded Statement of Mission (page number 35)
- FFW Program 2014
- January Series 2015
- MDEQ Application
- Meeter Center 2014 Spring Governing Board Report
- Nagel Program Report 2014
- Quest Schedule 2014
- Service-Learning Report 2013-2014
- Service-Learning Transcript
- Strategic Plan 2014-2019
- Strategic Plan 2014-2019 (page number 12)
- Strategic Plan 2014-2019 (page number 13)
- Teagle White Paper 2007
- Van Lunen Report - Appendix C

1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

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

Summary

One of the most striking traits of Calvin College is its passion for stating its principles. Not many institutions have a 60-page mission statement and a 42-page purpose statement for their general-education requirements. A comprehensive mission is central to the identity of Calvin, and discussion of mission precedes every major change within the college.

The college is aware that the mission needs to continually be adjusted to adapt to new challenges. The title of the current strategic plan, adopted in 2014, intentionally states the goal to “strengthen, support, and secure” Calvin's mission. The mission also needs to be communicated in fresh ways to both new audiences and current constituencies. The college is implementing new communication strategies to present its mission in accessible ways.

Sources

There are no sources.

2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

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

2.A - Core Component 2.A

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

Argument

Explicit and comprehensive policies that are widely available and understood are important to ensuring institutional integrity. [Board](#), [faculty](#), and [staff](#) handbooks are easily accessed via the Web, and include policies affecting these groups. Faculty and staff training ensures that important policies are widely understood.

The college has adopted codes of conduct for both [faculty](#) and staff (contained in their respective handbooks) that are consistent with the mission of the institution to be an exemplary Christian academic community. While most of the proscribed behaviors would be actionable at any institution, some are unique to a church-related institution (e.g., nonmarital sexual relations). Each code of conduct outlines procedures for addressing allegations of misconduct, for possible sanctions, and for processes for appeal.

Financial Functions

The board has the ultimate responsibility for ensuring the financial integrity of the institution. This responsibility is clearly indicated [in the board handbook](#). [A recent survey](#) of board members indicates a strong awareness of the board's fiduciary responsibilities. In response to the Financial Review Task Force report of 2012 (the need for and work of this task force is further described in component 5A), the board recognized the need for more ownership of and direct expertise in the audit process. It established [an audit committee](#) that is separate from the administration and finance committee. The audit committee selects internal and external auditors, reviews and recommends to the full board the approval of the audited financial statements, and makes recommendations concerning the reporting of financial information to the full board for review. The board also exercises the ultimate fiduciary responsibility for the management of the college's investments through [an investment committee](#). The board substantially reformed the structure and policies of this body in response to task force recommendations. These included

- removing college staff from voting membership;
- substantially changing the investment policy statement; and
- engaging a professional advisor.

All board members complete [a conflict-of-interest statement](#), and all potential conflicts of interest are reviewed by the board's trusteeship committee.

A variety of college policies ensure responsible and ethical conduct in financial matters. One policy, adopted by the board in May 2007, requires all employees to sign [a conflict-of-interest disclosure statement](#). Researchers who receive government funding also must complete a separate [conflict-of-interest statement](#) mandated by federal regulation. Policies regarding [appropriate spending of college funds](#), including [college-related travel](#), are readily available to all staff members. All expenditures require at least two signatures for approval, including that of the budget officer for the account from which the expenditure is made. The college has a published policy (adopted by the board in 2007) for [reporting suspected financial misconduct](#) that includes whistleblower protection.

Academic Functions

A summary of FERPA and related institutional policies is contained [in the college catalog](#) and is accessible to faculty, students, and parents [online](#). Staff and faculty receive FERPA training at their respective orientations. Updates to FERPA training happen often, most recently throughout the fall of 2014, as a regular feature in the weekly *Academic Bulletin* (September [5](#), [12](#), [19](#), [26](#); October [3](#), [10](#), [17](#)). Calvin maintains a definition of directory information and has [a procedure](#) for students to restrict access to their directory information.

In 2011 Faculty Senate, acting on advice from the Planning and Priorities Committee and the provost, [adopted a new policy](#) on copyright compliance that clarified faculty and student responsibilities and processes to help ensure compliance. The most important change was the purchase of an annual copyright license from the Copyright Clearance Center. The provost's office maintains [online resources for faculty](#), including information on how to use the Copyright Clearance Center. Additionally, the college bookstore assumed responsibility for ensuring copyright compliance for all materials it distributes, such as course packs.

The institution is authorized to teach [in the states in which it has educational activity](#). Activity in other states is usually limited to an occasional internship program or to a few students in a distance-learning class. Calvin also has two semester-long programs, in Washington, DC, and New Mexico. Details of the approvals by various states are found among the federal compliance documents.

Information Technology

The college has a policy on [the responsible use of technology](#) (adopted in 1993 and revised by the Faculty Senate and the board in 2009) that applies to all users of Calvin technology. The policy defines responsible use regarding respecting others' need for access, respecting others' privacy, respecting others' property, using college resources in a stewardly manner, and protecting information. It also outlines the process for disciplinary action for violations. Additionally, [an information security policy](#) (adopted by the Planning and Priorities Committee in 2013) defines an information security data framework and outlines employee responsibilities regarding information security.

Personnel Functions

Calvin does not discriminate in the employment of individuals on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, disability, sex, or age. Calvin College is a Christian educational institution operated by the Christian Reformed Church and, in compliance with Title VII and other applicable law, reserves the right to give preference in employment based upon religion.

Policies and Procedures to Address Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation

Over the two recent academic years (2012-13, 2013-14), the college completely overhauled its policies and procedures for addressing discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. The resulting policy, known as [Safer Spaces](#), is prominently displayed [on the college's website](#). Important features of the policy include improved reporting mechanisms (e.g., a report button appears on the Web page), five coordinators and 15 trained investigators and hearing panel members, and a clear statement of mandatory reporting responsibilities under the Clery Act, Title VII, and Title IX. The college retains the NCHERM Group, a law and consulting firm, to provide training for coordinators, legal consultation concerning incidents that arise, and updates on regulations and documentation. Faculty and staff receive Web-based training. All first-year students at Calvin College are given information on sexual assault prevention and reporting options by their resident director at a mandatory workshop during the first or second week of class. They also are asked to complete an online educational module called "Every Choice," which provides information on sexual assault, domestic and dating violence, and stalking, along with training on how to recognize and intervene when a friend or peer is in an unsafe or emergency situation.

Student Complaints

The college offers a number of mechanisms students can use to register concerns about what they perceive to be unfair or unlawful treatment. The student complaint policy is described [in the federal compliance submission](#). Two new important mechanisms that have been developed over the last two years are [a professor-comment form](#) available in the college's intranet portal and [a complaint form](#) available on the student life division's Web page.

Sources

- Academic Bulletin 2014-09-05
- Academic Bulletin 2014-09-05 (page number 2)
- Academic Bulletin 2014-09-12
- Academic Bulletin 2014-09-12 (page number 2)
- Academic Bulletin 2014-09-19
- Academic Bulletin 2014-09-26
- Academic Bulletin 2014-09-26 (page number 2)
- Academic Bulletin 2014-10-03
- Academic Bulletin 2014-10-10
- Academic Bulletin 2014-10-10 (page number 2)
- Academic Bulletin 2014-10-17
- Authorization to Withhold Directory Info
- Board Handbook 2014-15
- Board Handbook 2014-15 (page number 71)
- Board Handbook 2014-15 (page number 83)
- Board Handbook 2014-15 (page number 84)
- Board Handbook 2014-15 (page number 140)
- Board Self Assessment May 2014
- Calvin Research FCOI Policy
- Calvin Website - Copyright Procedures
- Calvin Website - FERPA Policy
- Calvin Website - Finding Safer Spaces

- Calvin Website - Reporting Suspected Financial Misconduct
- Calvin Website - Student Complaint Form
- Calvin Website - Travel Expenses
- College Catalog 2014-2015
- College Catalog 2014-2015 (page number 23)
- Employee Conflict of Interest
- Faculty Handbook August 2014
- Faculty Handbook August 2014 (page number 41)
- Faculty Handbook August 2014 (page number 93)
- Faculty-Comment Form
- FC_Argument
- FC_Argument (page number 4)
- Guidelines for College Expenditures
- Information Security Policy 2013
- PPC11-01 Copyright Policy for Handbook
- Responsible Use of Technology Policy
- Safer Spaces Policy
- State Approvals

2.B - Core Component 2.B

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

Argument

Catalog

The college catalog is the official document for presenting students with information on program requirements, [academic standards](#), and [program costs](#). It also includes information on [accreditation relationships](#), [control](#), [mission](#), and [a complete listing of faculty](#). The catalog is updated annually and is printed in time for summer registration of new first-year students. It is also available on the college website, along with catalogs from recent years. The registrar's office is responsible for the catalog review process and ensures that all program changes adopted by the previous year's Faculty Senate are included. Each section of the catalog is reviewed by the appropriate office (e.g., each academic department reviews its section). The provost's office checks to see that faculty are listed accurately and also approves any major change in the catalog's organization or content.

Students are clearly told that the catalog is the official set of graduation and program requirements. Since changes to programs may occur during a student's time at the college, students are allowed to declare a catalog year that determines the requirements that apply to them. Although this normally is the year that they entered the college, it can be any year when they are actually taking courses.

Portal

Students have access to a variety of [\(personalized\) information](#) through the college's intranet portal, which requires [authentication](#). This includes [the academic evaluation report](#) (AER), a current record of academic activity audited against a given program's requirements. Students and their advisors can rely on the AER as an authoritative declaration of what one still has to take in order to graduate. Students register for classes online through the portal, where they also have access to the course schedules well in advance. Additionally, the portal allows students to access the status of their financial accounts on a real-time basis.

Website

The college website is the principal means by which external audiences, including potential students, access information about the college. The development of the website is informed by [a Web governance policy](#). A Web team implements that policy, including recommending overall strategy, creating a majority of the website, setting design and content guidelines, providing training, and approving content. The Web team includes [Web communications managers](#) from each division of the college. [A major redesign of the website](#) is currently in progress. (The home and top-level pages are completed, but several components of the lower-level pages still need to be redesigned.) Important features of this redesign include a focus on external audiences, a mobile-friendly interface, the use of Web analytics to guide decisions, and a consistent presentation of data, primarily through implementing a database-driven content management system. (For example, academic department presentations of course and program requirements are driven from the catalog database rather than maintained separately by each department.) While the Web design team produces considerable

content and oversees the design of the entire site, individuals and departments are encouraged to suggest updates through the online Web request form as well as to write their own content. Training is provided for those who want to maintain their own Web pages.

Through [the "About" tab](#) on the front page of the website, all visitors have one-click access to important information including the mission, the strategic plan, a fact sheet, a directory of senior administrators, and all consumer information required by the Higher Education Opportunity Act. The organization and information on [the "Consumer Information" page](#) closely follows the recommendations of the National Postsecondary Education Cooperative's *Information Required to Be Disclosed under the Higher Education Act of 1965: Suggestions for Dissemination (Updated)* (NPEC 2010-831v2), prepared by Carol Fuller and Carlo Salerno (Washington, DC: Coffey Consulting, 2009). An "Admissions and Aid" tab on the home page gives one-click access to important information appropriate for prospective students.

Print

Calvin provides a variety of printed materials for prospective students. Typical materials include [the "Road Piece,"](#) which is often a first introduction to the college; [the financial aid brochure](#); [the "affordability brochure;"](#) and brochures on each academic program as well as other programs (e.g., [biology](#), [teacher education](#), [athletics](#), [honors](#)). Accuracy of these publications is ensured by a three-round system of review that includes content area specialists.

The college communicates regularly through mailings to a variety of audiences. The Calvin College Alumni Association's publication [Spark](#) is produced quarterly and has a circulation of 42,000. In the fall of 2014, [a printed version of the newly adopted strategic plan](#) was mailed to the approximately 6,400 households of those who had recently supported the college with significant financial donations.

Electronic Communication

The college's communications and marketing department maintains a consistent and accurate electronic presence. The current outlets are Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest, and YouTube.

Several electronic newsletters are distributed to various groups on a subscription basis. These include [Calvin-Parents](#) (sent weekly to parents of current Calvin students) and [This Square Inch](#) (a monthly letter from the president). Each of these is reviewed by the communications and marketing department before distribution.

Branding

From September 2014 through February 2015, the communications and marketing team ran [a branding process](#), the goal of which was to develop a consistent messaging framework for the college. The college engaged Dartlet, Inc., a reputation management consultancy, to lead the process. The consultants led 18 three-hour workshops (with 340 total participants) and an online workshop (with 950 participants) in the fall of 2014. The result of the process was what Dartlet calls a [master brand strategy](#) that will enable the college to tell a consistent and authentic story across all media platforms.

Sources

- Academic Evaluation Report 1
- Affordability Brochure
- Athletics Brochure
- Biology Dept Sheet
- Branding Process Advisor Mandate
- Calvin College Master Brand
- Calvin Website - About Tab
- Calvin Website - Consumer Information
- Calvin Website - Portal
- Calvin Website - Portal - Student Academics
- Calvin Website - Website Redesign
- Calvin-Parents
- College Catalog 2014-2015
- College Catalog 2014-2015 (page number 7)
- College Catalog 2014-2015 (page number 8)
- College Catalog 2014-2015 (page number 16)
- College Catalog 2014-2015 (page number 33)
- College Catalog 2014-2015 (page number 272)
- College Catalog 2014-2015 (page number 287)
- Financial Aid Brochure
- Honors Brochure
- Road Piece - Screen Version
- Spark Fall 2014
- Strategic Plan Mailing
- Teacher Education Dept Sheet
- This Square Inch
- Web Comm Coordinator Job Description
- Web Governance

2.C - Core Component 2.C

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

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

Argument

Calvin is [a nonprofit Michigan corporation](#), governed by a board of [31 members](#). The board meets three times annually; between regular meetings, its executive committee carries out the business of the board.

Board Deliberations (subcomponents 1-2)

The board's operation is governed by [bylaws](#) and a [handbook](#). The board's basic function "is to ensure that the College accomplishes its mission"; beyond this, the board handbook describes [nine general functions](#).

The board acts on recommendations from the faculty and administration. In February 1996 the board defined [the kinds of actions](#) that it may take and provided examples of faculty and administration recommendations subject to those actions. The board accomplishes its work through seven standing committees: Academic Affairs, Advancement, Student Life, Enrollment Management, Administration and Finance, Audit, and Trusteeship. A separate investment committee is a subcommittee of the Administration and Finance Committee. Each committee has a college vice president as its advisor (except the Trusteeship and Executive Committees, which are advised by the president). The Executive Committee comprises the officers as well as the standing committees' chairs.

The board engages the multiple constituencies of the college through several mechanisms, formal and informal:

- In May 2013 the board approved a policy (cf. [art. 28C of the minutes](#)) that appoints faculty members as advisors to all but the audit and trusteeship committees.
- The board interviews (cf. [art. 7 of the May 2013 minutes](#)) all faculty members on regular appointment twice, at their first reappointment and at their appointment with tenure.
- The board holds an annual dinner with the entire faculty.
- At each meeting, the board has occasion to interact with students informally, and it also seeks student input through the board Student Life Committee. For example, at two of its three meetings in the most recent academic year ([October 2013](#), [May 2014](#)), the committee met with groups of students to consider issues specifically of importance to students.
- The board has three designated "alumni trustees," chosen from nominations submitted by the

Calvin Alumni Association, and it also interacts with the alumni association board, which usually meets on campus concurrently with the board.

The role of the board in governance is further discussed in component 5B.

Board Independence (subcomponent 3)

A [conflict-of-interest statement](#) outlines the expectations of the board: "Board members have the duty of guiding the College's affairs in such a manner as to achieve the objectives of the College. Board members have a fiduciary duty to act honestly, in good faith, and in the best interest of the College, and to be loyal to the College." Trustees sign this conflict-of-interest statement annually and are required to disclose any potential conflicts. The board's trusteeship committee reviews all such potential conflicts and acts accordingly.

The board reports annually to the synod (governing body) of the Christian Reformed Church of North America (CRCNA), and certain actions of the board are subject to synod ratification or approval. For example, the synod approves the appointment of the president, appoints members of the board (from candidates selected by the board through [a board-approved procedure](#)), and ratifies changes to the articles of incorporation of the college. The minutes of the 2014 synod (cf. [art. 33](#)) report these actions for the most recently completed academic year. The church understands its relationship with the college to be cooperative rather than supervisory, and [the constitution of the board of trustees of the CRCNA](#) clearly acknowledges the authority of the college board to govern the college.

Board Delegation (subcomponent 4)

The board is a legislative body whose primary responsibility is determining policy. It delegates the execution of this policy to the president, as clearly documented in [the board handbook](#) and [the faculty handbook](#).

Sources

- Acts of Synod 2014
- Acts of Synod 2014 (page number 123)
- Board Action Types
- Board Handbook 2014-15
- Board Handbook 2014-15 (page number 70)
- Board Handbook 2014-15 (page number 73)
- Board Handbook 2014-15 (page number 106)
- Board Handbook 2014-15 (page number 140)
- Board Handbook 2014-15 (page number 148)
- Board Membership 2014-15
- Board Minutes May 2013
- Board Minutes May 2013 (page number 3)
- Board Minutes May 2013 (page number 7)
- Board Minutes May 2013 (page number 21)
- Board Minutes May 2014
- Board Minutes May 2014 (page number 4)
- Board Minutes October 2012

- Board Student Life Committee Minutes October 2013
- CRCNA Board Constitution
- CRCNA Board Constitution (page number 2)
- Faculty Handbook August 2014
- Faculty Handbook August 2014 (page number 11)
- Faculty Handbook August 2014 (page number 13)

2.D - Core Component 2.D

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

Argument

According to the expanded statement of mission (ESM), the second purpose of the institution is to "produce substantial and challenging art and scholarship." In expanding on that purpose, the ESM [articulates](#) Calvin's long-standing commitment to academic freedom:

Calvin College follows a more generous definition of academic freedom than do many Christian colleges (see [Faculty Handbook, section 3.5.4](#)). Essentially faculty members are free to exercise their talents with only three restraints: the confessional standards of the college, the professional standards of the discipline, and the prohibition of propagandizing in the classroom for causes unrelated to their profession as Christian teachers of a discipline. These restraints are not without risk and may be enforced only via due process and by communally accepted standards. Still, they are and should continue to be required in order to maintain the confessional, professional, and educational integrity of Calvin as a college in the Reformed Christian tradition.

At the same time, this very integrity demands a positive, supportive, expansive vision of academic freedom. The integrity of any educational institution resides in a process of free postulation, inquiry, interpretation, and conclusion. While the task of scholars at any college is to keep alive, develop, and pass along the root ideas of a culture, and while the task of scholars at a Christian college is to engage those ideas, to examine them, and to challenge or affirm them as consequential for the Christian faith, the Reformed Christian academic especially feels obligated to engage alternative points of view in order to learn from them, to be challenged by them, and to bring a Reformed and Christian witness to bear upon them.

Challenges to faculty teaching and research on confessional grounds occasionally come from parents, students, or members of the larger church constituency. In the last several years such challenges have been made concerning issues surrounding homosexuality as well as the relationship of the scientific evidence on origins to the doctrine of original sin. As the college's Professional Status Committee and the board discussed these challenges, it became evident that the college would benefit from a more explicit statement on how academic freedom relates to confessional commitments and from clearer policies concerning how challenges to faculty teaching and research should be adjudicated. In 2010 the board adopted the statement "[Confessional Commitment and Academic Freedom at Calvin College](#)," which captures the college's long-standing commitment to both academic freedom and its confessional identity. [An accompanying document](#) contains detailed processes for addressing controversial issues in ways that foster high-trust communication, confessional integrity, and mutual encouragement and accountability. These processes are included [in the faculty handbook](#). Faculty generally see these statements as strong protection for academic freedom. It is important to note that although the work of some faculty members has been challenged by some (both within and outside of the college) as outside confessional boundaries, no member has been dismissed over any such challenge, nor have any products of faculty scholarship been censored or suppressed.

The dean for research and scholarship maintains [an academic freedom Web page](#), primarily for

faculty members. This page contains, among other documents, presentations by Calvin faculty on academic freedom at AAUP meetings and in the journal *Academe*, as well as [an extensive bibliography on academic freedom](#), especially as it relates to faith-based institutions.

The college encourages wide-ranging discussion on a variety of issues that might be considered sensitive on the campus of a church-related institution. For example, since 2007, Calvin College's Sexuality Series has explored many sensitive topics in an atmosphere of respectful sharing of opinions. Outside speakers, films, and panel discussions are some of the strategies employed. Topics have included "Transforming the LGBT Conversation," sexual assault, pornography, and transgender issues, as identified by students as important for discussion (see [the 2013-14 schedule](#)). As another example, since 2002, the college has held its Christian Perspectives in Science Series, which explores interactions between Christian faith and scholarship in the natural and applied sciences (see [the 2014 schedule](#)).

Academic freedom extends to students, who are not required to sign a faith statement or hold any particular set of beliefs. Though faculty members are expected to teach from "a reformed and Christian perspective," they are not allowed to impose such a belief system on students; rather, they are expected to make room for discussion and disagreement. In fact, one of the issues explored in new faculty orientation is how to make the classroom safe and welcoming for students who do not share the beliefs of the faculty member or their fellow students.

The student newspaper, *Chimes*, is published weekly both in print and online. The college maintains [a policy of "responsible freedom" for student media](#) and does not engage in prior review of the content of *Chimes*. The college expects participants to "formulate their own opinions, develop their own styles, and exercise their own aesthetic judgments." This allows *Chimes* to engage important and sometimes controversial campus issues (e.g., its thought-provoking feature series on [profiles of current LGBT students](#)). It is the *Chimes'* policy to print every letter to the editor. Responsible freedom requires that students not "needlessly give moral or religious offense" but rather seek to "build and enrich the Christian community."

Sources

- Academic Freedom Bibliography
- Academic Freedom Panel Notes
- Calvin Website - Academic Freedom
- Chimes Listen-First Introduction
- Christian Perspectives in Science Series 2014
- Confessional Commitment and Academic Freedom
- Expanded Statement of Mission
- Expanded Statement of Mission (page number 27)
- Faculty Handbook August 2014
- Faculty Handbook August 2014 (page number 45)
- Faculty Handbook August 2014 (page number 46)
- Sexuality Series 2013-14
- Strengthening Confessional Commitment and Academic Freedom
- Student Life Media Subcommittee Mandate

2.E - Core Component 2.E

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

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

Argument

Commitment to Integrity in Research and Scholarship (subcomponent 1)

Calvin ensures integrity in research and scholarship through appropriate training, clear processes, and published policies.

Calvin maintains several administrative structures to ensure that research is conducted with integrity. [The Institutional Review Board](#) (IRB) oversees all human-subject research, and its membership and review policies satisfy or exceed all governmental-agency requirements for IRB approval. The IRB ensures that all researchers complete [the appropriate NIH human research training](#). In addition, administrators and committees with research oversight functions are aware of IRB requirements and ensure that IRB approval is sought. For example, the Faculty Development Committee, in reviewing proposals for sabbaticals and internal research grants, checks to see whether IRB approval has been obtained. The IRB maintains a comprehensive [website](#) of policies and procedures, including all necessary forms. The [annual report](#) of the IRB to the Faculty Senate for 2013-14 lists the sixty-eight projects approved by the board in that year.

Research involving animals is subject to mandatory review by [the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee](#) ([annual report to the Faculty Senate](#)); research involving recombinant DNA requires review by [the Institutional Biosafety Board](#) ([annual report to the Faculty Senate](#)). These two committees have processes and memberships consistent with national requirements.

Calvin has a strong commitment to undergraduate student research and requires all students to complete [online training](#) in the ethical conduct of research before receiving any wages for research-related work. Additionally, anyone who conducts research with human subjects must complete the NIH web-based training course "[Protecting Human Research Participants](#)."

Calvin has several written policies to ensure that research is conducted with integrity. They are collected in a central location on the web, and several are published in the faculty handbook. These policies include a [financial conflict of interest policy](#) and a [scientific misconduct policy](#) (both constructed to meet the requirements and standards of federal agencies that support research).

Ethical Use of Information Resources by Students (subcomponent 2)

All students are introduced to the ethical use of information resources in the required Written Rhetoric core course, in which students receive and study the [written rhetoric plagiarism policy](#). Each department is expected to supplement this training by introducing and enforcing policies appropriate

to its discipline. The rhetoric center maintains an online [Writing with Integrity](#) resource for students.

At its May 2008 meeting, the Faculty Senate adopted a requirement that all syllabi include [a statement on academic integrity](#). Faculty members are free to adapt this statement to reflect the unique requirements of their course.

Calvin has contracted with the Copyright Clearance Center for an annual copyright license. This license covers most documents normally distributed to students, whether paper or electronic, handout or course pack. The bookstore ensures that course packs containing copyrighted material are appropriately licensed.

Policies on Academic Honesty and Integrity (subcomponent 3)

The current policy on academic dishonesty was adopted by the Faculty Senate in 2002 and is contained in [the student conduct code](#). A key feature of the policy is that faculty members work in coordination with the student life division so that cases are adjudicated following the same procedures as other kinds of student misconduct (including the same rights of appeal). Approximately 40-50 cases are adjudicated [per year](#).

An important component of the policy is that faculty members may not impose a sanction for academic dishonesty without a hearing if the student contests the charge. Hearing and appeal procedures safeguard students' rights. Faculty members are also required to report all cases of academic dishonesty to the Office of Student Life. This creates a record that can be used when adjudicating cases involving repeat offenders.

Several professional programs ([engineering](#), [nursing](#), [social work](#), [education](#), and [speech-language pathology](#)) have adopted integrity statements as appropriate to their programs.

Sources

- Academic Integrity Syllabus Statement
- Calvin Website - Institutional Review Board
- Calvin Website - Plagiarism Policy
- Calvin Website - Responsible Conduct
- Calvin Website - Writing with Integrity
- Engineering Integrity Policy
- Faculty Handbook August 2014
- Faculty Handbook August 2014 (page number 99)
- Financial Conflict of Interest Policy
- Five-Year Summary of Academic Dishonesty Cases
- IACUC Committee Mandate
- IACUC Senate Report 2012-13
- IBC Committee Mandate
- IBC Senate Report 2013-14
- IRB Committee Mandate
- IRB Senate Report 2013-14
- IRB Site Redirect to NIH
- Nursing Department Code of Conduct
- Protecting Human Research Participants
- Social Work Handbook

- Social Work Handbook (page number 30)
- SPAUD Handbook
- SPAUD Handbook (page number 25)
- Student Code of Conduct
- Student Code of Conduct (page number 11)
- Teacher Education Program Guidebook
- Teacher Education Program Guidebook (page number 88)

2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

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

Summary

Calvin College is committed to demonstrating integrity in all its operations and has developed policies and training in order to maintain this high level of integrity. In its attention to policies and procedures, the institution attempts to model a "Christian academic community." Over the past ten years the college has devoted considerable attention to developing explicit policies to reinforce and refine what previously had been more implicit understandings. One important example is the careful attention paid to Title IX compliance, a component of which is the Safer Spaces Policy, which is a comprehensive set of policies and procedures to address discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. Another example is the board's strengthening of its role in the internal and external audit functions of the institution. A significant challenge going forward will be continuing to comply with the ever-increasing number of state and federal regulations. The college has been conscientious in its attempts to do this (e.g., in state authorization of distance education), and it will need to continue to devote resources to these efforts.

Sources

There are no sources.

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

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

3.A - Core Component 3.A

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

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

Argument

Calvin is a comprehensive liberal arts college offering a wide range of disciplinary majors and professional programs. The college has two small graduate programs but has no online programs, certificate or associate degree programs, or locations other than its main campus. These programs are offered in the context that 95% of Calvin students are full-time, traditional undergraduate students (see [student demographics](#)).

Undergraduate Programs

Calvin offers [84 different programs](#) that lead to one of [12 bachelor's degrees](#). There are four interdisciplinary programs ([Asian studies](#), [international development studies](#), [public health](#), and [science education studies](#)), each of which is overseen by directors appointed by the provost. All other programs are overseen by one of 27 academic departments. As of the fall of 2014, the number of [current students in each program](#) and the number of [graduates completing each program](#) in 2013-14 show that approximately 45% of students are in programs that could be considered professional programs; business, education, engineering, and nursing are the most popular. Of the programs not considered professional, biology, English, and psychology have the highest enrollments.

[Graduation requirements](#) for a Calvin bachelor's degree include completion of 124 semester hours, a given program's major and cognate requirements, and the designated core (general education) curriculum for that program.

An assessment program that functions at the program level (see component 4B) and a process for regular program review (see component 4A) serve to ensure that programs are current and meeting their intended outcomes. Departments are encouraged to seek external accreditation for their programs, when available, as an external quality control measure. For example, programs such as nursing and education require external accreditation for licensure, whereas programs such as computer science and chemistry seek accreditation on a strictly voluntary basis. Accreditation of professional programs is further described in component 4A.

The college is currently developing proposals for two programs that are sufficiently different from our current offerings as to require a substantive change request to the HLC. [The program in ministry leadership](#) is a degree program for inmates at a Michigan state prison. This would include a certificate program as well as associate's and bachelor's degree programs, making it the only Calvin certificate and associate's degree program, as well as the only program offered at a different location. This proposal was approved by the Faculty Senate at its February 2015 meeting and will be considered by the board at its May 2015 meeting. Plans for its implementation (including a change request) are currently in development. The college also is considering [an RN-to-BSN degree completion program](#). This program would be delivered online and would be the college's first online program. It is on hold, pending a broader study of whether Calvin should offer online programs at all. An ad hoc committee is studying this issue.

Graduate Programs

In 1990 the faculty [adopted](#) a report on graduate education that developed three stated purposes for its graduate programs. These purposes are summarized in the [expanded statement of mission](#). Importantly, one of these purposes is that graduate programs "should enhance the teaching, scholarship, and alumni support of Calvin's undergraduate programs." The college currently has five graduate programs and two master's degrees.

The MEd degree is awarded for the completion of one of four programs accredited by TEAC and designed for experienced teachers and school administrators who wish to integrate a Christian perspective into their understanding of their professional role as educator. The degree requires 32-36 hours of graduate courses (no undergraduate courses are involved), all of which are designed for that program. (See component 4A for more on accreditation of this program). The MEd program was identified in the recent prioritization process as financially unsustainable in its current form; consequently, the program is being thoroughly [reviewed and revised](#).

The MA in Speech Pathology is offered as an integrated five-year program that leads to both a bachelor's and a master's degree. The fifth year requires two full summers as well as the two semesters and interim of the academic year. Although students can graduate with a four-year bachelor's degree in speech pathology and audiology, the graduate courses in the MA program are designed for and only offered to students entered in the MA program. The program is a candidate for accreditation by the Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (CAA) of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. All students in the first two cohorts ([classes of 2013 and 2014](#)) passed the PRAXIS exam (required for licensure as a speech-language pathologist) and were employed or in graduate school within one year of graduation.

Faculty Oversight of the Curriculum

The faculty oversee the curriculum and are responsible for delivering programs that are current, consistent, and of high quality. The Faculty Senate must approve any new program or significant program revision. A [program proposal](#) must include program learning outcomes, an assessment plan, and a justification of the need for the program (including internal and external demand). The proposal must be approved by the Educational Policy Committee (EPC; a committee with faculty, administration, and student representation) as well as by other college committees as appropriate. The complete [approval process](#) is described on the EPC website. In 2013-14 two new programs were approved: (1) [a major in graphic design](#), housed in the art department, and (2) [a major in Chinese language education](#). That same year, two programs were approved for significant revision: [political science](#) and [physics and astronomy](#). The proposals give evidence of the kinds of documentation

necessary to introduce new programs or substantially revise existing ones.

Similarly, EPC must approve any [new course or major revision in a current course](#). New course proposals must include student learning outcomes and an expanded course description. This document is an important way in which departments maintain consistency of offerings over time, as new instructors have access to a detailed document describing course expectations. (The current template has been in place for five years. Earlier course proposals tended to be briefer and did not necessarily include student learning outcomes.) Examples of course proposals from the last Senate meeting of the 2013-14 academic year show the comprehensive detail of a new course proposal: [art studio](#), [biology](#), [English](#), [cancer](#), [study in Ghana](#).

Consistent Delivery of Programs

The college offers no online degree programs, but over the past three years a limited number of courses have been offered online in a pilot program ([in the calendar year 2014](#) there were 32 online sections offered by 17 different instructors to a total of 344 students). This pilot program is being reviewed during the current academic year, as called for in [§1.4.c of the strategic plan](#). An important component of this evaluation is to determine whether online courses meet the same learning outcomes as the on-campus versions. To help ensure this in the pilot program, online instructors were required to be regular faculty members (11 of the 17 instructors were tenured) who had taught the same course in the standard, face-to-face format. Similarly, these instructors were expected to have the same learning outcomes and to use the same (or similar) methods to assess student performance. Instructors also completed an [instructional design course](#) before offering the online section for the first time.

In a separate pilot program over the past two years, the college has offered a few sections of regular Calvin courses at three different west Michigan high schools for dual enrollment. In the fall of 2014, six sections of four different courses were offered in this manner. In the fall of 2014, the Faculty Senate adopted [procedures for proposing and approving such courses](#), including mechanisms to ensure that the high school sections meet departmental quality control standards. An important consideration in offering these courses was whether they could be guaranteed to achieve the same learning outcomes as their on-campus equivalents. By this measure, Chemistry 103 is successful: the instructor works closely with Calvin's chemistry department and gives the same final exam administered in the on-campus sections. On average, students in the high school offering perform at a higher level than the students in regular sections of the course. English 230, however, was taught at three different high schools, and the English department [expressed concerns](#) about "quality control" for this course; consequently, English 230 will no longer be offered in this manner.

The college offers 12 [off-campus semester programs](#), and many off-campus courses are offered during each January term. [In 2012-13](#), 248 students participated in off-campus semester programs, and an additional 551 students took off-campus courses during the January term. Each off-campus program is a one-semester program in which a faculty member serves as director and accompanies a group of students to an off-campus location. Students take some of their course work from the director; the remainder of the coursework is either provided by an adjunct instructor hired locally or by the local university that is a contractual partner. [The Off-Campus Programs Committee](#) is responsible for ensuring that "off-campus programs of the college shall be consistent with the educational policy of the college." That committee, along with an off-campus programs office staffed by a full-time director, who reports yearly to the Education Policy Committee, regularly [reviews and evaluates](#) all off-campus programs. The office also provides support for instructors in developing and offering such programs.

Calvin also partners with several institutions to provide off-campus opportunities for students to fulfill

specific requirements in certain majors. Each of these partnerships has been approved by the off-campus programs committee, the relevant academic department, and the Faculty Senate. Most of these are consortial relationships with other HLC-accredited schools. One of these programs is a contractual relationship. The Au Sable Institute of Environmental Studies offers [field courses](#) in environmental science. Courses are taught and the curriculum is overseen by faculty from participating institutions. Calvin is a sustaining partner of the Institute and Calvin faculty regularly teach in the program and evaluate the suitability of the curriculum for Calvin students.

Calvin allows students to apply to off-campus programs offered by other institutions. Since 2004, there have been 25 different programs in which Calvin students have participated. Most of these programs are consortial or are offered by institutions with which Calvin has had an on-going association through faculty and departmental contacts. For each student, the director of off-campus programs must approve participation in the program and the student must also have approval from their academic advisor. If the courses are intended to meet requirements of a major, the student must also have approval from the department chair. For these programs, the college engages in a consortial or contractual arrangement developed by the college for the individual student.

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3.B - Core Component 3.B

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

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

Argument

The General Education Program (subcomponents 1, 2)

The current general education program (the "core"), described in the document "[An Engagement with God's World: The Core Curriculum at Calvin College](#)," was first offered in 2001. The core's statement of purpose was developed by an ad hoc committee of faculty, students, and staff and was adopted by the faculty [in November 1997](#). That statement is grounded in [the mission](#): to prepare students for a life of informed and effective Christian service in contemporary society (i.e., to be "agents of renewal"). The purpose statement, [summarized in the college catalog](#), describes the knowledge, skills, and virtues that will equip students for such a life.

The core document also describes the structure of the core, which was developed by the same committee after its purposes had been approved; this structure was adopted by the faculty in the spring of 1999. The core comprises 19 categories, each of which is defined by a set of objectives derived from the knowledge domains, skills, and virtues of the purpose document (cf. the document's [curricular map](#)). The core categories fall in several groups:

- The Core Gateway is completed in the first year and introduces students to the central intellectual project of Calvin College.
- Core Competencies include research and information technology, written rhetoric, rhetoric in culture, foreign language, and health and fitness.
- Core Studies include biblical and theological studies, history, philosophy, mathematics, biological and physical sciences, social sciences, literature and the arts, global and historical studies, and cross-cultural engagement.
- The Core Capstone, an upper-level course, revisits the broad themes of the core.

Learning outcomes for each category were not established when the core was initially adopted, but the

Core Curriculum Committee worked with those teaching in each category and adopted [learning outcomes](#) in 2009.

The [Core Curriculum Committee](#) is charged with determining which courses meet the requirements of each category (core-credit courses must also be approved by the Educational Policy Committee and the Faculty Senate). No category is "owned" by a department; rather, courses are approved based on whether they meet a category's objectives and learning outcomes. The core committee works with departments and is responsible for assessing the core to ensure that courses meet a category's learning outcomes (see component 4B).

The number of core requirements is large. Depending on the courses students choose and their high school preparation, core comprises 60-72 hours of the 124 necessary for graduation. All students receiving the BA or BS degree are required to take this same core curriculum. However, because of the demands of certain professional programs, in 1999 the core committee adopted a procedure by which professional programs could request [core reductions for their students](#). Each of the professional degrees has a reduced set of core requirements, the most typical reduction being in the foreign language requirement, from four to two semesters. The engineering program (the BSE degree) has the largest number of reductions: five (of the 19) categories are not required (cf. [the mechanical engineering program](#)). [The reduction for other professional degrees](#) is considerably less.

Core has changed little in structure since 1999. One significant change is that the Core Gateway, originally one January-term course (entitled Christian Faith and Contemporary Issues), has been expanded to two courses: a first-semester course (originally called Prelude and now called First-Year Seminar) and a January-term course (Developing a Christian Mind). The development of the First-Year Seminar, initially offered in 2013, resulted from the institution's participation in the Academy for the Assessment of Student Learning (see component 4B for more details).

For the last several years there has been considerable discussion concerning a possible revision of the core. The faculty continues to support the core purposes, but the core's size is an ongoing source of concern. In 2012-13 the Core Curriculum Committee produced [a white paper](#) that outlined the current status of the core and, while reaffirming the core purposes, identified several issues to address. An (ad hoc) committee was appointed to continue discussing possible revisions. The committee has produced [a document](#), currently under review by the Educational Policy Committee and the Core Curriculum Committee, that describes three possible models of a revised core. Two faculty hearings about this document were held in January-February 2015. The full faculty will vote in May 2015 on which of these models should be advanced for further development.

Information and Research Literacy (subcomponent 3)

Recognizing that written, oral, and visual rhetorical skills are important in all programs, the college has developed a robust "Rhetoric across the Curriculum" program administered by [a college committee](#) and supported by two faculty codirectors. Each department (e.g., [chemistry](#), [French](#), [sociology](#)) is expected to develop a rhetoric program that describes how its courses develop rhetorical skills.

The Hekman Library staff work with departments to improve the research and information literacy skills of students. Each academic department is assigned a librarian liaison, and librarians are available to lead classroom sessions on the use of research databases and other library resources. [The current library strategic plan](#) calls for the college to embed information and literacy skills into the educational framework being developed (see component 4B for more on the educational framework).

Recognizing the Diversity of the World (subcomponent 4)

The core curriculum has embedded the issue of diversity of peoples and cultures in several places. Knowledge of "Human Society" is one of the essential knowledge domains of the core, and "Cultural Discernment," "Cross-Cultural Communication," and "Competence in a Foreign Language" are essential skills. Several core categories address these knowledge domains and skills:

- All students are introduced to diversity-related issues in [the required First-Year Seminar](#).
- All students meet a foreign language requirement, [one objective of which](#) is to develop understanding of a different culture through language study.
- All students (except those in some professional programs) take a course in the [Global and Historical Studies](#) category, which introduces them to the study of cultures either "long ago" or "far away."
- All students must take a course in the [Cross-Cultural Engagement](#) category, which requires interaction with people of a different culture over a significant period of time. A CCE coordinator ensures that experiences proposed for this credit meet the intended learning outcomes. Several programs (e.g., nursing, education, social work) have an integrated set of experiences that together meet this requirement. Students also may take an off-campus course approved for this purpose or engage in a cross-cultural experience [on a contract basis](#), supervised by a faculty member.

Contribution to Scholarship, Research, and Creative Work (subcomponent 5)

One of the three purposes of the college, described in [the expanded statement of mission](#), is summarized in [the college catalog](#) as "to produce substantial and challenging art and scholarship." Thus the college expects scholarship of its faculty, evaluates them based partly on their scholarly record, and provides resources for them to pursue their scholarly projects.

The general expectations and evaluation guidelines for faculty scholarship are specified in the faculty handbook. Each department (e.g., [chemistry](#), [economics](#), [philosophy](#)) also has a statement describing its specific scholarship expectations and evaluation criteria. These statements are developed at the department level and approved by the Professional Status Committee so that faculty members have a clear statement of what is expected of them and how they will be evaluated. These statements generally recognize that a variety of scholarly programs are appropriate for faculty members at a primarily undergraduate institution.

A variety of mechanisms support research programs. Faculty members with an appropriate scholarly program may apply for a sabbatical every seven years. A sabbatical provides either a one-semester and interim leave from teaching with no reduction in salary, or a full-year leave at a 50% reduction in salary. Additionally, the Calvin Research Fellowship (CRF) program provides course releases (on a competitive basis) to faculty members with an appropriate project. Together, these programs provided [17 sabbaticals and 23 course releases](#) for the current academic year. (The budget for the sabbatical and CRF program was reduced in 2013-14 due to the budgetary challenges described in component 5A, but the current strategic plan calls for [restoring funding to previous levels](#).) Additional internal sources of support for faculty scholarship include a \$1,000 annual travel allowance per faculty member and small grant programs from several centers and institutes. The [Office of Grants and Foundation Relations](#) has four staff who help faculty to secure external funding for scholarship. The [Office for Research and Scholarship](#) administers internal research funding and provides support for research at Calvin, including development workshops devoted to developing scholarly programs (for younger faculty).

Several centers and institutes, most supported at least partially by endowments, fund and promote faculty research. Each center and institute has a director and governing board and each reports annually on its activities to Faculty Senate. The work of several of these centers is described in component 1D. Those centers especially focused on research and scholarship include the following:

- **The Calvin Center for Christian Scholarship** exists to promote intentional Christian scholarship. [In 2013-14](#) the center provided 11 grants totaling \$72,000 to individuals and working groups. During the year, the center supported the production of six books authored by faculty members.
- **The Calvin Center for Social Research** conducts and supports [research projects](#) in the social sciences and in particular provides support for faculty research projects including a program of small grants as well as technical assistance. The center has a staff of seven.
- **Seminars in Christian Scholarship** is an annual series of topical summer seminars that has run continuously since 1996. Seminars are open to scholars from outside the college community but all include Calvin faculty members as leaders or participants. There were five week-long seminars [in the summer of 2014](#), with 69 participants.
- **The Kuyers Institute for Christian Teaching and Learning** is devoted to the study of pedagogy, learning, and educational leadership from an integrally Christian perspective. In 2013-14, the Institute received [a grant of \\$358,000](#) to fund an empirical study of the use of technology at a local Christian high school. This project involves several Calvin faculty members.
- **The Paul B. Henry Institute for the Study of Christianity and Politics** was created in 1997 to promote the work of integrating Christian faith and politics. [Over the past two years](#) the institute has supported the publication of five books, two book chapters and two scholarly articles as well as the work of five student research assistants.

Calvin faculty members are typically [more productive](#) as scholars than faculty members at similar institutions, publishing more over their careers and in the last two years than faculty at peer institutions. The HERI survey of all faculty includes several questions on [faculty scholarship](#) and compares Calvin both to its peers and to a group of aspirant colleges. Of the 23 institutions in the HERI peer group, 12 are in Calvin's peer list. Over the past three years Calvin faculty have received more [funding from the National Science Foundation](#) than all but three of the college's 40 peer institutions. (The list of peers and its development is described in component 5D.) In the last five years Calvin faculty have received 41 grants, totaling \$10.0 million from federal and state agencies.

Students contribute to scholarship and creative work as appropriate for their programs. Most programs have a culminating experience requiring significant research or a creative project. Students often engage in scholarly projects that go considerably beyond the requirements of individual courses or programs. One option is the honors program. Graduation with honors requires a major independent scholarly or creative project. In 2014 sixty students graduated with honors in 28 disciplines, and their scholarly achievements were recognized at [the annual honors convocation](#).

Calvin supports a vigorous program of student summer research by students. More than 100 students completed research projects in summer 2014, supported by faculty grants, institutional funds, and devoted endowments. Students' [summer research in the sciences](#) is recognized in a poster fair in the fall. The 2014 poster fair featured 57 posters representing the work of 81 students working with 39 faculty. While undergraduate summer research in the sciences is a long-standing tradition, the college established a summer research program in the humanities in 1998 with the help of a grant from the McGregor foundations (McGregor funding has ended, and the program is now funded from endowments and other sources). [In the summer of 2014](#), 16 students worked on 14 projects with 16 faculty mentors.

Calvin students also compete for national scholarship awards. Since 2008, 15 Calvin students have been named [Goldwater scholars](#) (arguably the most prestigious undergraduate science award), more than for any other undergraduate institution over that time period. (No institution may nominate more than three students for this award, and only about 300 are awarded nationally.) *US News and World Report* includes Calvin among [32 institutions](#) with exemplary undergraduate research and creative projects.

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3.C - Core Component 3.C

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

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

Argument

Faculty Composition (subcomponent 1)

The faculty handbook describes [the types of positions of faculty and other teaching staff](#); teaching staff are either regular teaching faculty or contingent faculty.

As of the fall 2014 semester there are [275 regular teaching faculty](#), averaging 14.1 years of service. All but 27 of these faculty members have tenure-track appointments, and 195 (71%) are tenured. [Expectations](#) of all regular faculty members include teaching, scholarship, advising, and service.

Faculty are organized in [departments](#), each with a department chair. The chair receives [release time from teaching](#) based on the size and complexity of departmental programs. [Student-faculty ratios](#) are computed by department and are an important component in determining whether a department has sufficient faculty to deliver its program. All faculty members are expected to participate in the work of the department, including curricular oversight and development, assessment, programs for student development beyond the classroom, and activities aimed at developing pedagogy and scholarship in the department. Most departments have a committee structure and regular department meetings; minutes are posted to the intranet portal and are available to the dean and the provost.

The oversight of academic policies and programs is the responsibility of the Faculty Senate and its [27 governance committees](#). All regular teaching faculty members are expected to serve on Senate or on one of these committees, and this participation is reviewed in the reappointment process.

As described in component 3D, student advising is the responsibility of the faculty, and all faculty members not in their first year of appointment are assigned advisees. Advising loads vary due to the

size of the programs.

Some teaching positions are contingent. Persons in such positions are hired to teach specific courses for a designated period of time (usually for a semester or one year), and such positions do not normally bear the other responsibilities of teaching faculty (scholarship, advising, and service). In the fall of 2014, there were 70 contingent faculty, representing approximately 28 FTE faculty positions. Between 10% and 15% of all sections are taught by contingent faculty in any given semester (13.4% in the fall of 2014). Contingent teaching faculty are usually hired when the needs are either specialized (e.g., instruction in certain professional programs) or transient (e.g., leave replacement).

Cooperating staff positions encompass such roles as private music lesson instructor and lab assistant. Cooperating staff provide instruction, albeit under the supervision of a faculty member who assigns grades and usually performs other administrative responsibilities.

[The standard teaching load](#) for faculty is between 21 and 24 semester hours. Since interim courses are all three-hour courses, a typical load is 9-3-9. Actual loads depend on a department's configuration of credit assignment, its participation in the interim, and the balance between semesters of course offerings. While scholarship, advising, and college service are expected in addition to this, some additional assignments are compensated by a teaching-load reduction. For example, department chairs receive a teaching-load reduction of 4 to 12 hours (depending on the size and complexity of the department), and the Calvin Research Fellowship Program awards teaching load reductions of three to seven hours for research projects (see component 3B for more about the Calvin Research Fellowships).

Faculty Size and Sufficiency (subcomponent 1)

The number of regular faculty has decreased to 275 from a high of 326 in 2009 with about the same student enrollment. This is a direct result of the college's realization that its financial trajectory was unsustainable (a description of that trajectory is in component 5A) and that faculty salaries had to be an important component of a sustainability plan going forward. The goal (of the prioritization plan described in component 5C) is to further reduce [the number of regular faculty to 270](#) by 2017. The provost's office has attempted to manage this reduction in a way that continues to provide students with classes of reasonable size that are taught by regular faculty and that are offered sufficiently often so that the ability of students to complete their programs on time is not compromised. The college has a goal of limiting instruction by contingent faculty to at most 15% of the total sections taught; currently, that goal is being met.

The [course schedule](#) for the most recently completed semester (fall of 2014) demonstrates the current range of offerings and enrollment patterns. The course schedule is constructed by the department chair in consultation with the academic dean and the registrar. A registration priority order and a closed-course appeal system ensure that students are able to register for any course that they need in a given semester (though students and the college sometimes disagree on the definition of the word *need*).

The average class size is 20 to 25 (depending on which classes are counted and how classes are weighted). The average enrollment in sections reported on [the Common Data Set](#) is 23.7. [In the fall semester of 2014](#), 100-level courses averaged 26 students per section, 200-level courses averaged 25 students per section, and 300-level courses averaged 19 students per section. In the interests of meeting the goals of the prioritization plan, the academic administration has set targets for these of 30, 24, and 17, respectively.

Courses are offered frequently enough that students can complete their programs in four years with appropriate planning. (For example, in smaller programs some courses may be offered on an alternate-year basis.) Students who choose to double-major and students who change their majors late in their career may have difficulty doing this. The college offers a small slate of summer courses to aid students in completing core courses, and there has been a growing trend toward current students [meeting some core requirements with transfer credit](#).

Faculty Qualifications (subcomponent 2)

The faculty handbook states [minimal academic credentials](#) for a faculty appointment. Faculty who teach undergraduates are expected to have at least a master's degree; those teaching master-level students are expected to have a PhD. There are [exceptions](#): prospective faculty members in professional programs who have professional licensure and/or significant professional experience may be hired to teach courses specifically related to their expertise. Each such appointment must be [justified](#) by the department chair for each particular course taught and also must be approved by the dean. In the fall semester of 2014, 18 courses were taught by 16 such contingent faculty members. The vast majority of regular faculty members (234 of 275) have a terminal degree in their field, as is required for a tenure-track position (with exceptions for certain professional programs). The college has been offering a pilot program of dual credit with courses taught by high school teachers; these teachers must meet the same requirements as other contingent faculty members (see component 3A for a description of this program). Although Calvin does not choose the faculty members who teach in courses offered by our contractual and consortial partners, the off-campus programs director reviews all such programs regularly. Courses that meet program or graduation requirements are also reviewed by the appropriate department or office.

The above qualifications serve as the minimum, and most faculty have much higher credentials than required. Departments are expected to conduct national searches, as outlined in [the faculty handbook](#), for each regular faculty position to find the best available candidate. All appointments must be recommended by a majority of the regular faculty members of the department and by the appropriate academic dean. The Professional Status Committee (PSC) must approve any appointment to the faculty. PSC also interviews all candidates for regular positions of longer than one year.

An important set of [faculty qualifications](#) concerns commitment to the mission of the college. All faculty members are expected to (1) sign the *Covenant for Faculty Members*, a document that affirms the historic Reformed confessions; (2) be active members in good standing of a congregation of the Christian Reformed Church of North America or a denomination in ecclesiastical fellowship with the CRCNA; and (3) provide their children with Christian schooling in grades K-12. Possible exceptions to these requirements are described in [section 6.13](#) of the faculty handbook. The rigor of these requirements admittedly decreases the number of qualified candidates for a faculty position and can make recruiting a diverse faculty more difficult; these challenges have been the source of ongoing discussion over the past several years at the level of Faculty Senate and the board.

Faculty Evaluation (subcomponent 3)

Regular teaching faculty receive a formal review in their third, fifth, and seventh years. For tenure-track faculty, a favorable seventh-year review results in tenure. Term appointees are eligible for five-year terms after seven years. The review for promotion to professor, if appropriate, usually occurs about six years after the seventh-year review. The review process at each occasion is described in detail in [the faculty handbook](#):

1. The candidate prepares a dossier that includes a teaching portfolio, self-evaluation, professional

- plan, and statement on the candidate's integration of faith and learning.
2. The department reviews the candidate and makes a recommendation.
3. The departmental recommendation and the dossier are forwarded to PSC, which makes the final recommendation to the president. Because the president chairs PSC, this recommendation is rarely overturned.
4. The board must ratify all faculty reappointments and approve all reappointments with tenure.

Faculty members are evaluated on teaching, scholarship, advising, and service. The faculty handbook outlines [general expectations](#) in each of the four areas and [guidelines](#) for professional planning. Because the nature of and expectations for scholarship vary widely across departments, each department maintains a statement of scholarship expectations that describes the standards and procedures used to evaluate the scholarship of candidates. (These are described in component 3B.)

Faculty members with tenure are reviewed every six years, and faculty members with five-year term appointments are reviewed every five years. These reviews follow [a separate process](#) with a primary focus on faculty development rather than evaluation.

There are few formal procedures for evaluating contingent faculty. Since contingent faculty members have only teaching responsibilities, departments are expected to evaluate their teaching as appropriate; beyond the student course evaluations, this usually amounts to classroom visits by the department chair. As the use of contingent faculty increases, and as more contingent faculty are used on a regular basis, more formal procedures will have to be developed.

Student course evaluations play an important role in the ongoing monitoring of faculty classroom performance. [The course evaluation form](#) was developed internally and has been used for four years. Beginning in 2014, the form was [modified](#) to include questions about the student learning outcomes of the course. While student course evaluations are only indirect evidence of good teaching and often not evidence at all of learning, they do inform chairs and deans about general patterns of student response to teaching. Course evaluations are administered in every section of every class. Since they are administered in the classroom on paper, a 90% response rate is typical. Faculty members, chairs, and deans receive numerical summaries ([sample](#)) as well as electronic copies of all forms immediately after final grades are due. Students generally [rate](#) Calvin instructors highly.

Students also are asked to evaluate their advisor immediately after the advising break each fall. The advising evaluation is an online instrument, and results are shared with the faculty member, department chair, and dean ([sample](#)). The Academic Advising Committee analyzes aggregate data to monitor overall trends and to inform recommendations for change in advising procedures and programs ([annual report, 2013-14, to Faculty Senate](#)).

Faculty Development (subcomponent 4)

[The Faculty Development Committee](#) oversees faculty development programs and makes recommendations concerning such programs, including funding and organization.

The Calvin Teaching and Learning Network (CTLN) is responsible for overseeing college programs devoted to teaching development. Three faculty members are designated teaching fellows and are given teaching load reductions to direct the programs of the network. [A report of their activities in 2013-14](#) documents [the new faculty orientation program](#), learning communities (groups of faculty members who study a particular topic related to teaching and learning for one year), development events, and mentoring individual faculty members. [The HERI faculty survey of spring 2013](#) indicates that 66% of faculty participated in organized activities around enhancing pedagogy and student

learning in the previous two years. The programs of the CTLN are open to all faculty, regular or contingent. Fall 2014 was the first year that contingent faculty were invited to participate in new faculty orientation, with a stipend offered to encourage that participation. Eighteen of the contingent faculty attended at least part of the orientation.

The college recognizes the value of mentoring new faculty. Departments are expected to appoint mentors for all new faculty members, and mentors receive [a letter](#) outlining the expectations for this relationship. A grant from the Lilly Foundation enabled the CTLN to [extend the mentoring program](#). Fifteen pairs, each comprising an experienced faculty member paired with a new faculty member, participated in the program.

An important component of faculty development is the Kuiper Seminar, a month-long seminar for all new regular faculty members. These faculty participate in this seminar during their first January term (and are released from teaching an interim course). The seminar [focuses](#) especially on the issue of the integration of faith and learning but also attends to other issues important to new faculty.

Programs for developing faculty scholarship are largely the responsibility of the dean for research and scholarship and are described in core component 3B.

The college annually provides departments \$1,000 for each faculty member for professional travel. The chair administers these funds within the department. Additional funds (e.g., to present at an international conference) are available on a competitive basis from the dean for research and scholarship.

Faculty Accessibility (subcomponent 5)

Members of the teaching staff are expected to be available to their students outside of the classroom as appropriate. This extends considerably beyond scheduled office hours and checking e-mail:

- Faculty members are expected to supervise independent studies and teach courses on a tutorial basis as appropriate (86 such courses offered in fall 2014).
- Faculty members are expected to supervise year-long projects for students graduating with honors (60 in 2013-14).
- Faculty members also are available to supervise independent research projects during the academic year and the summer (see core component 3B).

An important component of faculty engagement with students outside of class is academic advising. All regular faculty members are expected to do this, and [they report](#) spending on average more than two hours per week advising students. Two days of each semester are set aside for academic advising; no classes meet those days. In the recent HERI survey, 64% of faculty members [reported](#) mentoring students to "a great extent."

Staff Who Provide Student-Support Services (subcomponent 6)

All staff positions have job descriptions listing responsibilities and qualifications. General policies concerning hiring, evaluation, and professional development of staff are described in component 5A.

[Certain student-support positions](#) carry faculty status, including librarians, chaplains, those administering student-services programs, academic counselors, and counselors in the Broene Center, which provides psychological and behavioral counseling. Criteria for granting faculty status are described in [the faculty handbook](#). All persons with faculty status are appointed using the same

process as for regular teaching faculty and are reviewed by PSC on a regular basis. The criteria for such review are listed in [the faculty handbook](#). All those with faculty status must meet the mission-related faculty membership requirements.

In the academic division the principal office providing student support services is [the Student Academic Services department](#). The work of this office is described in component 3D. Most positions in this office carry faculty status, and staff members are expected to have active programs of professional development, including training (such as Web seminars) and participation in state and national professional organizations (e.g., disability coordinators frequently attend the weekly meetings of the Michigan Association of Higher Education and Disability). Most members of the SAS department are members of the National Association of Developmental Education, and several attend the national meetings of this organization.

The student life division is organized into several departments, with each department head being responsible for developing a program of professional development for its staff. The year-end reports of [the Broene Counseling Center](#), [health services](#), [residence life](#), and [intercultural student development](#) for the most recently completed years provide examples of the kinds of professional development activities undertaken in these departments as well as the considerations involved in finding qualified staff in these areas.

Financial aid counselors are appropriately [qualified](#) and are required to participate in training and conferences to maintain currency with state and federal regulations. The college has five financial aid counselors with 40 years of experience altogether.

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- Part-Time Minimum Degree and Experience Policy
- Residence Life Year-End Report 2014
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- Sample Student Course Evaluation Spring 2014
- Student Academic Services Org Chart

3.D - Core Component 3.D

The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.

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

Argument

Student Support Services (subcomponents 1-2)

The Student Academic Services (SAS) department provides integrated academic support services for students:

- **Support for students with disabilities.** Three disability coordinators manage services for students with disabilities, including supporting faculty members to provide appropriate accommodations. Approximately 600 students are registered as having disabilities that may require accommodation. [An important recent initiative](#) of SAS was to help faculty move toward providing all print materials in accessible format. The office maintains [a handbook for faculty members](#) concerning accommodating students with disabilities.
- **Tutoring.** Approximately 120 students serve as tutors for approximately 400 students each term. (There were 492 and 375 requests for tutors in the fall and spring semesters, respectively, of 2013-14) Students may [request a tutor](#) for any class, and this request must be supported by the class instructor. SAS also runs regularly scheduled, structured group help-sessions in [calculus](#), [chemistry](#), and statistics.
- **Academic Coaching.** Each year approximately 120 students [request](#) and receive an academic coach, usually an upperclass student, for weekly help with time management, organization, and accountability.
- **Support for international students.** One academic counselor in SAS provides counseling specifically for students whose first language is not English.
- **Advising.** Academic counselors in SAS serve as secondary advisors to all students who are either conditionally admitted or on academic probation. Such students also have an advisor in their major department.
- **Coordinated attendance checks.** Faculty members who notice that a student is not attending class regularly are expected [to initiate an attendance check](#). SAS staff follow up by checking attendance in other courses and may contact the student and intervene as appropriate.

[The Rhetoric Center](#) is a walk-in service staffed by trained student consultants who assist fellow students with planning, writing, and revising written assignments across the college's curriculum. The

center is overseen by the two faculty directors of the Rhetoric across the Curriculum program.

The student life division has several offices providing support for students:

- **The Broene Counseling Center** provides psychological and behavioral counseling to students. The center saw 758 different students for 3,666 appointments [in 2013-14](#).
- **Health Services** provides medical care for students with a staff of physicians, nurse practitioners, and nurses. There were 6,970 patient visits [in 2013-14](#).
- **The Career Development Office** assists students and alumni with [vocational planning](#) and also works with faculty to place current students in [internships](#).
- **The Intercultural Student Development Center**, housing both the International Student Development Office and the Multicultural Student Development Office, [provides support](#) for international students and minority students.

Faculty, staff, and students who are concerned about individual students may contact the CARE (Calvin Assessment Response and Evaluation) Team. [The team](#) includes representatives from the Broene Center, health services, campus safety, judicial affairs, residence life, student development, SAS, and the faculty. Members of the team are trained to address a broad range of student needs. The team will explore various options and strategies to address concerns and may provide appropriate guidance and resource referrals [to address](#) the particular situation.

Preparatory Instruction and Appropriate Placement (subcomponent 2)

[Standards for regular admission](#) include a high school GPA of 2.5, a composite ACT score of 20, and a specified number of college-preparatory courses in English, mathematics, and the natural and social sciences. Students who do not meet these admission standards may be admitted if their records indicate that they could be successful college students, but they are required to participate in the Access program (in fall 2014 eighty-four first-year students were in this program). All students in the Access program are assigned an SAS advisor (as well as an advisor in their major area of study, if known) and required to take the course [ASC 112](#), Strategies for Academic Success, in their first term. This course is taken concurrently with a reading/lecture, general-education course in which students apply the strategies learned in ASC 112. While students in the Access program are not retained at the same rate as students who meet the college's entrance requirements, [the retention rate](#) for such students in the most recent cohort was still relatively high at 73.5% (compared to 88.9% for non-Access first-year students).

Along with all Access students, other students whose high school records indicate that they might not be ready for college-level writing or mathematics courses are tested in these areas during the Passport summer orientation. The foreign language departments administer a similar placement test.

English 100/102 is a two-course sequence designed for students who might not be ready for English 101, the required core course in written rhetoric. This sequence has the same outcomes as English 101 but is taught in small sections and at an appropriate pace. Students are placed in this sequence after [a consultation](#) with an English professor by a process of [directed self-placement](#). Some sections of English 100/102 are reserved for students whose first language is not English. International students must present evidence of English proficiency (e.g., [TOEFL scores](#)) when applying, and they have been successful at Calvin (the six-year graduation rate of international students is 73.5%, compared to 73.6% for the student body as a whole).

Students whose high school records and placement-test scores indicate they are not ready for college-level mathematics are placed in one of two noncredit courses, [ASC 004](#) or [ASC 005](#), offered by the

SAS department and taught by a specialist in developmental mathematics. This specialist expects to retire in August 2016, and SAS and the mathematics department are evaluating this remediation approach before hiring a replacement.

Calvin offers an honors program to qualified, interested students. Incoming students are invited to participate if qualified (typically, ACT score of 29 or better). Current Calvin students are eligible if they have a GPA of 3.3 or greater. Honors sections of several core courses are offered. Students may also do honors work in any course based on [a contract](#) with the instructor. Students may elect to [graduate with honors](#) if they complete six honors courses (two outside their major), earn a GPA of 3.5 or higher, and fulfill any particular requirements imposed by their major department which usually includes a major research project (e.g., [mathematics](#)).

Official admission to a major program requires the formal approval of the department. Each department has its own admission standards. [For any major](#), students must have earned a C in certain designated introductory courses in the program. The [engineering](#), [nursing](#), [social work](#), and [speech pathology and audiology](#) programs have more-extensive admission requirements; students in these programs formally apply for admission, usually in the spring of the sophomore year. Both the nursing and speech pathology programs have early-admission programs for exceptionally well-qualified incoming first-year students.

Academic Advising (subcomponent 3)

The advising programs of the college are managed by a full-time [director of advising](#) and overseen by [the Advising Committee](#).

Incoming students are first advised during the two-day [Passport program in the summer](#) before their first semester. During Passport, students are introduced to the academic programs of the college, take placement tests as appropriate, and are advised by a regular faculty member from a department that matches their academic interests. Students are assigned their first permanent advisor before classes begin and have an opportunity to meet that advisor during the "Connect" portion of [the Quest orientation program](#). First-year students receive further orientation concerning advising and registration during the First-Year Seminar through videos, [handouts](#), and classroom activities.

All students have a primary advisor, typically a faculty member from their major department. Students may also have secondary advisors; for example, education students have advisors from the education department as well as their major and minor fields, and conditionally admitted students are also advised by academic counselors in SAS. Two days each semester are devoted to advising; no classes are held, and advisors meet individually with each of their advisees to plan for the next semester.

While the advising load of most faculty members is manageable, faculty in a few departments have more than 30 advisees. These departments have developed additional tools so that students can be efficiently advised. For example, the [education](#) and [engineering departments](#) have developed templates for four-year programs that students typically follow, and the business department recently added [a new staff member](#) who assists with advising first- and second-year business students.

An important tool to help students plan their academic program is the Academic Evaluation Report (AER; [sample 1](#), [sample 2](#)). This Web-based tool is available in the intranet portal and provides a continually updated audit of academic work against the requirements of a student's chosen program. A student considering a change in major may generate a personalized AER for any program. To avoid missing any requirements for graduation, students simply have to ensure that all the requirements of

their AER have been fulfilled.

Training sessions for faculty advisors are held before each Passport session. In [advising evaluations](#), students have indicated a high level of satisfaction with advising (the overall rating of faculty advisors in the fall of 2014 was 5.36 on a scale with 6.0 as the highest).

Teaching and Learning Infrastructure (subcomponent 4)

[A 2013-14 study](#) by the external consultant Sightlines stated that Calvin has more general and specialized (e.g., laboratories) teaching spaces than comparable institutions as measured in square feet per student. The recommendation is that Calvin does not need more teaching spaces and that any perceived "pinch" can be addressed by more effective utilization and scheduling.

Several recent building and remodeling projects (described in component 5A) focused on specialized teaching spaces. These include all-new laboratories for chemistry and biology (1998), project space for engineering (1998), a new building for the communications program with an auditorium and facilities for the new speech-language pathology master's program (2001), classroom and laboratory space for kinesiology (2008), practice and performance space for music (2010), and a public art gallery (2010).

Nevertheless, during the current master planning process, several academic departments identified needs for different kinds of teaching spaces to accommodate shifting pedagogies and enrollment patterns. The master plan being developed in 2014-15 will make recommendations concerning these needs.

In 2013-14 the Hekman Library engaged an outside consultant to review its operations and develop a new strategic plan. [The resulting review](#) found that (compared to the 37 of its 40 peer institutions for which data were available) Calvin is above average in acquisitions per student, circulation of print materials, and reference questions answered by library staff. On the other hand, the library compares unfavorably in total library expenditures per student (due to lower staff per student and lower librarian wages) and the number of hours the library is open (the library is closed on Sunday). In response to this review, the library reorganized its staff functions in the summer of 2013 and developed [a new strategic plan](#). A key component of that plan is to develop strategies that more fully integrate information literacy into Calvin's educational programs.

Technological support for teaching and learning is provided by Calvin Information and Technology (CIT). There are 118 "smart" classrooms, which include all necessary equipment to connect to the Internet and Calvin's network, and to display presentation material. Many classrooms have additional specialized technology as appropriate, including document cameras and smart boards. Classrooms have a phone, and instructors can contact CIT for immediate help in using classroom technology if necessary. The college's learning management system is Moodle (hosted by MoodleRooms). The three-member teaching and learning team of CIT supports and trains faculty in the use of technology, including Moodle, clickers, and automated test grading.

The Grand Rapids metropolitan area (population 1,050,000) provides the college with a rich selection of schools, agencies, and businesses in which to place interns. [The most recent report](#) from the Office for Career Development reports that 437 different sites were used for 1010 internships in 2013-14. This does not include the clinical/practicum placements for the [education](#), [nursing](#), [social work](#), and [speech pathology](#) programs, which encompassed 554 additional students. Because speech pathology clinical placements have become more difficult due to both the popularity of the program and increased competition from other schools, the college has developed [a plan](#) to open an additional

clinic in August 2015 in a building just north of the campus. This will both provide necessary clinical placements for students and also provide services needed in the community.

An important and unique instructional resource is the 150-acre Ecosystem Preserve located on northeastern boundary of the campus. The Ecosystem Preserve supports biology laboratories and several ongoing long-term research projects, including a box turtle study (since 1986) and a tree census (since 1974). The preserve also provides environmental education workshops for students majoring in a variety of areas as well as opportunities to serve as educational program leaders for the many education programs that are offered to the community at the preserve. [The director's report for 2014](#) summarizes the programs that the preserve supports.

Use of Research and Information Resources (subcomponent 5)

[The core curriculum document](#) identifies "the use of information technology" and "executing a research project" as two core skills. All students are introduced to the former in the Foundations of Information Technology core category. [The core document](#) recognizes the latter skill as complex and developmental, and it expects it to be directly addressed in four different core categories. (The core curriculum is further discussed in component 3B.)

Students receive direct instruction in the use of information resources in the required written rhetoric course, English 101 or English 100/102. Each section of this course is assigned a librarian who collaborates with the instructor and instructs the class in the use of both physical and electronic library resources. Librarians also are available to work with other courses as requested by instructors. The spring 2014 [evaluation of librarian class sessions](#) showed that students evaluated these sessions positively, and 23% of students eventually meet one-on-one with their librarian during the class.

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3.E - Core Component 3.E

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

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

Argument

The third purpose of the institution, as stated in [the expanded statement of mission](#), centers on community: "In this community, learning goes well beyond the classroom, making it possible and necessary that all campus life promote the educational tasks."

Student Life Division

The student life division offers programs that [promote development](#) in a context in which 92% of students are of traditional age (18-22 years old) and are full-time and undergraduate. Each of the division's programs has at least implicit learning goals for the students served.

Residence Life

Calvin provides three kinds of housing: residence halls, on-campus apartments, and Project Neighborhood houses.

All first- and second-year Calvin students not living at home must live in one of the seven residence halls. In the fall of 2014, 94% of first-year students lived in the residence halls. Each hall accommodates about 240 students in two wings: one male and one female. The residence life department provides considerable programming to meet its [five learning goals](#). Each hall has a full-time, non-student resident director living in the hall and supervising the overall operations, as well as several students involved in programming to promote the learning outcomes of residence life. Each student position has a required training program:

- [Resident assistants](#): a student who lives on each floor, trained and paid to promote the development of community on the floor
- [Barnabas Team members](#): students who lead Bible studies, promote worship, serve as mentors
- [Cultural Discerners](#): students who promote discussion of culture, including movies, concerts, and albums
- [Sustainability coordinators](#): students who promote sustainability in the residence hall
- [Community Partnership coordinators](#): students who facilitate an existing partnership between the dormitory and a Grand Rapids organization
- [Multicultural Affairs coordinator](#): students who help provide programming in support of the From Every Nation goals
- [Academic Help Ambassador](#) (a pilot program in 2014-15): students who work along with the Student Academic Services Office to assist students with finding academic resources and managing academic loads

- [Social Events Team members](#): students who provide programming that focuses extensively on floor events promoting community

Calvin's newest residence-hall wing, [Van Reken Hall](#), is home to three distinct intentional living-learning floors:

- [Outdoor Recreation and Creation Care](#) (exploring environmental sustainability and recreational leisure responsibility)
- [Grassroots](#) (exploring race and ethnicity at Calvin and more broadly in North America)
- [Honors](#)

Each floor is architecturally arranged to facilitate strong coed communities and to deepen the learning that happens there. Learning events and community practices invite students to think and act more intentionally in relation to the floor's theme. Each floor has an associated required class.

Approximately 500 upperclass students live in apartments on the east side of campus. There is less formal programming for these students, but a programming activities council in each apartment complex does plan several events each semester.

Project Neighborhood houses (six houses serving a total of 37 students) are an alternative housing opportunity for Calvin students to live in intentional Christian community in the city of Grand Rapids. Participants are committed to personal spiritual growth, structured time together as house residents, and service to the neighborhood. Each house has a formal connection to community organizations, and residents commit to serving the community with these organizations.

Campus Ministries

The chaplain, four associate chaplains, and a mentoring coordinator provide [programming](#) centered on faith formation and ecclesiastical development of students. A half-hour chapel service is offered each day at 10:00 a.m., during which no classes or other activities are scheduled. Although chapel is not required, it remains a popular feature of student life. Attendance varies from 100 to 1,000 depending on the day of week and the semester calendar; the average in 2013-14 was 384 per day. A worship service, called LOFT, is offered each Sunday evening and had an average attendance of 367 in 2013-14. Chapel and LOFT services are both Web-streamed and archived, and online viewing of these services increased dramatically last year.

An important goal of the worship program is to help students prepare as worship leaders for future service to the church. Over 100 students have formal worship leadership roles each year, and hundreds more participate in occasional worship leadership.

The campus ministries department coordinates a campus-wide Bible study each fall. This program, now in its fifth year, involves coordinated Bible studies of faculty, staff, and students (this year the campus studied the book of James) as well as worship themes in LOFT and chapel. An average of about 1,000 faculty, staff, and students participate each year.

The mentoring program of the department, now in its eleventh year, provides adult mentors for interested students in a one-on-one or group setting. This program continues to grow steadily, with about 300 students participating this year.

Campus Involvement and Leadership

This department is [responsible](#) for student organizations, weekend programming, the Student

Activities Office, and new-student orientation.

Over 60 student organizations support students' academic (e.g., the Pre-medical Club), cultural (e.g., the Animé Club), activity (e.g., the Running Club), and service interests (e.g., the Food Recovery Network). In addition, the Student Senate is an active body. Leadership development is an important focus of student organizations, and a representative from each student organization must attend all events of the Leadership Academy, a program for student leaders.

Weekend programming sponsored by this department focuses on providing late-night weekend events that promote community and give alternatives to off-campus parties.

The Student Activities Office helps students to engage with popular culture and to discern its positive and negative messages. It does this by providing a season of [concerts, films, lectures, and other programs](#) that allow Calvin students to interact with talented artists of a wide array of genres. It also sponsors student discussions, recruits and trains the Cultural Discerners, schedules talks with artists who perform on campus, and maintains an educational and informational website.

Sexuality Series

[The Sexuality Series](#) was launched in 2006, following the recommendations of a college task force on human sexuality and a campus climate study that revealed students' desire for more opportunities to learn about and discuss issues related to the integration of sexuality and Christianity outside of class. The series includes lectures, panel discussions, and other presentations (e.g., a dramatic play last year). The 2013-14 series included [32 events](#).

Collaboration of the Student Life and Academic Divisions

The student life division collaborates with faculty both formally and informally. One such important collaboration is the First-Year Seminar, which was revised in 2013 by a cross-divisional team and has instructors from both divisions. Its development was an assessment academy project, further described in component 4B.

Two representatives of the student life division are on the ad hoc committee that is developing an educational framework for the college. This educational framework is called for by the strategic plan and is described further in component 4B.

[The Service-Learning Center](#) is a department in the student life division but collaborates closely with faculty to provide service-learning opportunities, further described in component 1D.

Assessment of Cocurricular Programs

While most of the programs of the student life division have student learning outcomes, they are often implicit. Also, while the division routinely collects much data about its programs (as evidenced by the previously cited reports), the division does not have a strong tradition of directly assessing student learning. During 2014-15 the division engaged a consultant to work on developing more direct and explicit assessment of student learning outcomes for each of its programs. This project is described in component 4B.

Athletics

Calvin is a member of the NCAA Division III and subscribes wholeheartedly to [the Division III philosophy](#) that "colleges and universities in Division III place the highest priority on the overall

quality of the educational experience and on the successful completion of all students' academic programs." The Division III practices include no athletic scholarships, identical admission policies for athletes and nonathletes, reasonable limits on season lengths and out-of-season activities, and an emphasis on the integration of athletics with the campus culture and educational mission of the institution. Calvin is a member of the Michigan Intercollegiate Athletics Association (MIAA), the oldest athletic conference in the nation, and the MIAA has [a mission statement](#) consistent with that of the NCAA Division III.

To reinforce the priority on the academic experience of student athletes, the athletics program is housed in the academic division (the kinesiology department), and the two athletics directors report to the chair of the department and the provost. Calvin teams have historically been successful: Calvin is one of only six NCAA Division III schools to have placed in the top 25 of the Division III Learfield Cup competition every year of the cup's existence. (The Learfield Cup ranks institutions by performance in NCAA men's and women's postseason conference tournaments.) Calvin athletes have also been successful academically: Calvin is in the top 30 of all NCAA and NIAA institutions in the number of Capital One [All-American athletes](#). Approximately 10% of Calvin students [participate](#) in varsity sports (374 of 3,807 students in 2013-14).

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3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

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

Summary

Calvin's curricular and cocurricular programs are optimized for a student body that is almost exclusively undergraduate, full-time, of traditional age, and residential. The institution provides a wide range of traditional disciplinary programs as well as professional programs that are consistent with its mission as a comprehensive liberal arts institution. Students are supported both by extensive academic support mechanisms and by intentional cocurricular programming. Instruction is provided by a faculty that is largely full-time and tenure-track.

The next several years will present challenges to this model that the institution is now addressing. Section I.4 of the strategic plan ("Strengthen Calvin's Mission in Education") outlines key steps that the college is taking to address these challenges over the next several years.

Sources

There are no sources.

4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

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

4.A - Core Component 4.A

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

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

Argument

Program Review (subcomponent 1)

Calvin initiated a formal process for program review in 2007. Departments without external accreditation requirements were placed on [a ten-year rotation](#). Ten departments have completed one program review on this cycle. Programs with external accreditation use the self-study process and visit by peer reviewers as the program review. Most accrediting bodies require these reviews more frequently, on four- to six-year cycles.

[The review process](#) for programs without external accreditation has four steps: a departmental self-study that arises out of [departmental strategic planning](#), a self-study following stated guidelines, a visit by an external review team with required components, and a response by the department to the external review. Departments are encouraged to discuss the self-study process well in advance with both the dean for institutional effectiveness and their own academic dean so that the process can be adapted to serve their own unique needs.

Our experience with this first round of program review has been mixed. Several departments have conducted thorough self-studies and engaged excellent peer reviewers, resulting in honest appraisal and substantive concrete recommendations for program improvement. For example, a comprehensive [physics self-study](#) and thorough [external review](#) resulted in a [major curricular revision](#). As another example, [a review](#) of the International Development Studies program in the fall of 2014 gave the program considerable advice on the assessment of student learning. Unfortunately, a few departments have produced less comprehensive self-studies or have not been well-served by the external reviewers.

Other mechanisms stimulate departmental reflection and planning. For over 20 years, departments have submitted annual "State of the Department" reports. These are the principal year-to-year planning documents and, among other uses, inform the discussion between the department and its dean regarding budget and personnel issues. The report follows a standard template and consists of three components: [a general section](#), [a section on personnel](#), and [an assessment report](#) (described in core component 4B). Comprehensive data on [program enrollment](#), [majors](#), and [graduates](#) is available in the college's intranet portal to support this reporting.

During the calendar year 2013 the college engaged in a "prioritization" process. This process was initiated by the president after he had projected an unsustainable economic trajectory. (A detailed description of this trajectory is in core component 5A.) This prioritization process was designed to uncover much of the same sort of information as a program review but was especially focused on resource utilization. Most departments scheduled for a program review in 2013 postponed that process in order to engage in the prioritization process. The prioritization process ([template](#); [CAS department submission](#); [psychology department submission](#); [religion department submission](#)) was loosely patterned after the one proposed by Robert C. Dickeson (*Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services: Reallocating Resources to Achieve Strategic Balance* [San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010]). The result of the prioritization process identified [several programs as in need of reengineering](#). Changes proposed in this process will happen over a three- to five-year period. Some changes have already been proposed in response (e.g., the graduate education program has proposed [a major restructuring](#) of its programs as called for in the prioritization recommendations).

Externally Accredited Programs (subcomponents 1 and 5)

Calvin has long encouraged programs to seek external accreditation by professional organizations, where appropriate, and has several [externally accredited](#) programs. Accredited programs include

- Computer Science (ABET-CAC, since 2001)

The baccalaureate program in computer science is [accredited](#) by the Computing Accreditation Commission of ABET. The most recent site visit was in the fall of 2014, and the decision and report are expected in the spring of 2015.

- Chemistry (American Chemical Society, since 1958)

The chemistry department offers a major program that is [accredited](#) by the American Chemical Society through 2015.

- Education (TEAC, since 2012)

The education programs at the [undergraduate](#) (see [audit](#)) and [graduate](#) (see [audit](#)) levels are accredited by the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (previous accreditation was by

NCATE). The most recent site visit was 2013, and the programs are accredited through 2018.

- Engineering (ABET-EAC, since 1987)

The engineering program is [accredited](#) by the Engineering Accreditation Council of ABET. The most recent site visit was in 2013, and the program is accredited through 2020.

- Music (NASM, since 1985)

The Bachelor of Arts in Music and the Bachelor of Music Education are [accredited](#) by National Association of Schools of Music through 2017.

- Nursing (CCNE, since 2004)

The nursing program is [accredited](#) by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education through 2019 (see [review](#)). The program is also licensed by the Board of Nursing of the State of Michigan.

- Speech Pathology and Audiology (CAA, since 2011)

The master's program in speech-language pathology has [candidacy status](#) with the Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology through 2016 (see [site-visit report](#)).

- Social Work (CSWE, since 1992)

The social work program leading to the BSW degree is [accredited](#) by the Council on Social Work Education through 2021 (see [site-visit report](#)).

Integrity of Credit Awarding (subcomponents 2 and 3)

The vast majority of credit (92% in 2013–2014) that Calvin awards is for regular Calvin courses taught to current students. Other forms of credit awarded are transfer credits; credit awarded for AP, IP, or CLEP tests; and credit for courses taught in consortial and contractual programs in which Calvin participates. Calvin has [a policy](#) for awarding credit for "life experience," developed principally for a now-discontinued degree completion program, but no credit has actually been awarded under this policy for several years.

Policies concerning transfer credit appear in [the catalog](#) and, in greater detail, on [the "Transfer" webpage](#). Transfer policies are overseen by [the Academic Standards Committee](#), and major changes to these policies require Faculty Senate approval. A transfer coordinator in the registrar's office administers the policies. Transfer credit is accepted only from accredited institutions (with the exception of some international transfer credit), and credit is given only for courses "similar in nature to courses offered at Calvin." A grade of C or better is required for a transfer course (but grades in transfer courses are not included in as student's GPA). A maximum of 70 hours of transfer credit from community colleges is accepted, but regardless of the number of hours of transfer credit received, a student must complete at least 30 of the last 60 hours and four upper-level courses in their major at Calvin.

Current Calvin students may take courses at other colleges and receive transfer credit, which must be approved in advance. [A standard form](#) exists for that purpose. In cases where that transfer credit will

meet a specific program requirement, the credit must be approved by the student's advisor or the department chair of the relevant department.

The college awards credit for [AP](#) and [IB](#) tests, for which standards are recommended by the Academic Standards Committee (in consultation with affected departments) and approved by Faculty Senate. The college also accepts a single [CLEP](#) test: the Calculus with Elementary Functions Test (a score of at least 50 is deemed equivalent to Mathematics 171). No more than 32 semester hours of credit may be received in this manner.

Calvin students can also receive [credit by examination](#) for any course offered as deemed appropriate by the department. The department constructs and administers the examination, and the student receives a letter grade. It is expected that standards for awarding grades for courses in this way be similar to those used in the regular offerings of the same course.

Students may also receive credit for off-campus courses taught by other institutions through consortial and contractual arrangements administered by the off-campus programs office. (These programs are at most one semester long, and no student can complete more than 25% of a degree program through a contractual or consortial relationship.) The off-campus programs themselves are described in more detail in core component 3A. The director of off-campus programs and the Off-Campus Programs Committee are responsible for administering these programs and ensuring the integrity of the credit awarded in them. The director conducts a thorough review and evaluation (including a site visit) of each Calvin-run off-campus program every third year. (In the 2013-14 year the director reviewed the programs in [France](#), Honduras, and Spain. These off-campus programs are governed by contractual arrangements that the director and the sponsoring department negotiate with the host institution.

Approximately 20-30 students each semester participate in off-campus programs that are not administered by Calvin. Consortial and contractual arrangements govern each of these programs. In a [preliminary application](#) students must list the courses that they intend to take and receive the permission of their academic advisor. Additionally, the chair of the relevant department must pre-approve any course used to meet a major or minor requirement. The off-campus programs office then must approve the application in order for the student to participate.

Authority over Programs and Faculty (subcomponent 4)

The faculty ensures the quality and rigor of its educational program by the various approval and review processes of its governance system.

New [courses](#) and [programs](#) must be approved by the Faculty Senate on recommendation from either the [Educational Policy Committee](#) or the [Interim Term Committee](#). The proposal for a new course must include student learning outcomes and expectations of students. It must also include a description of where the course fits in the curriculum, including pre- and corequisites, course level, and relationship to currently existing courses. Courses that meet core (i.e., general education) requirements must also be reviewed and approved by the [Core Curriculum Committee](#) to ensure that the course addresses the learning outcomes of the core category. Courses that meet requirements in any teacher education program must also be approved by the [Teacher Education Committee](#). Programs that are offered off-campus must be reviewed and approved by the [Off-Campus Program Committee](#). Finally, all proposals must be reviewed by the [Assessment Committee](#), which reviews student learning outcomes as well as the mechanisms by which these might be assessed. As interim-term courses are generally one-time offerings, the approval process is streamlined; still, all such courses require Faculty Senate approval.

Educational policies beyond course and program requirements (e.g., advanced placement or transfer policies) are reviewed and recommended to the faculty by the Academic Standards Committee.

Responsibility for ensuring that faculty members are qualified to teach their assigned courses is shared by the department chair, the appropriate academic dean, and the provost. [The faculty handbook](#) details the qualifications needed for each kind of faculty appointment and the process for making such appointments. The institution does not rely heavily on contingent faculty (fewer than 15% of its sections) but has devoted considerable attention in the last several years to procedures for [hiring contingent faculty](#), including careful attention to faculty qualifications. The college has a policy of requiring faculty members to have a higher degree in the area of teaching than the level of instruction (e.g., a master's degree for undergraduate courses); however, the institution occasionally employs contingent faculty who do not have such a degree but nevertheless have unique qualifications by reason of professional experience. In each case of such an appointment, the department chair documents and the dean verifies that the experience is [appropriate and sufficient](#) for teaching the particular course for which the instructor is assigned. Faculty qualifications and hiring are further described in component 3C.

Several departments have internship programs that require students to work closely with a professional in the work environment. In each case, the internship course has a faculty member who is the instructor of record and works closely with the supervising professional in creating course requirements and expectations and assigns grades. All such internship courses are approved through the regular course approval process and therefore have clear expectations for students in terms of student learning outcomes as well as time spent on tasks.

A few of the college's courses are offered to students in local high schools with which the college has a long-standing relationship (six sections in the fall of 2014, at three different high schools). In the fall of 2014, the Faculty Senate adopted [procedures](#) to ensure that three courses are appropriately supervised. (See component 3A for a discussion of this program.)

Evaluating the Success of Graduates (subcomponent 6)

The Office of Career Development prepares a report every year on the first postgraduate activity of each class. This report is prepared following guidelines for such "first destination" surveys provided by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE). Several years of this report are available to current and prospective students on the Web (and are linked to from a variety of webpages). [The most recent](#) of these, based on the graduates of 2013, uses new standards and protocols adopted by NACE. This report includes data on 86.5% of the graduates of that year and contains data on employment and graduate school, lists of graduate schools and employers, and typical job titles of new graduates. The data are broken down by major and program. The approximate distribution of first postgraduate activity for Calvin graduates (within six months of graduation) is 72% employed, 25% in graduate school. Only 4% of the employed students report being underemployed.

Many departments, including all the professional programs (e.g., [speech pathology and audiology](#), [engineering](#), [business](#)), collect, use, and publish data on their graduates, often to meet reporting requirements of accreditors as well as to inform students on such issues as test-passing rates. The assessment plans of most programs include formal mechanisms for collecting and using data on graduates' success for program improvement (see component 4B).

It is more challenging to evaluate the success of graduates over the long term. Calvin has over 50,000 living alumni. The college has invested considerable effort in [a "young alumni" survey](#) that is

professionally administered by the college's Center for Social Research (see [report FAQ](#)). Each year, all alumni of one, four, and ten years who can be located are asked to participate in a Web-based survey. The survey has both a short and a long form and is prepopulated with basic information on the respondent so that the survey can be customized for each respondent based on their major at graduation. The survey includes questions regarding employment but also asks respondents to reflect on their education and to evaluate the curriculum and the services provided by the college. Individual departments can customize the questions that are asked of their graduates and [receive an individual report](#). Many departments consult this survey when evaluating programs (e.g., before a major curricular revision), and several incorporate these results into their State of the Department reports. While this survey has proved useful to many departments, the declining response rate over time (20.4% [in 2014](#)) and the need for finer-grained data have led us to consider a major revision of this survey. Discussions concerning the nature of this survey are underway.

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- Program Review Guidelines
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- State of Department General Sections 2014
- State of Department Personnel Section 2014
- TEAC Graduate Audit 2013
- TEAC Graduate Initial Accreditation 2013
- TEAC Undergrad Initial Accreditation 2013
- TEAC Undergraduate Audit 2013
- Teacher Education Committee Mandate
- Ten-Year Department Review Cycle
- Transfer Credit Pre-approval Form

4.B - Core Component 4.B

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

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

Argument

In 2004 the HLC evaluation team found that although Calvin had made "extensive efforts to promote a culture of assessment[,] ... the acceptance of and use in planning was uneven across academic departments." The team called for a progress report on assessment documenting the development of measurable learning outcomes, a balance of quantitative with qualitative and self-reported data, and appropriately coordinated assessment activities. In the report's advancement section the team listed [five specific recommendations](#):

1. Developing measurable learning outcomes at the program and course level
2. Obtaining quantitative data
3. Creating feedback loops
4. Centralizing the administration of academic assessment
5. Implementing a formal program review protocol

Calvin submitted [the progress report](#) in 2007. Both in developing that report and in the activities of the subsequent years, including participating in the HLC Academy for the Assessment of Student Learning, the college has made substantial progress on assessing student learning.

Administration of Assessment Programs

In 2005, partly in response to the evaluation team's advice to centralize assessment administration, the college established a new position, the director of assessment and institutional research; in 2008 this was converted to a dean-level position, [the dean for institutional effectiveness](#). The dean chairs the college's assessment committee and serves as an assessment resource to faculty and departments. The dean also manages all college surveys, such as the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and the alumni survey. The dean consults with individuals and groups on assessment-related matters and has a small budget to support assessment-related projects. (Routine assessment costs, like major-field tests, are adequately supported from department budgets, but departments occasionally have one-time projects requiring additional resources.) The dean also offers assessment workshops and makes presentations at the annual department chair retreats (e.g., [Assessment 101](#), for those just getting started in assessment, and the presentation given to the [department chair retreat in 2012](#)).

In the spring of 2015, President Le Roy created a new position, the director of institutional research and analytics. This position will provide additional support for assessment (e.g., administering all-

college surveys).

[The Assessment Committee](#) oversees assessment at the college. It comprises four faculty members, a representative from the student life division, the dean for institutional effectiveness, and a student. The committee reviews every proposal for a new or revised program, or course, the annual assessment reports of programs, and reports on core-curriculum assessment projects. In 2004 the Assessment Committee focused mainly on compliance. In the last several years the committee has begun to focus more intentionally on helping faculty and staff improve their assessment of student learning. As a result, the committee reviews proposals at an earlier stage of their development and provides feedback to the proposers on how to improve the assessment-related aspects of the proposal. (This feedback is often informal, delivered by e-mail or an in-person visit from a committee member. A more formal example is [this response to the history department](#) on a set of controversial course proposals.) The committee reads annual departmental reports on assessment activities and gives advice for improving assessment processes and reporting. In the most recent cycle of program-assessment reporting, all departments received a memo (sample [here](#)) from the committee with general observations about assessment reporting and specific comments for that department.

The Assessment Committee works closely with the three committees that oversee the curriculum: the Educational Policy Committee, the Core Curriculum Committee, and the Interim Term Committee. In the last five years the Assessment Committee completed the following tasks:

- With the Educational Policy Committee it revised the [course](#) and [program](#) proposal templates and processes to make student learning outcomes (SLOs) required and their assessment central.
- With the Core Curriculum Committee it developed three core-assessment projects (described below).
- With the Interim Term Committee it revised [the interim-course proposal form](#) to include SLOs.
- With the Professional Status Committee it revised [the course evaluation form](#) to include student self-assessment of learning gains.

Program Assessment

In 2004 only about half of all programs had student learning outcomes; now all do. Since all proposals for new programs and program revisions must now include SLOs and an assessment plan, many of these sets of SLOs are new or recently revised. Due to the variety of programs and the constraints imposed on externally accredited programs (many of which have long, prescribed lists of SLOs), there are no formal requirements on the number or nature of SLOs. However, departments are expected to demonstrate that their programs' learning outcomes fit with the college's mission, with Reformed Christian commitments, and with commitments to diversity.

All programs report on assessment activities each year. These reports do not have a prescribed format, to allow departments—especially those with accredited programs—latitude to develop reports that serve their own needs. The reports are submitted by the chair in the fall, along with the state-of-the-department report, but often are prepared by others (e.g., by a curriculum committee). Our claims about the state of program assessment below are based largely on the reports from 2013-14.

All programs are expected to have developed both direct measures of student learning for each outcome and, as appropriate, indirect measures. While all programs that have been recently revised or introduced have direct measures for every outcome, a few others still do not have direct measures for some outcomes. One reason for this is that we have encouraged departments to implement measures as soon as they are developed rather than wait until all measures are in place. (This strategy was called the “horizontal approach” to assessment in the college's 2007 [progress report on assessment](#).) A

typical example is the history department, which has used the senior capstone course project to effectively measure several program outcomes for several successive years (see the department's [assessment report](#) from 2014) but has not yet developed measures for some other program outcomes.

The minimal expectation is that each year, every program should assess at least one program-level outcome using at least one direct measure of student learning. Most programs do much more. [A summary](#) of the reported assessment activities for the 2013-14 academic year indicates that 36 of 43 programs used some direct measures of student learning to assess at least one outcome during the year. (Though the college reports 84 programs to IPEDS, some of these are combined for the purposes of assessment, resulting in 43 assessment plans.) The most common direct measure (used in 24 of the 43 programs) was one or more course-embedded assessment instruments, most often a written assignment in the program's capstone course (e.g., [history](#)). Several departments use comprehensive examinations at the end of a program, either a nationally constructed and normed test such as the ETS major field tests (5 programs; e.g., [biology](#)), a department-constructed test (4 programs; e.g., [psychology](#)), or a professional licensure test (6 programs; e.g., [nursing](#)). Most programs requiring internships use evaluation by a supervisor (4 programs; e.g., [education](#)).

The visiting team in 2004 found almost no evidence that assessment findings were used for program improvement ("closing the loop"). For several programs, the collection of data still remains largely disconnected from curricular improvement. However, there is also evidence that many programs do use these data to inform discussions about curriculum and pedagogy and ultimately to justify curricular revisions. The following are specific examples of how departments responded to findings in the most recent cycle (2013-14) of data collection:

- [The art studio program](#) developed four goals for pedagogy and departmental programming.
- [The French department](#) adopted new textbooks more closely aligned to their SLOs.
- [The economics department](#) noted that students did not perform well in macroeconomics on the major field test and has initiated discussions about how to address this. The department also completed a separate assessment project on the macroeconomics course, and the instructors are revising the syllabus on the basis of these results.
- [The engineering department](#) developed a long list of action items based on the year's assessment activities, including specific improvements in four different courses. It also appointed ad hoc committees to investigate specific issues uncovered by the evidence.
- [The psychology department](#) submitted a program-revision proposal that requires students to complete a "neuroscience-related" course and narrows students' choices among upper-level courses, ensuring that students take courses in all major areas of the discipline.
- [The philosophy department](#) decided to extend its analysis of student writing in the capstone course to an introductory and intermediate course to get a better idea of student development throughout the program.

General Education ("Core") Assessment

The college has been less successful in sustaining an effective program of assessing the core curriculum (the curriculum is described in component 3B). The Core Curriculum Committee has developed assessment plans on at least three occasions (in [2000](#), [2005](#), and [2008](#)) since the core was instituted in 2001, but only pieces of each plan have been successfully implemented. In a report to the Educational Policy Committee outlining some of the problems with the current core, an ad hoc joint subcommittee of the Core Curriculum and Educational Policy Committees [identified](#) the difficulty of assessing the core and the subsequent lack of assessment data as a major challenge to be addressed in any core revision.

The major difficulty in implementing effective core assessment is the complexity and structure of the core. The core curriculum proposal did not start with a succinct list of student learning outcomes but rather identified the goals of the core curriculum in terms of 15 knowledge domains, 14 specific skills, and 14 virtues that the core was to address. The core itself consists of 19 categories of courses. [A curricular map](#) assigns the knowledge, skills, and virtues to the categories. Adding to the complexity of this structure is that each category is responsible for several of the knowledge, skills, and virtues, and each of these is assigned to several categories.

The most successful core curriculum assessment project has been that of the course required of all first-year students during their January interim term. This course, called Developing a Christian Mind, is referred to as the “Core Gateway” and plays a crucial role in the core. Since 2006, the course has used a common assignment and [a common rubric](#) across the more than 40 sections for assessment purposes. Papers, randomly sampled from all sections, are evaluated independently by a second reader (in early years a team of retired faculty members served this function; a dedicated coordinator now does this). The annual report of the DCM coordinator to the Core Curriculum Committee uses these and other data to make recommendations regarding the course to the committee. In [his most recent report](#), the director made the following conclusion concerning the course: “In short, in my opinion the theological framework as well as the faculty leadership and timing of DCM needs to be fundamentally reconsidered and realigned with the full body of the Reformed tradition, with the needs of the day, and with the developmental stages of our students.”

In the spring of 2012, the Assessment Committee urged the Core Curriculum Committee to resume the assessment plan of 2008, which called for assessing each core category every fourth year. The Assessment Committee [proposed a model project](#) for assessing the Integrative Studies category. [The report to the Core Curriculum Committee](#) in the fall of 2013 outlines the successes and failures of that project. Briefly, the project was successful in promoting an increased alignment of courses with the student learning outcomes of the category and some integrative studies courses were revised as a consequence. However, several of the participating faculty ultimately did not produce direct evidence of student learning.

In the fall of 2013, the Core Curriculum Committee decided to assess the three core categories: Biblical Foundations I, Theological Foundations I, and Written Rhetoric. Working in cooperation with the dean for institutional effectiveness, the religion department and the English department developed plans to assess these categories. [The final report](#) to the committee for the religion project suggested that major changes to the courses were not needed, but it documented a few minor changes that were being incorporated in their courses and in the assessment instruments themselves. The Written Rhetoric project was implemented as a two-year project. The intermediate results document [the process](#) and [a new rubric](#) that was developed for assessing student essays based on the category’s SLOs. The final results of this project are expected in March 2015.

Assessment projects in two additional core categories (Philosophical Foundations, and History of the West and the World) are being developed this year.

As described in component 3B, the Core Curriculum Committee and the Educational Policy Committee have presented three models to the faculty for a revised core. In May 2015 the faculty will choose one of these for further development, including the creation of SLOs for the core.

Assessing the First-Year Experience (Academy for the Assessment of Student Learning Project)

Calvin joined the Academy for the Assessment of Student Learning in the spring of 2011 as its Quality Initiative. The broad goal of the project as described in [the action plan](#) submitted to the

academy roundtable was “to assess the effectiveness of our first-year program, paying particular attention to the two core courses that are required of all students in the first year.” A cross-divisional team with ten members worked on the project. Four principal results were [reported](#) at the Academy Results Forum in June 2014:

1. [A set of student learning outcomes](#) for the first year. These learning outcomes are intended to guide both curricular and cocurricular programs for first-year students. For example, these learning outcomes are highlighted as foundational principles in the proposal currently under consideration to revise the core curriculum.
2. A new course, [First-Year Seminar](#), to replace Prelude. This one-semester-hour course is taken by all new students in their first semester. Although the committee originally intended to propose some modest revisions to Prelude, the development of the learning outcomes and subsequent assessment of Prelude convinced the committee that it should develop a completely different course, starting with the SLOs for the first year. The course has now been offered twice (in the falls of 2013 and 2014).
3. The use of [student assessment of learning gains](#) as an indirect method of assessment. While such self-assessment is not direct evidence of student learning, it did [provide insight](#) into what students thought they were learning. Based partly on this experience, the Professional Status Committee changed the student course evaluation form to include student assessment of learning gains for every course.
4. The development of a common language for talking about first-year student programming across academic divisions. The SLOs give us a way to talk about programming for first-year students using objective criteria. Since these discussions occur across divisions, they are often sensitive, but having agreed-upon SLOs has made these discussions more productive.

To continue work on these goals, the team that attended the academy roundtable developed [a sustainability plan](#) for the project. Progress on this plan slowed when the vice president for student life left the college in September 2014, to become president of the CCCU, and was replaced by an interim vice president. Also, the provost was new as of July 1. Nevertheless, a multidivisional team has been formed and is meeting to address the issues and opportunities raised by the assessment project.

Course-Level Assessment

Most courses in 2004 did not have student learning outcomes, and syllabi containing SLOs were rare. That has substantially improved. In a study of 100 randomly chosen syllabi from the fall semester of 2014, at least 85 included SLOs (depending on [how generous a definition](#) one uses). A more recent trend is to explicitly identify in the syllabus the course-level assessment activities that assess specific SLOs; 7 of the 100 syllabi did this (e.g., [Psychology 151](#), [Biology 364](#), and [Spanish 301](#)). This mapping of SLOs to course activities is now required of [interim-term course proposals](#).

Several initiatives described above have contributed to greater attention to course level assessment:

- The provost’s [annual communication to faculty](#) about elements that must appear in syllabi includes a reminder that SLOs must be in all syllabi.
- New course proposals must include both SLOs and measures for assessing them.
- Since the spring of 2013, the course evaluation form has asked students to assess their learning gains on five SLOs that the instructor provides. (In the most recently completed semester, just over 90% of course instructors complied with this requirement).
- Every core category has [SLOs](#) that are appropriate for its courses.

Assessment of Other Programs

While Calvin has made considerable progress in assessing student learning in curricular programs, not much attention has been given to assessing learning that happens in cocurricular programs or in other programs that do not fit neatly into the academic departments (such as the library or athletics programs). The college's new strategic plan calls for [increased attention](#) to the assessment of student learning in these programs, and the college is already addressing this issue.

The student life division has many programs that have student learning goals, at least implicitly. Although the division has a long history of documenting the success of its programs (see component 3E for a list of programs and such documentation), it has few direct measures of student learning. The division understands this, and in the fall of 2014 it engaged [a consultant](#) to direct a two-year project to develop assessment plans for each department in the division. This consultant was chosen because she had successfully developed a strong assessment program for the student life division at a Christian college that is very similar to Calvin. The consultant has already met with all division heads to evaluate [current practices and capacity for improvement](#). The division is currently working in three areas:

- A team is developing a statement of the role and philosophy of the division.
- The deans and directors in the division are reading and discussing the literature concerning student life assessment.
- Each dean and director is developing one assessment “project” to implement this current year.

[The library's new strategic plan](#) instructs the library to “integrate information literacy into Calvin's educational mission” and to “strengthen library programs and services through outcomes-based assessment.” As part of its reorganization, the library established an assessment committee that meets regularly and works with the dean for institutional effectiveness. The committee is developing a plan to define and assess the learning outcomes of the library and, more generally, to work with others to integrate information literacy into the curriculum. A task force is working with the Rhetoric across the Curriculum Committee to integrate information literacy into the college's written rhetoric program.

The Educational Framework

[Section I.1 of the new strategic plan](#) calls for the college to “articulate and implement an educational framework which embodies our current educational philosophy and enhances and supports Calvin's Reformed Christian mission in higher education.” This goal comes from the realization that the institution does not have a succinct list of goals that help align student learning outcomes across programs and levels. (Because of this, the various lists of SLOs described above for programs, core, first-year, and cocurricular programs are not well coordinated or necessarily aligned). Many faculty members might point out that the expanded statement of mission provides this framework, but [the relevant statement](#) in the mission is too long and not sufficiently concrete to provide such coordination or alignment.

A committee worked over the fall semester of 2014 to produce a draft educational framework. The committee includes the chairs of the Educational Policy Committee, Core Committee, and Assessment Committee; two representatives from the student life division; and the provost. [A draft](#) of four college-level goals has been shared with faculty committees and the Senate, and a town hall meeting for the entire community to discuss the framework was held in February 2015. This framework is expected to be finalized and adopted when the Faculty Senate meets in May 2015.

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4.C - Core Component 4.C

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

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

Argument

Institutional Process Related to Retention, Persistence, and Completion (subcomponent 4)

The [Student Retention Subcommittee](#) of the Enrollment Management Committee is responsible to "monitor, evaluate and support retention strategies and activities for current students." This committee has representatives from all offices that support student retention efforts and is chaired by the student retention officer. It regularly reviews retention and persistence data and advises the college concerning retention initiatives.

The college follows the IPEDS methodology of tracking first-time, full-time students for reporting retention and graduation data. This methodology is appropriate because the number of students not included in this definition is small relative to the size of the student body. (The college enrolls approximately 100 new transfer students at any class level each year, as compared to approximately 1,000 first-time, full-time students.) For historical comparison purposes in reporting persistence and graduation rates internally, a few exclusions allowed by IPEDS are not used. These exclusions amount to less than 1% of the first-year class, and the difference between rates computed by IPEDS definitions and the internal definition is usually not more than 0.1%. For the purposes of goal setting and comparison to peer institutions, the retention subcommittee recently adopted the practice of using three-year averages to smooth the random fluctuations of individual year results.

The college has two graduate programs. The directors of each program are responsible for monitoring the persistence and completion of these programs by students. [Completion rates](#) for the MA in speech pathology are reported to the accrediting organization and on the Web. (Completion rates for the first two classes were 100%.) Completion rates for the MEd are monitored but are not an important metric for measuring program quality, as most individuals taking courses in the program are in-service teachers who do not necessarily intend to complete a degree (or to complete it at Calvin). Approximately half of those starting the MEd program eventually complete it. (Of the 162 students who started the program between 2005 and 2009, 78 have completed and 25 are still taking courses.)

Retention and Graduation Data (subcomponent 2)

The institution has computed retention rates for first-year students and graduation rates using the same methodology and definitions since at least 1992, and reports these to the entire campus community. Retention rates are relatively constant, having stayed in the range of 86%–89% for each of the past 15 years. Similarly, six-year graduation rates have ranged from 69% to 77% for the last 15 cohorts and have risen slowly over that time. These data are also readily available on the Web. [The one-page form](#) of the "Day 10" retention and graduation report provides ten years of data on retention and graduation rates both overall and also for significant subpopulations. Changes to the reports over the last 20 years have been made principally to track new subpopulations of interest (e.g., international students) and to reflect changes or refinements in category definitions such as the definition of AHANA (African, Hispanic, Asian, and Native American) students to reflect new federal guidelines for collecting race/ethnicity data.

In 2013, as an outgrowth of the strategic planning process, the college worked with an external consultant to define [a set of 40 peer institutions](#) to use for comparison purposes. In 2013–14 the retention subcommittee undertook an extensive comparison of Calvin's retention and graduation rates relative to these peer institutions. Generally, [this analysis](#) shows that Calvin is above the median of peers but below the 75th percentile of peers in both retention and graduation rates.

Besides reporting these data on an aggregate basis, the college collects data on individuals to attempt to explain and/or predict nonretention. All students leaving the college without graduating are asked to complete the online [nonreturning students survey](#). This survey asks students not returning to Calvin to select reasons from various categories (academic, environmental, personal, employment related, or financial). All first-year students complete the CSI ([College Student Inventory](#), Noel-Levitz), which employs predictive modeling to estimate a student's [proneness](#) to dropping out.

Goals for Retention, Persistence, and Graduation (subcomponent 1)

While Calvin pays careful attention to retention and graduation data, as demonstrated above, and responds to changes in these rates, the institution has not had a practice of establishing formal, numerical goals for retention, persistence, and graduation. For example, the [2012 strategic enrollment management plan](#) called for improving overall retention and graduation rates but did not set a formal goal or argue that improved rates were attainable.

In 2013–14, as part of the strategic planning process, the retention subcommittee identified the need to set explicit goals for retention and completion, particularly for students in certain subpopulations. [The strategic plan \(I.2.a\)](#) itself calls for the institution to adopt retention goals across "all sub-populations" of students. In its final report, the retention subcommittee ultimately [identified five key subpopulations](#) (AHANA, Access, marginal, nonlegacy, Pell) and defined retention and graduation goals for each of these subpopulations and for the college overall. These goals and [a timeline for a retention project](#) were endorsed by the president's cabinet in the fall of 2014.

The overall retention goal set by the subcommittee is to secure a position within the top quartile of our peer institutions within three years. While several of the peer institutions in this top quartile are considerably more selective than Calvin, this goal is realistic, as it entails an increase in retention rate of less than 1%. Similarly, the six-year graduation rate goal is to secure a position within the top quartile within eight years (an appropriate time frame for a six-year graduation rate goal).

The goals for several of the subpopulations are more ambitious and will require new retention strategies. The retention goal for each of the five identified subpopulations is to halve the gap between

the retention rate for the subpopulation and the overall retention rate. Meeting the goals for students in the Access programs will be the greatest challenge: Access students do not meet the college's admission standards but are admitted because they show evidence of academic promise. The Access program provides considerable support to help these students succeed, including special classes, a reduced course load in the first term, and a secondary advisor (see component 3D). Even so, the retention rate of this group is 68%. Improving retention to the goal of 77% for this group over three years will likely require new strategies.

Responding to the Data (subcomponent 3)

The retention subcommittee meets regularly and reviews retention data at the aggregate and individual student level. The subcommittee has representatives from all programs that contribute to student success, including those that serve subpopulations that are retained at lower rates (e.g., AHANA and Access students). Consequently, retention data continuously informs all these programs. However, the ambitious retention goals described above will require more explicit and formal coordination.

The institution has devoted considerable effort in the past few years to the early identification of students at risk of dropping out as well as providing appropriate interventions. The CSI has proved to be an important tool in this regard. Beginning in 2013, instructors in the First-Year Seminar have been furnished with each student's CSI report ([sample](#)). This report provides information such as the student's need for and receptivity to various kinds of institutional resources, and prepares instructors to meet individually with each student in the fourth week of this course. The advisor of each first-year student also receives CSI results and information on how to use these. Staff in the residence halls also receive a list of students who are identified as [dropout prone](#), and are expected to engage with these students in the dormitory as appropriate.

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4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

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

Summary

When the commission last visited the college in 2004, the team noted several weaknesses in the college's use of evidence to improve its academic programs. The college has since made substantial progress:

- A program review process is now in its eighth year and has resulted in significant improvements to several programs.
- All academic programs have course- and program-level learning outcomes and regularly assess these outcomes to inform curricular and pedagogical improvements.
- Retention and graduation goals have been identified for the student population not only as a whole but, more importantly, for five key subpopulations of students.

While program- and course-level assessment have substantially improved, assessment of general education and cocurricular programs has not become a routine component of program improvement efforts. And while retention and graduation rates are stable and acceptable, the new goals for targeted subpopulations are ambitious and will require substantial effort. Part I of the strategic plan ("Strengthen Calvin's Mission in Education," especially sections I.1 and I.2) describes key steps that the college will take to address these issues over the next several years.

Sources

There are no sources.

5 - Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

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

5.A - Core Component 5.A

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

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

Argument

Fiscal Resources

Audited financial statements for fiscal years [2013](#) and [2014](#) show that the institution is financially healthy. The composite financial indices for the past two fiscal years have been [4.46](#) (FY 2013) and [4.08](#) (FY 2014; a longer history of financial indicators is [here](#).) While these values are lower than [the strategic plan's goal of 6.0](#), they are indicators of a financially stable institution. The college's endowment is \$122 million ([as of 12/30/2014](#)).

Soon after President Le Roy took office on July 1, 2012, he learned that the institution faced serious immediate annual budget problems that, left unaddressed, would balloon in 2017 because of debt service schedules. Over the two academic years 2012-13 and 2013-14, he instituted several initiatives to change the processes and culture of the institution around budget and finance issues and lead the college toward financial sustainability.

By mid-August 2012 President Le Roy had ordered [an initial internal review of the college's financial situation](#), and in early September he informed the board's executive and finance committees of initial findings. On October 1 he commissioned an independent financial review task force (FRTF) to conduct its own investigation expanding on the college's internal review. The FRTF [reported](#) in early December and recommended several changes for the financial work of the college. The president outlined this situation in [a report](#) to the entire college community in February 2013. Briefly, the situation resulted primarily from a failed financial strategy for financing new construction:

- Since 1997 the college had constructed several major buildings using a borrow-to-build strategy

while investing project gifts hoping to raise additional funds.

- These investments did not do as well as expected, and investment earnings were not nearly enough to cover debt-interest payments.
- The final cost of the building projects exceeded the funds raised.

By 2007 the college had accumulated \$116 million in debt. While this debt was not excessive for a college of Calvin's size, there was no sustainable plan to service the debt. The college restructured its debt, first in 2007 and again in 2012, into interest-only agreements that will expire in 2017: roughly \$6.2 million in debt service is due each year until then. The plan was to service the debt by liquidating plant funds (essentially, the funds raised for the buildings), by using the unrestricted operating budget (estimated to contribute about \$1 million annually), and from gifts and other interest income. The situation facing the college in 2017 was concerning. The most likely scenario was that the \$115 million debt would be refinanced over a twenty-year period. Without administrative action, annual debt service payments would jump from \$6 million to \$9 million as principal payment commenced, while at the same time the plant fund would be largely liquidated. Without action, the projected additional demand on the unrestricted operating budget would be approximately \$8 million.

Over the two years of 2012-13 and 2013-14, President Le Roy worked with both the college's Planning and Priorities Committee (PPC) and the board to develop a five-point plan to service and reduce the college's debt. This plan was adopted by the board in January 2014 (cf. minutes, [art. 28F](#)). In the first year of executing this plan (2013-14), the college began to accomplish key components. As of December 2014, the college had raised \$28.9 million earmarked to pay down the long-term debt and had sold two large noncore real estate holdings. In the spring of 2014, the college's CFO [reported](#) to the board that based on progress to date, debt is scheduled to be reduced to \$74 million by July 2017, at which point debt service will be fully incorporated in the operating budget.

Three initiatives, on three different time frames, were crucial:

- A disciplined process for constructing a yearly budget that is balanced and includes all required debt service.
- A prioritization process that identified programs to be restructured or eliminated to achieve \$4.5 million in budgetary relief by 2017.
- A strategic planning process to identify strategic priorities that will be addressed over the time frame 2014-2019.

The prioritization and strategic planning processes are described in detail in component 5C.

Budgeting

Prior to 2012-13, a final budget for the year was adopted only after the fall census (thus at least four months into the fiscal year). Furthermore, that budget included only about \$1 million of the college's debt obligations. In the fall of 2012, President Le Roy called for a balanced budget for 2013-14 that included debt service and to be presented to the board at its May 2013 meeting (two months before the beginning of the fiscal year in July). Over the 2013-14 academic year, the budget process was refined so that again, in May 2014, a balanced budget for 2014-15 was presented to and adopted by the board (cf. minutes, [art. 32A](#)). [These two budgets](#) clearly show the increase in the amount of debt service built into the unrestricted operating budget. While the entire \$6.3 million debt service was not funded from unrestricted operations (some gift and investment income was directed to debt service), the 2013-14 budget funded \$2.1 million, while the 2014-15 budget increased debt service to \$4.4 million.

Based on the experience of these last two budget cycles, the budgeting process for 2015-16 is based on the following [principles](#) and [timeline](#). The principal components of the process include (1) establishing assumptions about tuition, salary pool increase, and enrollment; (2) budgeting faculty and nonfaculty salary lines; and (3) budgeting nonsalary lines.

1. The president's cabinet and the Planning and Priorities Committee (PPC) are responsible for determining the assumptions on which the budget is based. The most uncertain of these is the enrollment assumption, which is modified throughout the budget year based on data from the admissions process and is finally set on May 1. Tuition and room and board for the subsequent year are set at the February board meeting, on recommendation from PPC (cf. PPC minutes, [art. IV](#)).
2. Budgeting for faculty and nonfaculty salaries is determined by two separate, parallel processes. Open faculty positions are declared by the Professional Status Committee (PSC) once [recommendations](#) from the provost and academic deans are [approved](#). All new nonfaculty positions must be approved by the president's cabinet before being included in the budget.
3. The budget for nonsalary line items is developed in consultation with the budget officers for each unit (e.g., an academic department or service unit). Budget officers are given substantial guidance about the overall budgeting assumptions and the parameters that determine allowable increases in the budget.

Ultimately, vice presidents are responsible for preparing the budget, which will be reviewed by the cabinet, PPC, and, finally, the board at its May 2015 meeting.

Monitoring Expenses

Budget officers are responsible for approving all nonsalary expenditures and monitoring expenses against the budget. Through the college's intranet portal, budget officers have access to a variety of [nearly real-time reports of expenses against budget](#). Supervisors have access to the budget reports of all programs reporting to them and, as necessary, approve budget officers' expenditures.

While an attempt is made to budget all salary expenses before the fiscal year begins, new positions occasionally must be created during the fiscal year. Such positions must be submitted to the CFO and the associate vice president for human resources, with an explanation of how the current budget can provide funding. The financial services division reviews the funding assumptions and, if they are sound, refers the position to the president's cabinet for approval.

Because of rigorous attention to expenses, the college ended the fiscal year 2014 with revenues exceeding expenditures by \$8.2 million. This surplus was directed to debt service (\$2.1 million), the college improvement fund (\$3.4 million), one-time initiatives called for by the strategic plan (\$1.6 million) and the establishment of an emergency reserve fund (\$1 million).

Human Resources: Appropriately Qualified and Trained Staff

As of September 1, 2014, the college has [856 employees](#) (652 full-time equivalent). Faculty personnel procedures, including qualifications and training, are described in component 3C. Each nonfaculty position is defined by a job description ([example](#)) that lists responsibilities and necessary qualifications. New positions must be approved by the cabinet both to ensure that budgetary resources are available and to appropriately prioritize requests. All staff members have an immediate supervisor who is responsible for monitoring performance and assisting in development. Each year, the supervisor completes a one-on-one performance review (the Performance Development Plan) that includes [written employee self-reflection and goal setting](#) as well as [written supervisor review](#).

In 2012 Calvin participated in the Best Christian Workplace survey to benchmark staff perceptions on workplace issues. This survey, conducted and analyzed by an external organization, compares the institution to other participating Christian workplaces, many of which are considered exemplary. Calvin employees favorably responded to questions about [job satisfaction](#), [compensation](#), and [qualifications of \(other\) staff](#). Relative to other institutions however, Calvin staff were less satisfied with [communication](#) and [training](#). [Section III.1.a](#) of the current strategic plan identified two indices (trust and employee engagement) based on this survey and established goals for them. The survey in 2014 was recently completed and shows [improvement](#) on these two indices, but the goal of the strategic plan is not yet met.

Physical Resources

The college gradually relocated to its current campus, in the southeast corner of Grand Rapids, during the 1960s. The campus is 400 acres, 100 of which are an ecosystem preserve maintained for education, research, and public enjoyment. The college has [2.2 million square feet of buildings](#). From 1998 to 2010, the college undertook several major building projects both to support new and growing programs and to refresh and upgrade existing buildings:

- DeVries Hall (1998; 62,000 sq. ft.): biology and chemistry laboratories, classrooms, offices
- Prince and Vermeer engineering buildings (1998; 22,000 sq ft.): project and laboratory space for the engineering program
- De Vos Communication Center (2001; 53,000 sq. ft.): classrooms and offices for the communications, speech-language pathology, and political science programs
- Prince Conference Center (2001; 30,000 sq. ft.): hotel and conference facilities
- Spoelhof Fieldhouse (2008; 264,000 sq. ft.): auditorium, natatorium, classrooms, and offices for athletics, recreation, and kinesiology programs
- Covenant Fine Arts Center (2010; 53,000 sq. ft.): classroom and performance space for the music and English programs

In 2012 Sightlines, a firm that specializes in education facilities, conducted an analysis that benchmarked Calvin's facilities against peer institutions. The three major findings of the study were:

- Due primarily to recent renovations, the college has a "balanced" [age profile](#), with buildings slightly younger on average than its peers'.
- Calvin's [asset reinvestment backlog](#) (measured in dollars per square foot) is lower on average than peer institutions' but is growing more rapidly due to dramatically decreasing investment in the last several years. The college is developing a strategy for addressing this backlog and has targeted [\\$4.8 million](#) for maintenance and improvement for 2015-16.
- Spending for maintenance and custodial services is about at peer averages, but Calvin attains substantially better scores on inspection metrics (e.g., [cleanliness](#), [general repair](#), [grounds](#)).

In [a study of classroom space](#) specifically, Sightlines found that classroom utilization was substantially less than at peer institutions and that Calvin has considerable room to grow academic programs within its current facilities (with suggested remodeling of classrooms to better suit current pedagogical practices).

As called for [in the strategic plan](#), the campus master plan is in the process of being updated with the assistance of Ayres Saint Gross, a firm that specializes in campus master planning. The [master planning process](#) featured input from over twenty focus groups chosen to represent various campus interests. The plan is scheduled to be completed in May 2015. The first phase resulted in [a concept plan](#) that was shared with the entire community in December 2014.

Technological Resources

Calvin College has a solid information technology infrastructure and support system in place. The current IT organization comprises 42 positions encompassing work in the areas of teaching and learning, information systems, instructional resources/print/logistics, business services, infrastructure, and security. The director of IT is a member of the president's council and reports directly to the president in order to provide alignment with institutional strategy and objectives. The director reports to the board of trustees at each meeting. [The most recent report](#) documents major initiatives of the past and current year.

The annual budget for technology investment, support, and operations at the college is funded in line within the 3%-6% of institutional budget benchmark for higher education as reported by EDUCAUSE (Calvin is at 4.3% for the current year). Funding is applied to support staff, enterprise and academic software licensing, infrastructure such as servers and networking equipment, and end user hardware (computers, laptops, and mobile devices), which are updated according to a strategic operating plan and regular life-cycle reinvestment program. (For example, all faculty and staff office computers are replaced on a three-year cycle.) The IT strategic plan is reviewed regularly with executive administration and college governance committees and revised every five years for relevance. The current version of [the IT strategic plan](#) was developed in the fall of 2014 to align with the college's strategic plan. The implementation plan for the college's strategic plan makes resources available to support IT objectives for the next five years.

Resource Allocation Appropriate to Educational Purposes

The mission of the institution as a nonprofit educational institution is always primary in resource allocation as its financial statements demonstrate. The college is an educational agency of the Christian Reformed Church of North America (CRCNA), which supports the institution in this mission. Calvin receives more than \$2.4 million annually from denominational "ministry shares" (essentially assessments levied on denominational congregations to support the institution).

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5.B - Core Component 5.B

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

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

Argument

Calvin has a strong tradition of shared governance that has evolved from a faculty governance structure instituted in 1972. However, campus confidence in the effectiveness of shared governance eroded during the final years of the previous president's administration, and in a survey (the Best Christian Workplace Survey) conducted in 2012, Calvin faculty and staff rated the college lower than the average of other responding institutions on questions concerning [management effectiveness](#), [teamwork](#), and [trust of senior leadership](#). Michael K. Le Roy, the current president, has placed a high priority on improving communication and increasing trust and has taken several actions to increase community involvement in decision making over the past two years. Results of this same survey administered in the fall of 2014 show some improvement in these measures ([management effectiveness](#); [teamwork](#), [trust](#)). Continued improvement on these issues is a goal of the current strategic plan. A key performance indicator for the plan is [the BCW trust index](#), for which the 2014 survey showed some improvement toward the strategic-plan goal. The HERI faculty survey administered in the fall of 2013 ([discussion here](#)) also shows such improvement, as it shows that faculty rate the relationship with administration higher than do faculty at comparison institutions and much higher than they had in the 2007 and 2010 administrations of that survey.

Organizational Structure and the Cabinet

The president is the chief executive officer of the college, and [the president's cabinet](#) (see [member CVs](#)) serves as the executive management team of the college. The college has six divisions: [academic affairs](#), [administration and finance](#), [advancement](#), [enrollment management](#), [information services](#), and [student life](#). Five of these are headed by vice president-level appointees; the director of the information services division reports to the president but does not have vice-presidential rank or serve on the cabinet. The cabinet comprises the vice presidents and provost, the associate vice president for human resources, the executive associate to the president for communication and planning, the executive associate for diversity, and the college chaplain. The president added the last two positions to the cabinet in 2013 based on [his assessment](#) of the composition of the cabinet and the current priorities of the college. (The position of [executive associate to the president for communications and planning](#) was added in 2012, essentially to improve the college's performance on this criterion.)

The cabinet provides advice and counsel to the president, prepares items for consideration by the

Planning and Priorities Committee, and coordinates work across the divisions. The cabinet is responsible for implementing the strategic plan—each of the six themes of the strategic plan has a cabinet "steward." The cabinet also ensures that the college operates within the current budget (e.g., by reviewing every request for a new nonfaculty hire, for both new and existing positions). The minutes of cabinet meetings are shared with the Planning and Priorities Committee, the Faculty Senate, and the board.

The Board of Trustees

The operation of the board and its relation to the president and his cabinet is described in component 2C. In its review of board governance, the Financial Review Task Force (see component 5A) made 26 recommendations to improve board governance and, especially, its fiduciary oversight. Over the 2012-13 and 2013-14 years, the board responded with a comprehensive board governance reform initiative. Some of the improvements follow:

1. Creation of a separate [audit and risk management committee](#) of the board
2. Establishment of board-level [KPIs](#) and [a strategic plan scorecard](#) to help the board engage issues at the right level (see component 5D for further description of KPIs and the strategic plan scorecard)
3. The development of standard ["key questions"](#) for the board in general, and for each of the separate board committees, to guide its oversight and ensure it meets its fiduciary responsibilities
4. The appointment of faculty representatives to key board committees
5. Annual and every-meeting [self-assessment instruments](#)
6. Professional development through college-sponsored events (cf. minutes from May 2013, [art. 15](#)) and participation in [the Association of Governing Boards](#)
7. Assessment of needed board skills and recruitment of new members, and training of present members to meet these needs
8. A review and revision of the board handbook to make it more useful, particularly for new-board-member orientation (cf. trusteeship minutes from February 2015, [art. 6](#))

The Planning and Priorities Committee

The [Planning and Priorities Committee](#) (PPC) is the primary formal structure for ensuring that all internal constituencies are engaged in setting the strategic priorities of the college. Committee members include the vice presidents and provost, two members of the board, two members of Student Senate, five faculty members (elected by the entire faculty), the director of human resources, and a staff member (elected by the entire staff). The president serves as chair. The committee's work is aided by four task forces, each of which is augmented by additional members from the community as needed. The task forces, their function, and examples of their recent major initiatives include the following:

- [The Workplace Quality Task Force](#) monitors the workplace environment, with particular attention to employee compensation and benefits. Most recently, the task force recommended a major modification to the health insurance benefits offered to employees.
- [The Budget Task Force](#) monitors the budget and the budgetary process of the college, with particular attention to the alignment of the budget with the mission of the college and the strategic plan. It also assists PPC with providing a detailed evaluation of the budgetary aspects of proposals before the committee.
- [The Data and Metrics Task Force](#) monitors the college's information and analysis capabilities, with particular attention to the college's capacity to provide PPC with data and analyses to

support strategic planning and budgeting. Most recently, the task force reviewed a privacy policy for Web data collection and also [endorsed](#) the acquisition of Data Cookbook, a product to aid in standardizing data definitions across the college.

- [The Facilities Task Force](#) monitors the adequacy and maintenance needs of the college's buildings and grounds. Most recently, the task force developed the preliminary work for the new master planning process that began in summer 2014.

Minutes of PPC meetings are distributed to both the board and the Faculty Senate and are available to the entire community on the committee's website. Annually, PPC also provides [a summary report](#) to the Faculty Senate.

Faculty Governance

The Faculty Senate is [an elected body](#) that acts on recommendations concerning faculty personnel policies and academic policies and programs. The Senate is chaired by the college president, and the vice chair is elected by the faculty from among the faculty. Vice presidents attend Senate meetings and regularly report on the activities of their division. Although agenda items normally come as recommendations from [governance committees](#), procedures exist for other bodies and individual senators [to bring matters](#) directly to Senate.

Members of the governance committees are appointed by the [Committee on Governance](#), which is itself an elected committee. These governance committees normally include faculty members broadly representative of the college's academic divisions, as well as students and staff members when appropriate. Committee minutes are publicly accessible on campus (except for personnel actions of the Professional Status Committee) and are available from the governance website ([sample committee website](#)). During the current academic year, the Committee on Governance is [reviewing](#) the work and composition of all governance committees.

While it is not always clear which policies require Senate approval and which could be simply adopted by some other body such as the cabinet or PPC, administrators have generally interpreted the role of Faculty Senate broadly. For example, the current strategic plan was brought to Faculty Senate for approval at two consecutive meetings ([December 2](#) and [December 16](#), 2013), and PPC revised the plan in response to recommendations from the Senate before the Senate voted 41-2 to approve it.

The full faculty [meets once a year, at the fall faculty assembly](#). While this meeting is primarily for communication and discussion, the Senate can decide that weighty matters (e.g., [the adoption of a new general education program](#)) be brought to the faculty assembly for approval. Additionally, the faculty assembly (and the board) must approve any changes to the faculty bylaws.

The President's Council, the Administrative Leadership Team, and the President's Coffees

In the fall of 2013, President Le Roy instituted three new structures for increasing cross-divisional communication and collaboration:

- The [president's council](#) consists of the cabinet members, the three academic deans, the directors of physical plant, finance, communications and marketing, and IT. The council meets monthly and aids the cabinet by holding chief responsibility for implementing and coordinating the strategic plan.
- The administrative leadership team is a large body (with ca. 100 members) essentially comprising all employees who manage groups (e.g., directors of administrative departments and chairs of academic departments). The two primary purposes of this group, which meets

quarterly, are cross-divisional communication and leadership development. The invitation to this team, with [a schedule for the current year](#), indicates the purpose and range of discussion of this body.

- President's coffees, to which the entire community is invited, are held seven times a year; attendance ranges from 100 to 200. The president uses these opportunities to report on important matters of all-college interest. During 2013-14, much of the discussion concerned strategic planning, prioritization, and fund raising.

Student Engagement in Governance

Students are formally engaged in governance by their membership on various committees; appointments are handled by the Student Senate. PPC has two student members, and all governance committees dealing with academic programs and policies have at least one student member. Three students are (nonvoting) members of the Faculty Senate.

Students are informally engaged in conversation about all-campus issues in various ways:

- Student Senate regularly discusses issues of importance to students and brings recommendations to administrators (for example, it recently recommended changes to the course evaluation form and convened a town hall on core-curriculum revision).
- The president of the Student Senate meets regularly with the president of the college.
- The college newspaper, the *Chimes*, covers major campus issues and fosters campus discussion, including online discussion through its online issues.

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5.C - Core Component 5.C

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.

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

Argument

President Le Roy's first year, 2012-13, coincided with the final year of [the previous strategic plan](#). In [August 2012](#), [the Planning and Priorities Committee](#) (PPC), which is "responsible for developing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating a process of systematic, continuous, and effective institutional planning," began developing the current strategic planning process.

Concurrently, the president was learning that [the college's financial trajectory](#) would lead to significant operating deficits by 2017. (See component 5A for a detailed description of these issues.) [His summary of the situation](#) in an October report to the board outlined two processes, a strategic planning process and a prioritization process, to address this financial trajectory and to improve the institution.

Strategic Planning Process

The strategic planning process was designed to be broadly collaborative. All documents, timelines, and progress reports were available to faculty, staff, and the board at a dedicated site in the college's intranet portal.

Phase 1: Preparing (October-December 2012). The board commissioned the president, cabinet, and PPC to initiate the strategic planning process (cf. minutes, [art. 43](#)). The cabinet and PPC gathered and reviewed information regarding finances, organization, personnel, and technology, including

- [an external facilities review](#) by Sightlines, a national firm specializing in educational institutions;
- administration of [the Best Christian Workplaces survey](#) to assess workplace culture;
- an independent financial task force [to review the college's administration and governance](#) in the area of finances;
- [a revision of the PPC mandate](#) (including the addition of three task forces: [workplace quality](#), [budget](#), [data and metrics](#), and [facilities](#)), approved by the Faculty Senate in December 2012, to enable PPC to better assume an increased role in budgeting and planning; and
- a review by the board of its committee structure.

Phase 2: Assessing (January-March 2013). During this phase, more than 400 Calvin faculty, staff, students, board members, and alumni participated in sessions identifying the college's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats ([SWOT](#)). These deliberations resulted in [a mid-May report](#) that informed subsequent stages. Nine fact papers were produced by small study teams on key issues. These reports covered [trends in pedagogy](#), [higher education financing](#), [the Calvin constituency](#), the [regional economy](#), [diversity](#), [student demand](#), [student culture](#), [the Calvin workplace](#), and [comparative pricing](#).

Phase 3: Brainstorming (March-July 2013). PPC led brainstorming sessions on [six questions](#) developed from the SWOT sessions and the fact papers. More than 300 community members [participated](#) in these sessions.

Phase 4: Articulating and Reviewing (August-October 2013). The fall faculty-staff conference was devoted to a discussion of [six broad themes](#) identified in the previous stages. [A summary](#) of the fall conference feedback was available to the community by early September. These themes and the conference feedback informed early drafts of the plan.

Phase 5: Shaping (October-December 2013). A draft of the strategic plan was considered (cf. October 2013 minutes, [art. 29](#)) by the board. PPC considered feedback from the board, Faculty Senate, and others and then commissioned a small group of faculty and academic administrators to create [an authoritative draft](#). The Faculty Senate [amended and approved](#) the plan, "Calvin 2019: Strengthen. Support. Secure."

Phase 6: Finalizing (January-May 2014). In January 2014 the board approved (cf. minutes, [art. 35](#)) the plan endorsed by the Faculty Senate.

The plan consists of six themes centered on strengthening the mission of the college. The first three (education, scholarship, and community) align with the three purposes of the expanded statement of mission. The other three (diversity and inclusion, financial future, and partnerships) arose from environmental scanning and community input as key areas needing strengthening and support. Incorporated into the financial theme was the prioritization plan that the cabinet developed in a separate prioritization process, described below. After board approval, the cabinet developed an implementation plan that includes timelines and financial consequences for each of the objectives of the plan. While that plan continues to be adjusted by the cabinet, [the April 2014 version](#) already provided specific commitments for the 2014-15 budget.

The Prioritization Process

The goal of the prioritization process was to reduce expenses relative to the 2012-13 budget by \$4.5 million by June 30, 2017, by reviewing all college programs and services. This was one of the five strategies adopted by the board (cf. minutes, [art. 28F\[5\]](#)) for closing the budget gap by 2017. The process was modeled on that proposed by Robert C. Dickeson (*Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services: Reallocating Resources to Achieve Strategic Balance* [San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010]).

The vice presidents and provost managed their divisions' prioritization process, which varied according to each division's size and the nature of its programs. In the academic division, the provost [required](#) all programs to complete a common [program profile template](#). The provost then worked with the deans to develop a preliminary list of programs for possible restructuring or elimination (more details on academic prioritization are in component 4A). The other divisions employed a similar process.

The cabinet presented its recommendations to PPC in November 2013. PPC held open hearings on these recommendations on December 6, 2013, and then endorsed [the plan](#) on December 16. At its January 2014 meeting the BOT "endorsed the direction of the prioritization plan while allowing administrative flexibility in its implementation, as long as annual and overall budget target savings are achieved."

Alignment of Planning and Budgeting

Throughout the discussion in the fall semester of 2012, it became apparent that the college did not have a strong practice of integrating long-term planning and priority setting with short-term budgeting and decision making. For example, though the college had a strategic plan, the plan was not constructed with timelines or financial plans and was more aspirational than operational. A strong goal of the current planning process was to move toward alignment of priorities and resources.

Because the strategic plan and the prioritization plan were adopted in 2014, the 2014-15 budget was the first that needed to explicitly address prioritization and strategic planning goals. The vice presidents and provost were responsible for identifying budget cuts required by prioritization. Most of these were made by the elimination of positions (e.g., approximately \$750,000 was saved by eliminating faculty positions). Additionally, the implementation of the strategic plan called for approximately \$500,000 in additional expenditures. [A report to PPC](#) for use in its consideration of the budget indicates the progress made on prioritization and strategic planning in the 2014-15 budget. Further information on the budget process is in component 5A.

Additional Planning Initiatives

Strategic Enrollment Management Plan. The strategic plan sets an objective of enrolling 1,000 FTIAC (first time in any college) and 100 transfer students each year and also calls for "policies and procedures for the annual determination of a purposeful, mission-centered demographic profile of the future incoming classes." Consequently, the Enrollment Management Committee developed [a strategic enrollment management plan](#) that was endorsed by the cabinet and approved by PPC on May 1, 2014. This plan identifies clear objectives in four areas: student body size and composition; revenues, costs, and pricing; branding, marketing, and messaging; and campus culture and the student experience.

Campus Master Planning. The strategic plan sets a goal to "develop and implement a strategically aligned campus master plan that prepares fully for key college needs and their long-term sustainability requirements." Consequently, the college developed a year-long master planning process for the 2014-15 academic year. The master planning steering committee consists of the PPC Facilities Task Force, augmented by fifteen members from across campus. The college engaged Ayres Saint Gross, a nationally respected campus master-planning firm, to aid in the process. The process affords numerous opportunities for all-campus input, including open meetings and an online discussion board. The master plan is expected to be completed in May 2015. [A preliminary concept plan](#) was shared with the campus community in December 2014.

Library Strategic Planning. While many units on campus have strategic plans, the library was one of the first to conduct strategic planning after the college's new strategic plan was complete. The library engaged [an external consultant](#) and produced [a strategic plan](#) aligned with the college's strategic plan.

Information Technology Planning. In the fall of 2014, Calvin Information Technology completed [a strategic operating plan](#) for 2014-2019.

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5.D - Core Component 5.D

The institution works systematically to improve its performance.

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

Argument

The college has several long-standing processes for both documenting performance in its operations and using that evidence to improve performance. At the department level in both the academic and student life divisions, department heads prepare annual state-of-the-department reports that report and reflect on unit performance. These reports are used for planning and, especially in the academic division, resource allocation. (They are further described in component 4A, for the academic division, and in component 3D, for the student life division.) In addition, each employee creates a self-evaluation and development plan—yearly for staff and at each review for faculty. These plans form the basis for conversations between supervisors and employee (and are described further in component 3B for faculty and component 5A for staff). At the institutional level, vice presidents submit written reports at each board meeting, documenting performance in their respective divisions. These written reports form the basis for the discussion between the vice president and the relevant board committee (examples from the most recent board meeting: [academic division](#), [advancement](#), [administration and finance](#), [enrollment management](#)).

Along with regular evaluation processes like these, the college strategically uses outside consultants to evaluate its performance and provide recommendations for improvement. In the past few years the college has used a number of consultants.

- A financial review task force (see component 5A) made many recommendations concerning financial management and operations and listed nine [priorities](#). The college has made significant progress on all goals and fully implemented several of them.
- [The Best Christian Workplace Study](#) (see component 5A) identifies both strengths and weaknesses in organizational culture. The college considers the "building trust" criterion to have especially high priority.
- Sightlines conducted [a facilities study](#) (see component 5A) that informed the first round of campus master planning.
- The Master Planning Steering Committee engaged Ayers Saint Gross, a nationally respected campus planning firm, to develop a new campus master plan (as described in component 5C). The plan is expected to be complete in May 2015.
- The college engaged Dartlet, Inc., a reputation management consultancy, to define the college's brand strategy. That work is largely complete and will inform the communications and marketing strategy of the college (see component 2B).
- The college [engaged](#) AON to analyze our benefits packages. Consequently, the college [changed health insurance providers](#) and the structure of the retiree health benefit. This resulted in significant savings for the college.
- The Cultural Intelligence Center [assessed the college's diversity and inclusion efforts](#) (see component 1D) and made recommendations concerning these efforts. These recommendations

inform the implementation plan for the fourth theme of the strategic plan.

- The student life division engaged [a consultant](#) for two years to help develop a program for the assessment of student learning in that division (see component 4B). The division is carrying out the first steps of the plan.
- The NCHERM group, a national legal and consulting firm, has helped develop a coordinated effort to meet Title IX responsibilities. This has resulted in the Safer Spaces policy (see component 2A).
- A consultant was engaged by the library to help it [assess its operations and develop a strategic plan](#) (see component 3D).
- The college engaged a consultant to help define [a set of peer institutions](#). This project identified a set of 40 peer institutions with which the college has begun to compare its performance on various dimensions to help inform planning. One such set of comparisons appears in [the recently developed retention plan](#).

Data and Reporting. The core database of the college has been maintained for over thirty years, allowing the college to develop a rich set of reports that document its performance over time. The [Day-10 reports](#), twenty years of which are available on the Web, are one example.

Over the past several years Calvin has devoted considerable effort in improving the quality and availability of data necessary for monitoring operations. A data warehouse that includes virtually all crucial financial, admissions, student, and academic program data is updated nightly. Managers have access to a wide variety of reports and tools to access these data. For example:

- Department chairs view [current enrollments in courses](#), [classroom assignments](#), [faculty loads](#), course rosters, and [current departmental majors](#). These tools are useful for short term planning (e.g., making a schedule) as well as longer term planning (e.g., enrollment patterns over time).
- Admissions counselors have access to data concerning [current progress in recruiting the next class](#).
- Budget officers use [budget-versus-actual reports](#) that are current and that have the capability of drilling down to the transaction level.
- The director of financial aid monitors [the progress](#) in awarding financial aid for the coming year.
- Fund raisers in the development office [chart their progress](#) toward goals for the year.

As the college has placed increased emphasis on making data-driven decisions, the need to improve the institutional research function has become more evident. Many departments and divisions use data to inform decision making in sophisticated ways, but the approach has been decentralized, and the data isn't always shared or even well curated. For example, there are too many locally developed databases, with inconsistencies in data definitions across departments (e.g., what is an international student?). The Planning and Priorities Committee partially addressed this concern by forming a standing [Data and Metrics Task Force](#), and the implementation plan for the strategic plan calls for a new [institutional research officer](#) (a position starting in the spring of 2015).

A particular weakness in the current data architecture is that the budgeting, payroll, and human resources information systems are not well integrated, resulting in manual, redundant steps in payroll forecasting. Since the payroll is the largest (and most variable) part of the budget, this affects efforts to budget accurately. Working together, the information technology, human resources, and financial services offices have made it a high priority [to address this limitation](#) with new software and new business processes.

Financial Reporting. The cabinet, board, and PPC closely monitor the financial performance of the

college. While these groups have always reviewed standard financial statements, a number of additional tools to assist them have been developed more recently. For example, standard financial statements use NACUBO categories for revenues and expenditures and are not very useful in understanding how expenditures are distributed across the college's units. Now, PPC regularly uses financial statements that allocate expenditures [across the college's divisions](#) and [across natural categories](#) (salaries, benefits, travel, etc.) that are affected by budget decisions. Goldman Sachs has developed and maintains [a dashboard](#) by which the college and the board can track the college's investment portfolio. In order to better understand the evolution of the budget over a longer term (3-5 years), the college has invested in Future Perfect, a budget-planning tool for academic institutions. Use of this tool is in its early stages, and whether the tool has high utility is not yet clear.

Performance Indicators. Over the past few years, the college has been developing and refining key performance indicators (KPI) in various areas. Some of these have been tracked and used for many years; for example, [the student-faculty ratio](#) is computed by academic department and is important for determining instructional staff allocation. Others are new and often are related to a particular goal of the new strategic plan. Managers track KPIs using a variety of tools, including Tableau, a high-level data analytics instrument. Each divisional vice president has a set of KPIs (example: [academic division](#)). [A set of KPIs](#) suitable for the whole college is used by the cabinet and the board to monitor the overall performance of the institution. These are tracked in the strategic dashboard. Each KPI has benchmarks (often specified by the strategic plan), and the dashboard presents progress toward these benchmarks. The board reviews the dashboard at each meeting.

Strategic Plan Tracking. With the launch of the strategic plan in July 2014, PPC realized the importance of carefully tracking the plan's goals and objectives. [A strategic-plan scorecard](#) is available to all community members in the college's intranet portal. It tracks performance using red, yellow, green indicators and is updated quarterly. PPC regularly reviews this scorecard. The vice presidents also maintain [a strategic-plan tracking document](#) that includes more detail (such as financial implications of each objective).

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5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

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

Summary

An aggressive building campaign over the last two decades resulted in substantial improvements in the college's ability to carry out its mission. However, the financing strategy for that building campaign put the institution on a financially unsustainable path. Over the last three years the college, led by its new president, has taken substantial steps to change the institutional culture surrounding budgeting and planning. As a result, the college has

- implemented a five-point plan for reducing the debt and has already completed key parts of this plan, including raising \$28 million for debt service;
- developed a budgeting process that aligns resources with planning and produces a balanced budget before the fiscal year begins;
- produced a strategic plan that outlines ambitious but achievable goals designed to "strengthen, support, and secure" the mission of the institution;
- evaluated all current programs to align them with current priorities;
- improved capacity and willingness to make data-driven decisions; and
- revised governance structures to promote a disciplined and collaborative approach to planning.

Even though the college is financially healthy, challenges remain. It has successfully executed the first year of both the prioritization plan and the strategic plan, but the remaining four years will require the college to make difficult decisions. The college also will have to continue adjusting its management and governance structures to more fully institutionalize the processes now in place. Part V of the strategic plan ("Secure Calvin's Financial Future") details key steps that the college will take over the next few years to meet these challenges.

Sources

There are no sources.