

**A SELF-STUDY REPORT  
PREPARED FOR THE MIDDLE STATES COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION**

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**THE COLLEGE OF SAINT ROSE**

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## Introduction

We are undertaking this self-study at a time of change and challenge for higher education, and for The College of Saint Rose in particular. This process of self-reflection provides the opportunity to re-evaluate our effectiveness in fulfilling our mission and to reaffirm our role as College committed to transforming the lives of our students.

The College of Saint Rose was founded in 1920 by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet to open doors to women to private higher education in upstate New York. The College became fully coeducational in 1969 and continues to fulfill the value of its founders to meet the needs of the times. From preparing expert and skilled teachers, forensic psychologists, and social workers, to the development of the Flex MBA, the College continues to change to meet the needs of its students and society, and to demonstrate its ability to be nimble during the pandemic.

After more than 100 years of service, the College remains committed to its mission. Today, the College has approximately 3,800 students, offers 35 undergraduate degrees, 24 graduate degrees, and 22 advanced certificates. With more than 46,000 alumni, 28,000 of whom have teaching-related degrees, the College is widely recognized for its impact on the Capital Region and beyond.

Saint Rose is a 48-acre urban campus in Albany, New York, the state's capital. The College is the centerpiece of the City of Albany's Pine Hills neighborhood. The beautiful signature Victorian houses on campus are symbolic of Saint Rose and of Albany's history. Albany's population was 96,400 in 2020. The greater metropolitan area, commonly referred to as the Capital Region, had a population exceeding 1,000,000.

The College of Saint Rose is chartered by the Board of Regents of New York State. All of its degrees and programs are registered, and its professional programs are fully approved by the Board of Regents through the New York State Education Department. The College is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE). In addition, a number of specialized accrediting agencies recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and/or the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) have accredited programs offered at The College of Saint Rose.

### The Self-Study Process

The College of Saint Rose used a standards-based approach for this self-study. This approach was chosen for several reasons. As the MSCHE standards have changed since our last self-study, using this approach ensures that we fully understand each standard and what it entails. The standards-based approach will also enable us to provide a full and thorough assessment of how we meet each standard and its related elements. The College concurrently undertook a strategic planning process. The initial stages of this work coincided with our Middle States efforts, and our Middle States Steering Committee worked collaboratively with the Strategic Planning and Priorities Committee on mission review and priorities. Because of this, we were able to fully align the goals of the new strategic plan with the priorities identified for the self-study. Working groups on each standard used these identified priorities to help focus the assessment of each standard, thereby providing an opportunity to assess priorities on a standard-by-standard basis. Finally, by using a standards-based approach, college constituencies engaged in the self-study process will be better informed on the standards and requirements for accreditation.

The process of developing this self-study has been a collaborative one. In Fall 2020, the College’s President, in consultation with the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs, selected the Steering Committee co-chairs and Accreditation Liaison Officers. This team later identified additional members to complete the Steering Committee, after consulting the Provost, Deans, and leaders of all functional areas and seeking nominations. This committee is the strategic leadership group that oversees the Self-Study process and held regular meetings to ensure the Self-Study process moved forward as planned. Wider campus involvement in the process started in March 2020 through a college-wide convocation event on the Self-Study. By Fall 2021, in response to Steering Committee’s call for volunteers, more than 60 community members, including faculty, staff, and administrators, agreed to serve on one of the seven Self-Study Working Groups tasked to generate evidence-based narratives addressing each of the Commission Standards and Requirements of Affiliation. In addition, the Steering Committee also identified an Evidence Inventory Manager to oversee the documentation process of the Evidence Inventory. The Working Groups collected and analyzed evidence, and created multiple drafts of their reports during the Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 semesters. In order to provide on-going oversight and support for Working Groups, the Steering Committee assigned at least one of its members to each Working Group as liaison. These liaisons facilitated communication between the Steering Committee and the Working Groups and between the Working Groups themselves. In Summer 2022, the Steering Committee compiled the Working Group reports into a complete draft of Self-Study Report, shared it with campus community, and actively sought feedback. The draft will be finalized in Fall 2022 after revisions made in response to campus feedback. In summary, our Self-Study process was collaborative, with 60 members of the College community directly involved in writing the responses to the MSCHE standards and other community members providing input, either through focus groups or direct response to the Self-Study draft.

The alignment of Commission Standards and Requirements of Affiliation with our Institutional Priorities and Working Group task assignment are illustrated in the table below:

<b>Working Group</b>	<b>Commission Standards</b>	<b>Institution Priorities</b>	<b>Requirements of Affiliation</b>
<b>1</b>	I, Mission & Goals II, Ethics & Integrity	#1 Support Student Experience; #2 Sustain Academic Excellence; #3 Foster an Engaged Community	#7
<b>2</b>	III, Design & Delivery of the Student Learning Experience	#1 Support Student Experience; #2 Sustain Academic Excellence; #3 Foster- an Engaged Community, #4 Ensure Financial Health	#8, 15
<b>3</b>	IV, Support of the Student Experience	#1 Support Student Experience; #2 Sustain Academic Excellence; #3 Foster an Engaged Community, #4 Ensure Financial Health	
<b>4</b>	V, Educational Effectiveness Assessment	#3 Foster an Engaged Community, #4 Ensure Financial Health	#9
<b>5</b>	VI, Planning, Resources & Institutional Improvement	#1 Support Student Experience; #2 Sustain Academic Excellence; #3 Foster an Engaged Community, #4 Ensure Financial Health	#10, 11
<b>6</b>	VII, Governance, Leadership and Administration	#1 Support Student Experience; #2 Sustain Academic Excellence; #3 Foster an Engaged Community, #4 Ensure Financial Health	#12, 13, 14
<b>7</b>	Verification of Compliance		#1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

## Significant Changes and Challenges

The College is facing significant challenges as it moves into its second century of serving students. Some of these, such as shifts in high school demographics and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, have affected all colleges in the Northeastern United States. These broader concerns are accompanied by challenges more specific to Saint Rose. These include financial concerns that have driven significant reductions in staff, faculty, and programs, and concerns regarding issues of racial justice and equity.

Over the last decade, the College faced the enrollment consequences of the decline in high school graduates in the northeast, as well as the shrinking market demand of its signature undergraduate and graduate level teacher education programs. In New York state, since 2008, there has been a 50% decline in teacher education enrollment, a trend that has been reflected at Saint Rose. In reaction to these shifts, faculty developed new programs, and investments in marketing and recruiting resulted in more equally balanced enrollments across programs and geography.

To address the demographic challenge, the College has made a number of changes, the most significant of which was moving the Office of Enrollment Management under the umbrella of Academic Affairs. This shift has facilitated collaboration between Enrollment Management and academics. This includes work between departments and Enrollment management to identify program differentiators to better market our offerings to potential students, and the revision of student recruiting events to include more academically-focused activities such as the “Love This Class” mini-classes with faculty.

The changing composition of the College’s student population in terms of program, geography, race, ethnicity and socio-economic factors has enabled us to become a campus community more reflective of the America of 2021. Our student population reflects our commitment to fulfill our founding values of providing educational opportunities to those who have been traditionally underrepresented in higher education, with approximately 28% first generation and 40% Pell recipients. Our undergraduate student population is approximately two-thirds women, and increasingly diverse, with 40% of undergraduate students currently identifying as people of color, compared to 32% five years ago, and 16% ten years ago.

The shifting demographics of our student population is a positive trend, it has also presented challenges and required us to examine our work in regards to equity and inclusion. In summer 2020, in the midst of the national awakening on racial justice following the murder of George Floyd, the College responded to issues of equity and discrimination brought forward as the result of an Instagram page titled Black@strose. This site was a compilation of anonymous student comments based largely on issues of racism. The College engaged students, faculty, staff, and alumni in multiple zoom forums to openly and actively listen to students and recent graduates and hear their perspectives. Saint Rose established the Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Action (IDEA) Committee to investigate and assess issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion. In 2020-2021, a new more comprehensive policy and process to address complaints of bias was drafted and approved. The College held monthly community conversations open to all students, faculty and staff. In addition, the College appointed a new Chief Diversity Officer, and hired a Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

Recent organizational changes have also helped the College to continue addressing issues of equity and the challenge of supporting higher numbers of first generation students The Division of

Student Development underwent a number of transitions in the summer of 2021 which carried throughout the 2021-2022 academic year. With each professional staff vacancy, the College took the time to re-evaluate the position in light of current needs, and refined positions to better serve our students. As part of these examinations, Student Development identified the need to serve and celebrate our diverse student population as a priority. One way to address this priority was to consolidate support of our student clubs and organizations under one umbrella. The College also acknowledged how critical it was for our team working with our Academic Opportunity Students to focus on advising and supporting this cohort of students to succeed and retain. Providing this focus meant this team could not also oversee New Student Programs. Recognizing these needs, and having vacancies in both our Director of Student Life and Director of Diversity and Inclusion positions, the College decided to create a Director of Inclusion and Engagement to oversee a Coordinator of Student Leadership and New Student Transitions and a Coordinator of Student Engagement and Campus Activities. The Coordinator roles were created to be live-on-campus positions so that they are available for evening and weekend programming for students and to assist Residence Life with on-call responsibilities. In addition, the College lacked a position to lead the area of Community Service for our students. We know our students are committed to serving our local, national, and global community as well as advocating for social justice. It was important to bring this role as the Assistant Director of Community Service back to support our students in this way. Finally, the College understands that students are still in a time of growth and development both in and out of the classroom. That said, it is one of the College's many responsibilities to help our students see how they are part of a larger community and that the decisions they make impact themselves and those around them. To do this, the position of Assistant Director of Student Conduct was newly defined to be the Assistant Director of Student Support and Development.

In addition to the changes made in the Division of Student Development, the College shifted offices related to student academic support to Academic Affairs. This shift provides for clearer communication between academics and academic support, enabling the support offices to better understand student needs and to provide for greater access to and collaboration with faculty.

Another significant challenge faced by the college is financial. In 2020 and 2021, the College's Board of Trustees approved the development and implementation of a multi-pronged plan to address the institution's financial challenges. This plan included \$8 million in reductions in staff and administrative operations, followed by \$6 million in academic-related reductions. Administrative and staff measures included salary cuts for administrators, elimination of some vacant positions, and a six-month hold on all open positions. A joint working group of administrators and faculty members elected by the full faculty, developed a set of recommendations that were approved unanimously by the Board of Trustees. These recommendations included the elimination of 25 academic programs (16 undergraduate degrees, 6 unique graduate degrees, 3 advanced certificates) along with the consequent reduction of 33 of the College's 151 tenured and tenure-track positions, and 8 one-year visiting faculty positions. The program eliminations impacted 307 students: 10% of undergraduate and 4% of graduate students. All students were provided with teach-out plans to complete their degrees at Saint Rose.

Financial challenges and concerns have also led to employee turnover, which has affected campus morale. As noted in this self-study, personnel in many student-facing offices feel stretched, and resource limitations has caused some frustration and delays to students seeking services. The efforts noted above in regards to organization changes and personnel re-configuration are efforts to address this that are having positive effects in addressing these issues. Currently, Academic Affairs is involved in a process to recommend changes to the academic organization of the college to help address financial

issues, but more important, to support collaboration and innovation in our core business of serving and supporting students.

### **Moving Our Mission Forward**

In multiple conversations with the College community, President Marcia White has been consistent in declaring that we are moving forward to ensure the future of the College and the important work that we do with our students. The College continues to move forward and look for ways to address the challenges we face. Many difficult challenges have already been met head-on, and, as discussed above, the College has made a number of changes to ensure that we will continue to fulfill our mission. A new strategic plan, adopted in 2021, provides a road map to the future that is grounded in our mission and history. The strategic plan specifically addresses our challenges through goals focused on academic excellence, student success, community, and fiscal strength.

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## Standard I: Mission and Goals

### Executive Summary

The institution's mission defines its purpose within the context of higher education, the students it serves, and what it intends to accomplish. The institution's stated goals are clearly linked to its mission and specify how the institution fulfills its mission. The College meets its purpose within the context of higher education and its mission across the campus, from the academic experience to the student experience. Decisions and priorities are made through the lens of the mission, and goals are set to reflect that mission. Routine assessment ensures the College is meeting these mission-based goals. Although at times changes in the higher education environment and availability of resources have shifted the way the mission is delivered, creative thinking and resourcefulness that prioritize the mission have allowed the College to find new ways to meet its goals.

### Criterion I: Clearly Defined Mission

The College of Saint Rose has a clearly defined mission that is widely known by internal stakeholders. The Mission Statement is easily accessible through the College's website and is provided in College catalogs (*College Catalogs (2009-2023)*, The College of Saint Rose [CSR]. (2022, 7, 25). <https://www.strose.edu/academics/registrar/college-catalogs/>), the *Faculty Manual* (CSR, *Faculty Manual*, 2021, 5), *Student Handbook* (CSR, *Student Handbook*, 2021-2022, 10) and Employee Handbooks (CSR, *Employee Handbook for Administrators* (n.d.), 4; CSR, *Employee Handbook for Staff* (n.d.), 5).

It reads:

The College of Saint Rose community engages highly motivated undergraduate and graduate students in rigorous educational experiences. In the progressive tradition of the founding Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, we welcome students from all religious and cultural backgrounds. In addition to developing their intellectual capacities, students have the opportunity to cultivate their creative and spiritual gifts in a diverse learning community that fosters integrity, interdependence, and mutual respect.

The College delivers distinctive and comprehensive liberal arts and professional programs that inspire our graduates to be productive adults, critical thinkers, and motivated, caring citizens. Our engagement with the urban environment expands the setting for educational opportunities and encourages the Saint Rose community's energetic involvement and effective leadership in society. (*History & Mission*. (2022, 7, 25). CSR. <http://president.strose.edu/history-and-mission>).

The institution's mission is developed through appropriate collaborative participation and is supported by the governing body. The Board of Trustees regularly reviews the College mission and has a Mission and Values Committee that examines items related to mission and programs that exemplify the mission and values of the College (Board of Trustees [BOT] Meeting of the Mission and Values Committee. 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022). Strategic planning groups are in place to develop goals appropriate to the mission and engage with campus community for input. In 2021, the various campus constituencies were engaged in the development of the strategic plan for the College through the leadership of the SPCC, which is comprised of a representative group of faculty and administrators (2021-2024 Strategic Plan, CSR, 2021-2024 Strategic Plan | The College of Saint Rose (strose.edu) SPPC is

charged with periodically evaluating the mission. Within the strategic planning process, the mission was evaluated, and no changes were suggested at the time (Board of Trustees Mission and Values Committee, 2021). In addition, the campus-wide Strategic Outcomes Assessment Report (SOAR) and Student Learning Outcomes Assessment (SLOA) processes involve all elements of the College in assessment as it relates to the institution's mission and values (Office of Residence Life, 2021). Both the academic and administrative units are charged with assessing how the College progressed toward goals and how those goals are aligned with mission and the strategic plan.

The current 2021-2024 **Strategic Plan sets forth the institutional goals that are realistic, appropriate, and consistent with the mission.** These start, fittingly, with academic excellence (including specific attention to building new programs, improving graduation rates, and building a career center equipped to aid both students and graduates), student success (attending to issues ranging from inclusion to technology support), fostering an engaged, inclusive community, and achieving fiscal strength. Each objective includes tactics and timelines for those steps (The College of Saint Rose website, n.d.).

These goals spring from the College's history, wherein for over 100 years those excluded from customary centers of education (starting with women and then including diverse populations including race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender identity) found a home for intellectual exploration and professional preparation. Our current strategic goals and objectives reflect that history and contribute to the next chapter. The institutional goals are certainly realistic; they recognize and are responsive to the challenges facing the College but provide metrics for timely achievement.

The College's mission addresses internal and external contexts through its "engagement with the urban environment" which "expands the setting for educational opportunities and encourages the Saint Rose community's energetic involvement and effective leadership in society" (The College of Saint Rose website, n.d.). The College serves this part of the mission in a variety of ways. The Office of Community Service has engaged students with the "dear neighbor" through on-campus and community-based service projects and educational programs that allow students to volunteer and learn about local organizations and their work, and the larger issues behind the volunteering being done (Office of Community Service, 2021). Before and during COVID, efforts have been made to connect our service work with the veterans and athletes as well to build on-going partnerships with faculty and staff so that the support of those outside our campus is carried forward by the entire College community. From 2014-2020 a Community Advisory Board was designed by the Office of Service Learning and supported by the Office of Community Service to create more substantive service opportunities and relationships with the needs and opportunities for learning in the Capital District and the city of Albany in particular. The outcome of this included college administration-faculty-community organization partnerships that resulted in research projects, service-learning, and volunteer connections that could be more responsive to community needs and issues as well as a transition for our students from "doing for" to "working with." (Hunter, 2019).

The Office of Community Service and Office of Spiritual Life are key parts of developing and sustaining a menu of transformative service trips to places like New Orleans, San Francisco, Washington D.C., Philadelphia, and Guatemala (Office of Spiritual Life and Community Service Office, 2018). The Office of Spiritual Life also works with numerous faculty, community partners, and students on Social Justice Weeks/Months, Heritage and Justice Weeks, and sand mandala creation and companionship programming weeks (The Office of Spiritual Life and Community Service, 2020). These experiences bring the College's mission well beyond our campus borders to service partners at the national and

international levels, engaging students with urban environments (beyond the community that houses our campus) and connecting with those environments in ways that offer education to our students about social justice and how to be active and committed citizens now and beyond their time as students. Service trips create transformative experiences for the participants (including faculty and administrators from campus) and were expanded to include leadership development as selected students were trained and mentored in the process of leading service and outreach trips, providing opportunities for mission-focused leadership for students. During the COVID-19 pandemic, these opportunities have had to be put on hold but plans to restore them are underway.

A substantive example of mission-based collaboration occurred in the spring of 2020. A faculty member from the communications department, who was teaching a course on communications and activism, worked with the students in the course to develop a series of programs on a variety of social justice issues scheduled for March 2020 (Roy, 2020). During the pandemic, the professor pivoted and the students re-designed their plans to a virtual format. This collaboration working with internal and external constituencies, connecting the curricular and co-curricular around the mission, and staying true to that intention during the pandemic shift to virtual education demonstrates the power and potential of mission-based partnerships.

Other activities also highlight how the College uses its mission to address external and internal contexts. Work with the local interfaith community, particularly through the assistance of the Sidney and Beatrice Albert Interfaith Board, has helped the College form a companion identity to our revered Catholic heritage by being a “faith-friendly campus” working to build and sustain positive relationships with the many faith-based communities around the college and the wider Capital District. The presence of the Interfaith Sanctuary is an embodiment of a commitment to bringing those of diverse faiths together for dialogue, education, celebration and peace-making (The College of Saint Rose website, 2018).

The Athletics Department places mission awareness at the heart of its activities serving and encouraging the College’s student-athletes. The Department’s *Student-Athlete Handbook* links athletic work ethic and success with enthusiastic support of the College’s Mission (Athletics Department, 2021). The department tracks each team’s participation in community service projects, such as the student-athlete-led Black History Month literacy initiative (Athletics website, 2021).

The Career Center and the Coordinator of Internships and Business Relationships in the Huether School of Business work with employers in a variety of capacities to participate in job fairs, present panels on important topics relevant to student internships and employment, host internships, mentor students, and speak to classes. The Career Center also works with Saint Rose departments, faculty, and student organizations to educate them about the Career Center offerings, connecting the internal community with the external one. The 2021-2024 Strategic Plan places a greater emphasis on the Career Center’s role in building connections with external partners, with Tactic 1.2.1 calling for a “revamping” of the Career Center by Fall 2022. (The College of Saint Rose website, n.d.)

Students in the Thelma P. Lally School of Education participate as mentors (undergraduate students) and “lead teachers” (graduate students) in the “Help Yourself Academy,” which brings 24 third-grade students each year from a local public school, Pine Hills Elementary School, who are invited to take part in the program until high school (Saint Rose website, n.d.). The program currently serves 85 economically disadvantaged (i.e., “free or reduced lunch”) pupils. The program includes instruction twice a week throughout the academic year and connects each pupil with a college-student mentor.

Program evaluations suggest that academy attendance improves grades and standardized test scores for pupils. Through this program, Saint Rose students in the School of Education develop firsthand experience providing individualized attention to the children who need it most.

Governance and decision-making at the College are guided by mission and goals. The overarching support for this criterion comes from the annual SOAR process, which requires all offices and departments to create and regularly assess activities and goals related to the strategic plan, which is grounded in the mission. In a period of limited resources, the College has used the mission to drive decisions, making the priority supporting the student experience. In cases of limited resources, the College has sought external partners for support. The Office of Counseling Services works to maximize partnerships with external constituencies to offset limitations with internal resources to provide the widest range of counselling resources needed for students' academic success (Balbuena, 2018). With significant health resource demands, the Office of Health Services has worked at the ongoing development of partnerships and sharing of resources from outside of campus to maximize options for student health and well-being and minimize the impact of limited resources on campus (Parisi, 2021).

The Office of Community Service and Office of Spiritual Life have been particularly inventive and invested in leaning into the College's mission and goals, allowing the mission to guide decisions during a period of great need due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Office of Spiritual Life, 2021). During the semester of Spring 2020, the retirement of the previous director of community service and hiring freezes kept the position vacant for the semester. The mission guided us in defining what was essential to carry forward and the Office of Spiritual Life took on sustaining the outreach trips and supporting the student employees of the office in the work they were doing to continue to offer smaller service opportunities to the campus. Historically, the Office of Spiritual Life saw its role as attending to the needs of the entire College community (including employees and the neighborhood in which the College exists). With the need to prioritize ensuring financial health and the related budgetary decisions, the Office of Spiritual Life made use of its resources to sharpen its mission-focus entirely on student-facing programs, events and supportive groups, clubs, and organizations. Many of these programs could be implemented with low costs – the happiness support class, student faith-based clubs, on-campus retreats, art programs, concerts, guided meditations, and open houses.

The College provides numerous ways **to support scholarly inquiry and creative activity** as part of prioritizing support of student experience, sustaining academic excellence, and fostering an engaged community. In addition to regular professional development funding, all tenured and tenure-track faculty members can apply for professional development grants for activities that contribute to their professional development and the development of their professional field. The College provides grants to an average of 20 faculty members each academic year for a total of \$10,000 in annual funding (The College of Saint Rose, 2022). Through this program, the College has funded research projects, conference travel, art installations, faculty-led workshops, and other activities that allow faculty to engage with their professional disciplines. Faculty sabbaticals have provided the time needed for some of this production. The research work of faculty is also showcased in the annual *Collegiate Copie* (The College of Saint Rose, 2018) The College is currently working on updating the process for showcasing faculty research and professional work.

The College also supports the scholarly and creative activities of students. Undergraduate students make contributions in *The Journal of Undergraduate Research* (Shane, 2020) and through projects supported by Undergraduate Summer Research grants. These projects and others are presented annually in the Spring semester in the Undergraduate Research Symposium (Gomez, 2022).

These endeavors allow students to work directly with faculty on mutually beneficial research projects. Students work under faculty direction but often pursue new directions discovered during the process. Students in the School of Mathematics and Sciences tackle real crimes in the College's Cold Case Center, the only center of its kind in the state (The College of Saint Rose, 2021). Students in the School of Arts and Humanities participate in production of the English department's online literary journal *Pine Hills Review* (Nester, n.d.), and Music Industry students direct all aspects of Rose Record Label Group production (Rose Record Label Group, n.d.). Students in the Thelma P. Lally School of Education gain hands-on experience in the Pauline K. Winkler Speech-Language-hearing Clinic (The College of Saint Rose, 2021). The Huether School of Business supports student participation in The Fed Challenge, which is a team-based competition sponsored by the Federal Reserve in which teams of three to five students take on the role of monetary policymakers by analyzing economic conditions, recommending a course for monetary policy, and participating in a Q&A with judges who are New York Fed economists and staff. Through this experience, students develop skills in analytical thinking, presenting, teamwork, and economic analysis (Dagnino, 2021).

### **Criterion II: Institutional Goals that are Realistic, Appropriate, and Consistent with Mission**

The 2021-2024 Strategic Plan sets forth institutional goals that are consistent with the College's mission. These start, fittingly, with academic excellence (including specific attention to building new programs, improving graduation rates, and building a career center equipped to aid both students and graduates), student success (attending to issues ranging from inclusion to technology support), fostering an engaged, inclusive community, and achieving fiscal strength. Each goal includes objective with specific tactics and timelines for those steps.

These goals spring from the College's own history, wherein for over one hundred years those excluded from customary centers of education (starting with women and then encompassing diverse populations including race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender identity) found a home for intellectual exploration and professional preparation. Our current strategic goals and objectives reflect that history and contribute to the next chapter. Therefore, at a very basic level, the College's institutional goals are appropriate because they reflect what the College has been doing for over one hundred years.

The institutional goals are realistic. They reflect the challenges facing the College, and the strategic plan includes activities and metrics for timely achievement.

### **Criterion III: Goals Focusing on Student Learning, Related Outcomes, and Institutional Improvements**

The College's Strategic Plan includes goals focused on student learning, related outcomes, and institutional improvement. These goals are implemented and assessed in a number of ways. Liberal Education SLOAs demonstrate the breadth and depth of the College's pursuit of academic excellence. English, History, Philosophy and religious Studies, Psychology, and World Languages and Cultures each contribute multiple sections to the undergraduate liberal education curriculum. These liberal education courses introduce students to a wide variety of human behaviors, expressions, and collective actions (The College of Saint Rose, n.d.). Program assessments reflect a high level of success regarding these classes, even accounting for online delivery methods mandated by the COVID-19 pandemic. In

themselves, these reports reflect the College's successful pursuit of its mission: student-centered education.

#### **Criterion IV: Periodic Assessment of Mission/Goals to Ensure they are Relevant and Achievable**

Institutional goals are assessed as part of the strategic planning process to ensure relevance and the College's ability to meet them. A new strategic plan was created with the involvement of the campus community every four to five years, with the most recent plan developed under the leadership of SPPC in 2021 and approved by the Saint Rose Board of Trustees in October 2021 and is available for viewing on the website. As part of the development of the Strategic Plan, the college undertook dozens of focus groups with faculty, staff, students, and trustees focused on mission reflection.

The strategic plan includes institutional goals and outcomes, and the college has developed specific tactics to aid it in achieving its goals. Strategic goals are incorporated into operational goals and evaluated regularly as part of the SOAR process which requires all offices and academic departments to create and regularly assess goals and outcomes related to the strategic plan. These assessments are used as part of a continuous improvement cycle to ensure that the college is meeting goals and supporting its mission.

#### **Requirements of Affiliation and Institutional Priorities**

As is demonstrated in the discussions of both Standards I and II, the College fulfills the Requirement of Affiliation 7: mission statement and related goals approved by governing board and define purpose within context of higher education.

As the College's mission underpins all of the work that we do, this standard report shows how the college supports all of the

- Priority 1, Support Student Experience
- Priority 2, Sustain Academic Excellence
- Priority 3, Foster an Engaged Community
- Priority 4, Ensure Financial Health

#### **Standard I Areas for Improvement and Innovation**

While the College continues to fulfill its mission, this work has been affected by both program and personnel reductions, and by the COVID-19 pandemic. While the College has made adjustments to ensure our mission-focused work, as we emerge out to the pandemic there is an opportunity to re-examine our processes and resources ensure that they align with our mission. In particular, as the Office of Community Service and the Office of Spiritual Life are key offices sustaining our mission, the working groups suggests that the College find resources to fully support the work of these offices and to restore the full range of activities provided by these offices prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **Summary:**

The College of Saint Rose remains committed to its mission and to fulfilling that mission in the work that we undertake with our students, community, and with our faculty and staff. Despite limitations of resources and the imposition of a world-wide pandemic, the College's mission remains central to our planning and our work.

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## Standard II: Ethics and Integrity

### Executive Summary

Ethics and integrity are central, indispensable, and defining hallmarks of effective higher education institutions. In all activities, whether internal or external, an institution must be faithful to its mission, honor its contracts and commitments, adhere to its policies, and represent itself truthfully. The College of Saint Rose is consistently faithful to its mission, honors its contracts and commitments, follows its policies, and is both transparent and truthful with internal and external stakeholders. When problems arise, the College works to address them ethically and with integrity and by following its stated policies and procedures.

### Criterion 1: Commitment to Academic and Intellectual Freedom, Freedom of Expression, and Respect for Intellectual Property Rights

The College of Saint Rose is fully committed to academic and intellectual freedom, and to the free expression of ideas. In our *Faculty Manual*, academic freedom covers research and publication, teaching one's subject matter in the classroom, and ability to speak out as a private citizen, and explains the boundaries of that freedom (The College of Saint Rose, 2021, p. 6). College catalogs include the College's mission statement, integrity statement, statement of values, and academic values putting these at the forefront of students' academic experiences (The College of Saint Rose, 2020)

The range of academic offerings—from specific classes to major programs to public events, lectures, and performances—in all four schools reflect the College's commitment to creating a climate fostering academic freedom and respect for all forms of diversity. Faculty from the schools have participated extensively in the College's "ProVisions" professional development conversations. This endeavor, recently reconfigured as a podcast called "Dear Neighbor" (a reference to the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet's 17th-century founders) is led by Arts and Humanities faculty (The College of Saint Rose, 2021). Huether School of Business and Thelma P. Lally School of Education have partnered with the UpState New York Black Chamber of Commerce to feature a series open to students in all schools about soft skills in the workplace (Gish, 2021). The dean of the School of Mathematics and Sciences and Neil Hellman Library lead the Undergraduate Research Symposium, encouraging students and faculty to explore in partnership research interests of their choosing (Neil Hellman Library, 2022).

### Criterion 2: A Climate Fostering Respect Among Diverse Students and Employees

Regarding ethics, campus climate, and fair treatment of all, the College's new strategic plan includes an institutional goal to "foster an engaged, inclusive, and supported Community." This goal builds upon existing efforts to support diversity. For instance, the Athletics department organizes student-athlete participation in RISE, a national organization advancing social justice through collegiate athletic programming (RISE presentation). After training from the national office, Saint Rose student-athletes then pursue local initiatives to implement RISE's vision, such as increasing voting participation. The spectrum of identity-awareness, diversity, power concepts, and community building reflect content from academic programming as well as the department's own efforts to coordinate student-athlete personal development with community relations.

In the summer of 2020, the murder of George Floyd brought systemic racism to the forefront. College and high school students throughout the country began sharing their painful experiences with institutionalized racism and bias using a medium that was comfortable for them: social media. In response to a social media campaign highlighting allegations of racism at The College of Saint Rose, administration took several steps to address community concerns while working toward a more inclusive and equitable campus climate (WAMC Northeast Public Radio, 2020). A series of community discussions were led by administrators, including action planning and opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to share their experiences and concerns. This included the Planning Action for Tomorrow meeting, attended by more than 125 Saint Rose community members (The College of Saint Rose, 2020). A major component of administrations' response was a revised Bias Response policy and new reporting options for students, allowing for either anonymous or formal reporting based on the preferences of the reporter (The College of Saint Rose, n.d.). The College's efforts to confront racism and discrimination on campus are ongoing as part of a larger effort to ensure a climate of justice and equity.

### **Criterion 3: Fair and Impartial Grievance Policy Addressing Complaints, Policies, and Procedures.**

The employee grievance process is found in both the *Employee Handbook for Administrators* (HR (n.d.), *Employee Handbook for Administrators*) and *Employee Handbook for Staff* (HR. (n.d.), *Employee Handbook for Staff*). Employees are introduced to the handbooks at the new employee orientation and have ongoing access to them via SharePoint. The academic grievance process, which addresses grievances raised by students, is described on pages 15-17 of the *Faculty Manual* (CSR. (2021) *Faculty Manual*). Additionally, on pages 97-99, the Faculty Manual covers the process for grievances related to Rank and Tenure, Academic Freedom, Non-renewal, Removal and Retrenchment. The grievance process for each of the bargaining units is negotiated and documented in the respective union contract. An example is the grievance process found on pages 11-12 of the Security Union Contract (The College of Saint Rose and The Security Officers and Drivers Association Employed at The College of Saint Rose, 2021).

The College has programs and policies aimed at creating an environment of ethical conduct, respect, fairness, equity, and community belonging. Each of the policies listed below includes a detailed description of the investigation process, aiming at fairness and impartiality. Investigations are conducted by more than one person. Policies contain a non-retaliation clause when applicable. These policies are introduced to employees at their new hire orientation. We also provide a separate Title IX/Clery Act orientation that familiarizes new employees with the related requirements and the status of mandatory reporter.

The Bias Response Policy was created in the summer 2020 as a result of discussions prompted by increased awareness of racial injustice. A Bias Response Team, composed of faculty, administrators, staff and students, was created to investigate bias complaints. An accessible bias complaint form serves as a starting point to the bias investigation process (The College of Saint Rose, 2020). Other recently updated policies related to discrimination and harassment are Sexual Harassment and Misconduct policy, pertaining to employees and students (The College of Saint Rose, n.d.), and Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy, pertaining to employees only (The College of Saint Rose, 2021). The College conducts the sexual harassment training annually and for new employees at hire. The Whistleblower policy offers an avenue to prevent and deter illegal and improper actions with the College community (The College of Saint Rose, 2018).

#### **Criterion 4: Avoidance of Conflict of Interest Among All Constituents**

The Conflict of Interest Policy informs the standards of conduct of the members of the Board of Trustees, College Officers, and Key Persons as defined by the policy, as pertains to situation of a possible conflict of interest (The College of Saint Rose, 2017). These individuals are required to familiarize themselves with the policy and complete the Conflict of Interest Questionnaire (The College of Saint Rose, n.d.) . The Nepotism Policy prevents close relatives from working in the same College department (The College of Saint Rose, 2007). The application for employment contains a question about being related to any current employees of the College. If a relative is listed, the Human Resources Office determines if the applicant can work in the selected department as per the policy.

#### **Criterion 5: Fair and Impartial Employee Hiring, Evaluation, Promotion, Discipline, and Separation**

The hiring process for administrators and staff is guided by a Recruiting and Selection Policy, most recently updated in 2018 (The College of Saint Rose, 2018). As an institution that values inclusion, we seek to attract and employ individuals who reflect the diversity found within our student body and across the nation. The objective of this policy is to balance the need to diversify the workforce through external searches with providing promotional opportunities for existing employees. The Office of Human Resources provides and interprets the policy for hiring managers and search committees. A search process begins with a clear and relevant job description, where the requirements align with the contents of the position. In the past few years, hiring managers with the Human Resources consultants have been reviewing educational requirements for open administrator and staff positions and have often removed bachelor's and master's degree requirements for those positions where work experience is more relevant. Not only does this create an opportunity for otherwise qualified individuals to apply but also if hired, it gives them a chance to earn a desired degree through the College's tuition remission program.

Hiring managers, search committees, and Human resources consultants document each stage of the selection process. This includes evaluating applicants' qualifications in the applicant tracking system (Interview Exchange, 2021). Interviewers complete evaluation forms (The College of Saint Rose, 2022). This documentation process helps ensure a selection decision based on relevant reasons.

The goal of hiring teams is to ensure the applicant pools are robust in quantity, quality, and diversity. Among our recruiting sources are those targeting diverse populations, such as Diversity Jobs. The Human Resources consultant conducts an analysis of the applicant pool in regards to diversity, using the metrics within our applicant tracking system (The College of Saint Rose, 2022) aggregate diversity data). This analysis informs further steps in the recruiting process. For most part, hiring teams have been successful in ensuring that qualified diverse individuals who have already applied are considered for the open positions. However, more outreach methods are needed to attract diverse applicants to apply for our open positions in the first place. The Office of Human Resources and Chief Diversity Officer have begun working toward this goal.

The faculty search process is described in detail in the Faculty Manual Appendix on Faculty searches (The College of Saint Rose, 2021). The Office of Human Resources provides search committee training on an as-needed basis. The training uses the Overview of Faculty Search Process, an operational document that offers a step-by-step format (The College of Saint Rose, 2022). Search committees also receive a template for search announcements (The College of Saint Rose, n.d.), guidelines for evaluative comments, and guidelines for campus interviews (The College of Saint Rose, Guidelines for Campus

Interviews). Search committees develop a diversity recruitment plan (The College of Saint Rose, 2022). As the applicant pool develops, the Office of Human Resources reviews its diversity and notifies the search committee so they can take additional steps if diversity is lacking. These procedures help ensure the integrity of the search process.

In 2017, the College committed itself to preparing an annual Affirmative Action Plan (AAP). Even though the College was not, and still it not a federal contractor and therefore not required to have an AAP in place, one of the reasons for implementing an AAP on a voluntary basis is to use it as a tool in efforts to increase employee diversity. This process also helps obtain data on the diversity status as compared to workforce availability. The 2021 AAP demonstrated that the College has an ethnic diversity goal in the category of faculty in the rank of Professor (The College of Saint Rose, 2021). We will continue and enhance our efforts, so the College employees reflect the diversity of our student population.

College administrators and non-union staff participate in the annual performance appraisal process. Per a recommendation from the last Middle States self-study, a new, enhanced process was re-created in 2014, as a result of in-depth research of other programs and electronic platforms, as well as focus groups of managers and employees. Detailed descriptions of the performance criteria and ratings were developed to reduce subjectivity. The training provided by the Office of Human Resources includes an introduction to the performance appraisal timeline and components, demonstration of the electronic tool, and discussion of best practices. (The College of Saint Rose, n.d.) materials used for training.

The performance appraisal is a comprehensive evaluation of both “universal factors,” such as work ethic, and specific job responsibilities. Because of this, the process requires the creation of an individual performance appraisal form for each employee (The College of Saint Rose, n.d.). Throughout the years, we listened to employee feedback about the process, and often heard that it was too cumbersome. Working with a senior leadership in 2017, the program was streamlined to contain fewer performance criteria. Currently, the performance appraisal process is on hiatus imposed mainly by COVID, but it will be re-introduced in January 2022. As part of the re-introduction, the College will share reasons why a formal performance appraisal program is valuable for an organization, including ethical aspects such as fairness and accountability.

The employee handbook describes the corrective action process for College administrators and staff. The process emphasizes the manager’s one-on-one communication with the employee as the first step in addressing performance deficiencies. The second step involves a written document that often takes the form of a performance improvement plan (The College of Saint Rose, n.d.). By listing areas of improvement, specific expectations, and timelines, this process is a tool to help the employee succeed. Human Resources works with managers to support them in addressing performance deficiencies and to ensure the process is applied equitably to all employees. As per the policy referenced above, some employee actions, such as harassment or falsification of documents, constitute a cause for immediate termination. However, the Office of Human Resources conducts thorough investigations of such situations prior to terminating employment. The discipline and discharge processes for employees in the College’s four unions are negotiated and reflected in each union contract (see Article #17 in Security Union Contract).

The College participates in a CUPA (College and University Professional Association) annual salary survey, which provides access to data used in the market analysis. We share the data with hiring managers when determining the salary range for open positions and promotions (The College of Saint

Rose, n.d.) CUPA template. Frequently the CUPA salary exceeds the College budget for the position, which typically prevents the College from offering an externally equitable salary, or, if offered, the new employee may create pay inequity with current employees.

The below-market compensation has taken a toll on employee morale and prompted increased turnover. Within the current year, the College has experienced an increase in voluntary employee turnover compared to the prior year, with 101 employees resigning or retiring. Based on the 2021 turnover report, the main reasons, along with relocation/family reasons, are pay/benefits (15%) and job security (13%) (The College of Saint Rose, 2022). In the current draft strategic plan, one of the tactics toward the objective of increasing employee retention is to increase the compensation pool in order to adjust compensation, which would be preceded by a comprehensive equity analysis.

In summer 2020, in order to address the budget deficit and financial challenges caused by COVID, the College eliminated or placed on hold 50 vacant positions and laid off 20 administrators and staff. Later in the same year, as a result of elimination of academic programs, 28 faculty members were provided with a one-year notice of layoff.

The decision-making process for academic program elimination was shared by the President with the campus community 6 months in advance (White, 2020). President's memo on program elimination Following the Faculty Manual, the College administration worked through his process in partnership with the faculty. In the months preceding program elimination, the College announced the Distinguished Professor Program, offering a voluntary early retirement option to the faculty, while at the same time meeting anticipated curriculum and administrative needs (The College of Saint Rose, n.d.).

In the process of making budget reduction decisions affecting administrators and staff, division leaders considered a possibility of modifying a position, for example reducing the hours or number of months the position works, in order to avoid laying off an employee. These job modifications were implemented for 8 positions.

In conducting the layoff process, the College ensured that it be conducted in a respectful manner, with information and resources that affected employees need. Each employee was provided with a packet that included a personalized pay and benefits guide, key dates and important contact information (The College of Saint Rose, n.d.). Employees were also offered free outplacement services, including an outplacement firm that specializes in supporting faculty. The utilization of outplacement program was 50% for administrators and staff and 20% for faculty. In April 2022, President White announced that the College would restore salaries and reinstate a retirement match.

The faculty promotion and tenure process is governed by the Faculty Manual. Faculty from all four schools participate in the Rank and Tenure Committee. In the tenure process, the Committee receives the data regarding teaching, community service, and scholarly or artistic performance provided by the faculty member seeking tenure. The Committee evaluates this data against the published standards for tenure approved by the Full Faculty and makes an appropriate report either supporting or opposing tenure. The Provost reviews the Committee report and implements the recommendation unless there is evidence that its report failed to adequately consider the candidate's academic achievements.

#### **Criterion 6: Honesty and Truthfulness in Internal and External Marketing and Communications**

The work of the Office of Marketing and Communications staff is guided by the American Marketing Association's Statement of Ethics (American Marketing Association, 2021). This statement directs marketers to:

1. Do no harm. This means consciously avoiding harmful actions or omissions by embodying high ethical standards and adhering to all applicable laws and regulations in the choices we make.
2. Foster trust in the marketing system. This means striving for good faith and fair dealing so as to contribute toward the efficacy of the exchange process as well as avoiding deception in product design, pricing, communication, and delivery of distribution.
3. Embrace ethical values. This means building relationships and enhancing consumer confidence in the integrity of marketing by affirming these core values: honesty, responsibility, fairness, respect, transparency and citizenship.

In addition to these guiding principles, the College also has a media policy for communications on behalf of the College to ensure information shared with the public is accurate while not being restrictive to individual rights (The College of Saint Rose, 2019).

Each year, the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness at Saint Rose publishes a College Fact Book that includes data related to the number of programs, enrollment, demographic profile of the undergraduate and graduate student body, and College financial information (Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness, 2022). This book is available to the internal community via Sharepoint, and the Office of Marketing and Communications uses those statistics in its student recruitment materials, on the website, and in e-mail communications with prospective students, alumni, donors, and the media to ensure consistency and accuracy of data. The staff also works closely with deans and department chairs to accurately tell the story of each program on the website, in viewbooks, and in other student recruitment materials.

Internally, the College community relies on the President and senior leadership's communications to obtain accurate information and see a path forward, especially in times of challenge. As a result of both COVID and the budget deficit, the College had to make difficult decisions about academic program eliminations, layoffs, furloughs, and pay reductions. These decisions were communicated in a transparent and empathetic manner (The College of Saint Rose, 2020). In addition, the President, in collaboration with VP for Finance and Administration and other members of senior leadership, has been offering convocations over Zoom to present facts and numbers related to our budget and to answer employee questions.

To regularly communicate about mission-related issues, bi-annual convocation gatherings are held with employees, during which the College president and her leadership team share updates on new initiatives, survey data, enrollment, and finances. External experts are sometimes invited to discuss a topic important to the College's mission.

In the aftermath of nationally significant events such as the death of George Floyd and the Capitol insurrection, the President's communications invoked the College mission and the values of our founders, as a perspective to consider these events (White, 2020). The transparent approach was also demonstrated in listening to students who had expressed concerns on social media about racial bias at

Saint Rose, and relaying these concerns to the whole community, with commitment to address them (White, 2020).

When interviewing applicants, the Office of Human Resources strives to both attract qualified candidates to the College and present them with a realistic picture of the institution. This includes informing the interviewees, in general terms, about the financial situation of the College in the context of the challenges facing the higher education industry as a whole. Decisions about employment are some of the most important ones a person can make, and applicants deserve to see a complete picture of the organization they are joining. Of course, applicants also hear about the steps the College is taking to ensure that it will thrive for another 100 years.

### **Criterion 7: Services and Programs Promoting Affordability and Accessibility and Enabling Students to Understand Debt and Value**

The College has been committed to underserved populations since its founding. In 1920 that was primarily women, but the College is committed to today to ensuring access today to underrepresented students, who represent a variety of statuses and cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. In Fall 2021, 40% of all full-time undergraduates were Pell-eligible a number that has remained steady in recent years (Fact Book, January 2022). And, since 2013, Saint Rose has been a test-optional institution, recognizing that it is difficult to understand a students' gifts and abilities based on just a numerical score on a test that might hold certain biases (The College of Saint Rose, 2013).

**To help make College more affordable**, the College has opted to participate in New York State's Enhanced Tuition Award program, which provides additional state aid to New York State students at participating private colleges who meet the program requirements (The College of Saint Rose, n.d.). A benefit of the program is that it freezes the tuition rate for the duration of the student's time at the institution.

**The College provides information to students to help them understand funding sources and options.** The College launched a microsite with Financial Aid information in 2019 called [financialaidking.com](http://financialaidking.com), where information is supplied by Assistant Vice President for Financial Aid Steve Dwire, our very own Financial Aid King (The College of Saint Rose, 2019). This is the place where videos and resources that are also used in the communications stream to prospective students, are housed. The videos detail – in a very accessible way – the difference between grants, loans, and scholarships; the importance of and how to fill out the FAFSA; and how to read and interpret a financial aid award letter. The College also holds sessions during student recruitment events that explain the financial aid process and offers both online and in-person help to students and their families with the financial aid process.

In addition to the aforementioned Financial Aid King resources, workshops and individual financial aid counseling sessions, the "Financial Aid Policies and Procedures" section of the institution's website answers frequently asked questions, including how to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress in order to maintain aid and the annual evaluation of financial need, where changes in income could make need-based aid go up or down depending on the student's situation (The College of Saint Rose, n.d.). When first-year and transfer students get their financial aid packages, the information provides an explanation of the various types of aid broken into grants, scholarships, loans, and work study with the final net cost. Information is also provided about the College's graduation rate, median borrowing, and expected tuition and fees over the next three years that accounts for potential increases. The financial

aid package also provides additional information about how to pay for college, payment plans, additional loan options and a cost of attendance comparison based on whether they choose to live on or off campus.

Continuing students see their aid decisions for the upcoming year online in Banner, which details cost and all applied aid. The Financial Aid Office is open to students Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. to answer student and family questions by phone, in-person, or via Zoom. Counseling sessions can include helping them find other ways to pay for college or help filing needed paperwork.

An outcomes section on the College's website shows post-graduation employment results and average earnings so student can determine whether they see value in investing in a Saint Rose education. (*Outcomes* (n.d.). CSR. Retrieved 7-26-2022. <https://www.strose.edu/outcomes/>)

### **Criterion 8: Full Disclosure of Information on Institution-wide Assessments, Outcomes, Compliance with Commission's Requirement of Affiliation, Substantive Changes, and Policies**

The College's Compliance Committee regularly reviews compliance responsibilities that pertain to the College as a whole, as well as to specific departments and areas of activity. The Committee maintains a spreadsheet of compliance responsibilities that includes over 280 items ranging from IPEDS reporting to immunization compliance. Each compliance responsibility lists the applicable legal requirement, responsible Cabinet member and department, actions to complete and due dates (The College of Saint Rose, n.d.). Please see the Compliance Committee report included in this Middle States assessment for additional details. (Compliance Committee, 2022).

The College provides a Charter and Accreditations section on its website, which explains our affiliation with Middle States and other accrediting bodies. Visitors are directed to contact the Registrar's Office "to obtain or view documents related to any of the College's approved accreditation or licensing." (The College of Saint Rose, n.d.).

### **Criterion 9: Periodic Assessment of Ethics and Integrity**

The College engages in routine, periodic assessment of its practices regarding mission, ethics, and integrity. A prominent example is this particular working group of the Middle States self-study. The committee collects examples of the institution's ethics and integrity appearing in its daily affairs. This collective work starts with, but is not limited to, academic department SLOA reports and administrative unit SOARs. Furthermore, the examples cited elsewhere in this report demonstrate a commitment to periodic assessment across academic and administrative units. These assessments are both routine (they occur in the normal course of the academic calendar) and periodic (they are engaged intentionally at specific times, such as this cycle of MSCHE self-study). Periodic and routine assessment backlights the College's 2021-2024 Strategic Plan as it includes objectives, tactics, and timelines, facilitating assessment.

### **Requirements of Affiliation and Institutional Priorities**

As is demonstrated in the discussions of both Standards I and II, the College fulfills the Requirement of Affiliation 7: mission statement and related goals approved by governing board and define purpose within context of higher education.

As this report has shown, by acting ethically and with integrity in regards to its operations and policies, the college supports all four institutional priorities:

- Priority 1, Support Student Experience
- Priority 2, Sustain Academic Excellence
- Priority 3, Foster an Engaged Community
- Priority 4, Ensure Financial Health

### **Standard II Areas for Improvement and Innovation**

The work that the College has done in the past few years related to diversity and equity have supported a climate of justice and equity. As we move forward the College can build upon these efforts by continuing to build resources and examine policies to ensure that we continue to enhance our campus community in regards to issues of diversity and equity. The College should continue efforts to build a diverse community of employees, particularly in the faculty ranks, that is reflective of the diversity of our student population. Efforts to address equity in employee compensation would also help to provide stability of service to students.

### **Summary**

The College is committed to providing an environment characterized by ethical behavior and integrity. The College is faithful to its mission, honors its contracts and commitments, and follows its policies and procedures, and addressing issues and problems with integrity.

**Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience**

**Executive Summary**

The College of Saint Rose provides students with rigorous and coherent learning experiences driven by the College’s mission and consistent with higher education expectations. The College’s 2021-2024 Strategic Plan identifies academic excellence and student success as top priorities for the institution. With its engaged and accomplished faculty and excellent student support services, the College is continually working toward these goals. Throughout their career at Saint Rose, undergraduate and graduate students are provided with clearly stated guidelines for timely progress to graduation and they are given academic, logistical, and emotional assistance to help them achieve their academic and professional goals. The College offers a thoughtful and rigorous educational experience that provides students with the skills and knowledge to pursue their professional ambitions, better advocate for themselves and others, and become well-rounded citizens of the world.

**Criteria 1 and 3: Degrees and Programs Offered**

The College of Saint Rose offers 51 undergraduate majors, five undergraduate certificates, 31 master’s degree programs, 13 dual degree programs, and 22 certificates at the post-baccalaureate or post-master’s levels (The College of Saint Rose, Office of Institutional Effectiveness 2021a). These programs are divided across four schools: the School of Arts and Humanities, the Huether School of Business, the Thelma P. Lally School of Education, and the School of Mathematics and Sciences. Each school is led by a dean who, in consultation with the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs (Provost/VPAA), is responsible for the management, academic integrity, and overall direction of the school.

In 2020-2021, the Board of Trustees approved the development and implementation of a multi-pronged plan to address the College’s financial challenges. This plan included \$8 million in reductions in staff and administrative operations, followed by \$6 million in academic-related reductions. These reductions included the elimination of 25 academic programs (16 undergraduate degrees, six graduate degrees, three advanced certificates).

**Table III.1: Degrees and Programs Offered as of Fall 2021**

School of Arts and Humanities	Huether School of Business	Thelma P. Lally School of Education	School of Mathematics and Sciences
<b>Baccalaureate Programs</b>	<b>Baccalaureate Programs</b>	<b>Baccalaureate Programs</b>	<b>Baccalaureate Programs</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 9 Bachelor of Arts Programs (1 discontinued)</li> <li>▪ 2 Bachelor of Fine Arts Programs (2 discontinued)</li> <li>▪ 1 Bachelor of Music Program (1 discontinued)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 4 Bachelor of Business Administration Programs</li> <li>▪ 9 Bachelor of Science Programs (2 discontinued; 4 to be replaced)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 7 Bachelor of Science Programs</li> </ul> <p><b>Graduate Programs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 23 Master of Science in Education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 2 Bachelor of Arts Program (1 discontinued)</li> <li>▪ 17 Bachelor of Science Programs (6 discontinued)</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4 Bachelor of Science Programs (3 discontinued)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Graduate Programs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 Master of Science Programs (1 discontinued)</li> <li>1 Master of Business Administration Program</li> </ul>	<p>Programs (5 discontinued)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Master of Science in Education + Certificate of Advanced Study Program</li> </ul>	<p><b>Graduate Programs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3 Master of Science Programs (1 discontinued)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Dual Degree Programs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 Bachelor of Arts/Master of Science in Education Programs</li> </ul>	<p><b>Dual Degree Programs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Bachelor of Science/Master of Science Program</li> <li>3 Bachelor of Science/Master of Business Administration Programs (1 discontinued)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Certificate Programs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>13 Certificate of Advanced Study Programs (3 discontinued)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Dual Degree Programs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 Bachelor of Arts/Master of Science in Education Program (2 discontinued)</li> <li>1 Bachelor of Science/Master of Business Administration Program</li> <li>1 Bachelor of Science/Master of Science in Education Program</li> </ul>
<p><b>Certificate Programs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Certificate Program</li> </ul>	<p><b>Certificate Programs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Certificate Program</li> <li>3 Certificate of Advanced Study Programs (2 discontinued)</li> </ul>		<p><b>Certificate Programs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3 Certificate Programs</li> <li>2 Certificate of Advanced Study Programs</li> </ul>

All the degrees and programs at The College of Saint Rose are registered and its professional programs are fully approved by the Board of Regents through the New York State Education Department (NYSED) (New York State Education Department, 2019). Specialized accrediting agencies have granted accreditation to the programs listed below:

- The School of Business, inclusive of its degree programs at the bachelor's and master's level, is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP).
- The Communication Sciences and Disorders program at the master's level is accredited by the Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology.
- Programs offered for the preparation of all school professionals, leading to initial and advanced certifications, are accredited by the Association for the Advancement of Quality Educator Preparation (AAQEP).

- The bachelor's and master's degree programs in Social Work are accredited by the Council for Social Work Education, a specialized accrediting agency recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.
- The specialist's level School Psychology Program is approved by the National Association of School Psychologists.
- The Department of Music was accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music until December 31, 2021 and our Art & Design programs were accredited by the National Association of Schools of Art & Design (NASAD) until June 30, 2022.

In registering programs with NYSED, the College aligns **its curricula with the state standards to ensure that the programs are of a length appropriate to the objectives of the degree or certificate, designed to foster a coherent student learning experience, and focused on promoting the synthesis of student learning.** The content of the curriculum must show growth from the introductory level to the advanced level while covering the subjects with appropriate breadth depth and currency. Faculty design curricula that respond to advances in scholarship and the needs of students and the broader society. At the end of their respective studies, students demonstrate the knowledge and skills they have acquired over the course of their education in a culminating capstone course or experience.

As of the 2021-2023 Undergraduate Catalog, the College's bachelor's degrees require the completion of major courses, 10 courses in the liberal arts and sciences core (called The Core), and the fulfilment of the diversity requirement, which offers students the opportunity to delve into the topics related to diversity (The College of Saint Rose, Registrar, 2021). Graduate programs build upon undergraduate work and aim to move students to advanced levels in their chosen fields. Such specialization involves a quantitative and qualitative increase in knowledge; the strengthened ability to critique and synthesize; a deepened understanding of the principles, problems, ethical issues, and histories of the chosen disciplines; and the development and improvement of the attitudes and skills particular to the fields of study. The College's graduate programs encourage this specialization by providing students with advanced-level course work with opportunities to conduct and report on original research. The programs also challenge students to balance their professional development with an increased awareness of and concern for the needs of society.

Since the last Middle States report, the College has added the Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) degree, which is offered in Finance, Management, Marketing, and Sales Management. The BBA degree, approved in 2020, offers students the ability to take business elective courses to develop a secondary focus and, thus, expose them to other opportunities and flexibility in their major and the job market (The College of Saint Rose, Huether School of Business, 2021a; The College of Saint Rose Huether School of Business, 2021b). Also of note is the creation of accelerated degree options, which provide a pathway for students to complete both a bachelor's degree and a master's degree at an accelerated pace. For this option, departments work together to match undergraduate and graduate programs to improve the marketability of their graduates.

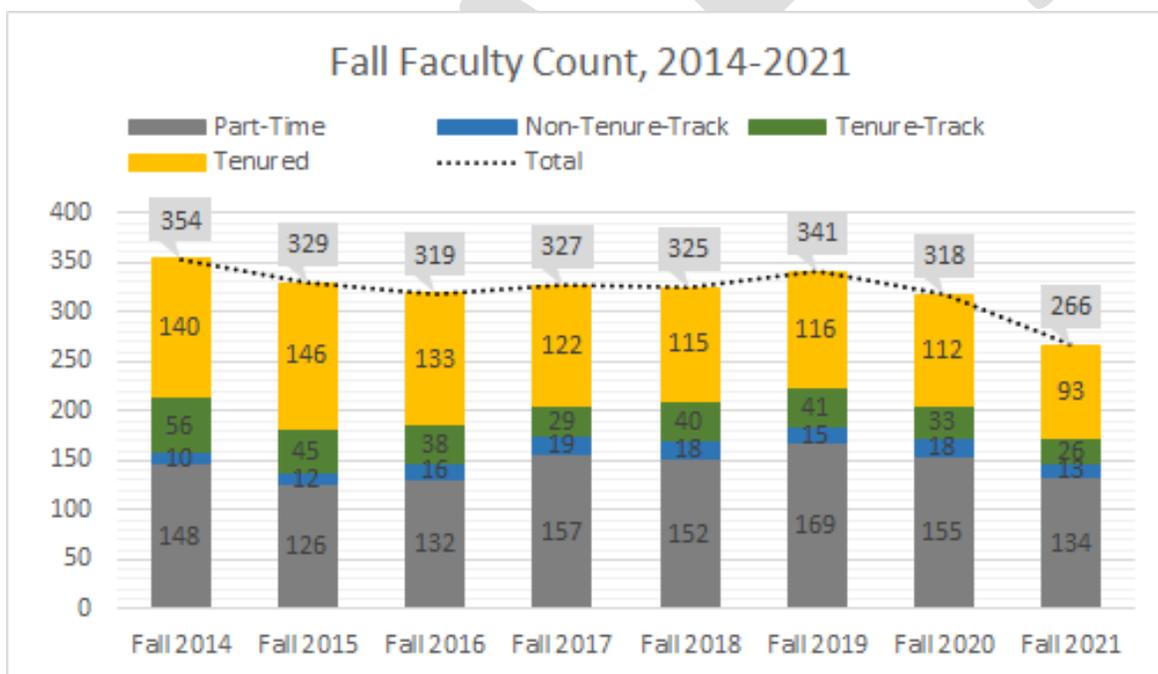
The **Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs provide a clear and accurate listing of academic programs and their requirements** (The College of Saint Rose, Registrar, 2021; The College of Saint Rose, Registrar, 2020). Departmental faculty revise and review each catalog every other year to ensure that their **programs are accurately represented and described in a way that students are able to understand and follow.** The catalogs are available electronically on the College's website going back over 10 years. Hard copy catalogs are available through the Registrar's Office. To provide Saint Rose undergraduates with more transparency in mapping out their schedules and to improve their progress

to the completion of their degrees, the College includes four-year plans for undergraduate degree programs—an addition since the last Middle States report. These plans help students and faculty advisors with developing course schedules that ensure timely completion of the degrees. In concert with faculty advisors and the Office of Academic Advising, undergraduate and graduate students also monitor their progress toward fulfilling their degree requirements with DegreeWorks, the College’s degree audit tool. At the request of the Provost/VPAA, departments were charged with creating four-year plans for their programs for inclusion in the 2017-2019 undergraduate catalog and beyond. There is currently no mechanism to receive feedback on the four-year plan and its usefulness, so it is recommended that feedback be gathered from students and advisors.

**Criterion 2: Faculty**

Faculty at The College of Saint Rose have, at the center of their work, the education of their students and they are rigorous and effective in designing, delivering, and assessing student learning experiences **The faculty is sufficient in number for maintaining a small class size that the College is committed to offering to its students.** Their credentials are carefully vetted at the time of hire and their teaching performance is regularly reviewed.

**Chart III.1: Fall Faculty Count, 2014-2021**



In Fall 2020, the College employed 322 faculty members (including four tenured and tenure-track librarians), roughly half of which is made up of part-time instructors (155); the 163 full-time faculty is made up of 112 tenured faculty, 33 tenure-track faculty, and 18 visiting faculty on annual contracts (National Center for Education Statistics, 2021). As a result of the elimination of 25 academic programs in the 2020-2021 Academic Year, 33 tenured and tenure-track positions and eight visiting faculty positions were terminated. As shown in the chart above, this decline in faculty numbers was preceded by earlier declines with the terminations of tenure-track and tenured faculty positions in 2015-2016, along with continuing attrition due to retirements or resignations for other positions—with limited

replacements for those positions. At the same time, the College has been committed to providing small classes taught by full-time faculty. A faculty-student ratio of 14:1 has remained consistent over the past five years (The College of Saint Rose, Office of Institutional Effectiveness, 2020). A majority of our undergraduate classes contain between 10 and 20 students (The College of Saint Rose, Office of Institutional Effectiveness, 2021a). Indeed, the small class sizes remain at the heart of the Saint Rose experience.

**Table III.2: Average Class Size, 2014-2021**



Fifty-seven percent of total student credit hours are taught by tenured or tenure-track faculty (The College of Saint Rose, VPAA Office, 2021a). These numbers indicate that, while the faculty are sufficient in number to teach the necessary courses, the College, like many other institutions, could do more to right the ratio of tenure-track and tenured faculty in relation to adjunct instructors. Students (and the institution overall) would benefit from less of a reliance on contingent employment.

**Table III.3: Percentage of Student Credit Hours Taught by Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty, 2017-2021**



The vast majority of full-time faculty hold a terminal degree as shown in the table below (The College of Saint Rose, Office of Institutional Effectiveness, 2021a). The College has instituted a Faculty Credentials Review Process, which was adapted from the 2017 Higher Learning Commission’s (HLC) Determining Qualified Faculty Through HLC’s Criteria for Accreditation and Assumed Practice, used for both tenure-track and contingent faculty (The College of Saint Rose, VPAA Office, 2018). At the time of hire, the process reviews the qualifications of the faculty member based on their degree(s) and CV to affirm their credentials to teach courses at certain levels. For example, a faculty member teaching at the graduate level is required to have earned a doctorate or terminal degree in the discipline of the course being offered, whereas faculty teaching at the undergraduate level must have earned a doctorate or a master’s degree in the teaching discipline. The process also accounts for “tested experience,” which may include professional experiences related to the teaching discipline or a record of scholarly or creative

activity directly related to the teaching discipline. **The Faculty Credentials Review Process works to ensure that faculty are qualified for their positions and the work they do.**

**Table III.4: Full-Time Faculty with Terminal Degree, 2014-2021**



Tenure-track and tenured **faculty are reviewed regularly and equitably in a variety of ways during the tenure process and beyond, and visiting and contingent faculty are reviewed in transparent and fair ways as well.** The effectiveness of the faculty’s teaching, service, and scholarly inquiry can also be seen in the College’s tenure and promotion process as stipulated in the *Faculty Manual* (The College of Saint Rose, VPAA Office, 2021,d). Every effort is made to evaluate probationary faculty before and during the **tenure process in an equitable way by disseminating clear and fair criteria, expectations, policies, and procedures** through meetings and a variety of written documents, available on SharePoint. Probationary faculty on the tenure track are reviewed annually by their department Probationary Faculty Evaluation Committee (PFEC), convened by the department chair (The College of Saint Rose, VPAA Office, 2021,d). Probationary reviews of faculty are designed to be formative and assist faculty to develop and grow as teachers and scholars. Department chairs provide guidance to these faculty, as does the PFEC. The tenure and promotion process is outlined in the *Faculty Manual* and, in advance of the application deadline in the early fall, the Rank and Tenure Committee, which is made up of tenured faculty representatives from the four schools, holds two information sessions to answer questions and make the process as clear as possible.

As part of the tenure and promotion process, faculty are evaluated on their teaching, research, and service through course evaluations, observation reports of their teaching by other faculty (including the department chair), colleague recommendation letters, faculty data activity forms in which their service work and research activity are listed, and more. Faculty applying for tenure must submit all course evaluations from the fall and spring semesters in the year prior to their application (The College of Saint Rose, VPAA Office, 2021, d). Faculty must also submit an additional four course evaluations from prior academic years, culminating in a minimum of 12 course evaluations. For promotion to Associate Professor or Professor, applicants must submit course evaluations from at least four courses from the year preceding the application. This process ensures faculty demonstrate excellence in teaching both before and after earning tenure. Deans must also observe the teaching of tenure-track faculty. Chairs (or their proxies) regularly observe the teaching of adjunct instructors, write observation reports, and review their performance with them. Results from course evaluations are reviewed by department chairs and deans for all faculty, regardless of tenure status. These procedures are clearly laid out in the *Faculty Manual, Information Handbook for Visiting Fulltime Faculty, and Information Handbook for Adjunct Faculty* and communicated verbally to the faculty by department chairs (The College of Saint Rose, VPAA Office, 2021, d; The College of Saint Rose, VPAA Office, 2019; The College of Saint Rose, VPAA Office, 2021b). All tenure-track and tenured faculty are also required to turn in data activity forms to their deans in the spring semester, on a date announced in the official academic calendar. In addition

to providing the institution with an overview of the work of the faculty, these faculty activity data forms offer a way for faculty to synthesize their service work for their department, their school, and the College overall, along with service to their field, scholarly work, and civic service.

To earn tenure, faculty must hold a doctorate or terminal master's degree, demonstrate evidence of effective teaching, and provide evidence of positive contributions to their program area and to the College community. Faculty are also asked to provide evidence of service to the civic community, membership and participation in professional societies, or published work within their field of study. Saint Rose faculty are accomplished, rigorous, and effective scholars, researchers, artists, and practitioners. For example, social work faculty have not only published widely in their field but also engage in or have engaged in clinical social work in community hospices, the Albany Medical Center's emergency room, the court system, and the Albany County Department for Children, Youth, and Families. The inclusion of service to the civic community as a qualification for tenure encourages faculty to be leaders who demonstrate community engagement, which is at the heart of the College's mission and history.

**The liberal arts and sciences core curriculum and the curricula of each major, minor, and certificate are designed, delivered, and assessed by faculty who are experts in their fields.** After development by faculty in the relevant departments (in concert with deans, the provost/VPAA, and other relevant administrative offices), proposals for new undergraduate programs and changes to The Core curriculum and to college-wide academic policies are reviewed by the Undergraduate Academic Committee (UAC). Fifteen tenure-track and tenured faculty members serve on the committee. Motions passed by UAC are then brought to the full faculty for consideration (The College of Saint Rose, Undergraduate Academic Committee, 1992). Changes to graduate programs and policies are reviewed by the Graduate Academic Committee (GAC), which consists of faculty representatives from the graduate degree-granting departments (The College of Saint Rose, Graduate Academic Committee, 2012). This process of decision-making—grounded in departmental faculty, UAC/GAC, and the full faculty—makes it clear that the institution has a core of faculty with sufficient responsibility to the institution to assure the continuity and coherence of the institution's educational programs.

**Assessment of student learning and teaching effectiveness is carried out in three ways at the College:** (1) liberal arts and sciences core assessment through Student Learning Outcomes Assessment (SLOAs) for each learning outcome of The Core curriculum, (2) portfolio assessment of student work within individual programs, and (3) the program review process. SLOAs are completed on a yearly basis and program review is conducted on a seven-year cycle. (See criterion III.8 as well as Standard V for additional information.) UAC oversees both processes, and assessment reports from each program are due June 15<sup>th</sup> of each year.

A 2020 report on liberal education assessment, conducted by the Liberal Education Subcommittee of UAC, shows that eight of the 10 liberal education categories studied submitted at least one SLOA between 2016 and 2019 (The College of Saint Rose, VPAA Office, 2020b). Four of the 10 represented had data for all three years. The overall recommendation from that committee state that improved consistency in implementing and responding to the SLOAs is necessary; this recommendation is also part of the 2019-2020 College of Saint Rose Assessment Update (The College of Saint Rose, Institutional Assessment Working Group, 2020). Importantly, both reports note that more faculty training on assessment is necessary to increase the percentage of SLOAs submitted. The 2019-2020 College of Saint Rose Assessment Update, however, which covers the 2019-2020 academic year (the year after the Liberal Education Assessment Report) shows that 81% of SLOAs were submitted, which is

an increase from the previous academic year's total of 73% (The College of Saint Rose, Institutional Assessment Working Group, 2020).

**In addition to internal assessment of programs, the College collects evidence from the students themselves to develop a broader picture of their overall experiences at The College of Saint Rose.** Most recently, in Spring of 2021, the College administered the Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium (HEDS) Senior Survey. Its results indicated that 47% of Saint Rose seniors scored highly "Good Teaching and High-Quality Interactions with Faculty," responding "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" to all nine statements in that category. This percentage is similar to that of seniors at comparison institutions. 57% of the College's seniors indicated the faculty had challenged their ideas in class "often to very often." And 74% said that faculty posed challenging ideas in class "often to very often." Overall, the College scored well in comparison to other institutions when it came to "Challenging Assignments and High Faculty Expectations," as well (The College of Saint Rose, Office of Institutional Effectiveness, 2021b). This feedback from graduating seniors illustrates rigorous and effective teaching on the part of faculty.

While course evaluation results, due to their demonstrated biases, must be regarded with caution, they indicate that faculty are engaged in rigorous and effective teaching and assessment of student learning (The College of Saint Rose, Online Learning Services, 2021). The College switched from paper course evaluations to SmartEvals online evaluations in the fall of 2016. From 2016-2021, the average scores on these evaluations are uniformly high on the graduate and undergraduate levels for categories that focused specifically on teaching, including those that asked if an instructor engaged in teaching that allowed students to gain an understanding of the subject and graded according to clearly presented standards. With the highest possible score of 4.0 (or "strongly agree"), Saint Rose students perceive faculty as performing at a level of above 3.55, which falls between "strongly agree" and "agree," across the board. These results indicate that students perceive Saint Rose faculty as excellent teachers engaged in rigorous and effective teaching and the assessment of student learning. While the faculty overall receive high marks for teaching effectiveness, it is worth noting that SmartEvals completion rates have fallen significantly over the past five years from a 78% return rate in 2016 to only 45% in 2021 (The College of Saint Rose, Online Learning Services, 2022). Online Learning Services is working to help increase this rate through reminders and modules in Canvas, the College's learning management system.

In supporting the teaching, scholarship, and creative work of faculty, **the College offers several forms of professional development support.** After 12 semesters of full-time service, tenured and tenure-track faculty are eligible to apply for sabbatical leave for one semester at full pay or two semesters at half pay (The College of Saint Rose, VPAA Office, 2021, d). All tenure-track and tenured faculty receive a professional development fund of \$700 each year via their deans (The College of Saint Rose, VPAA Office, 2021, d). In addition, faculty are eligible to apply for additional professional development funds of up to \$600 each semester from an open call for applications overseen by the Provost/VPAA and the Professional Development Committee, which is made up of faculty peers with at least one representative from each of the four schools at the College. Historically, funding has been awarded for a variety of projects, including expenses associated with presentations at the Popular Culture Association National Conference, the Communication Association's conference, and the National Association of School Psychologists national convention—to give only a few examples. The awards have also supported research projects exploring Shakespeare and the metabolic rift, the therapeutic value of support groups for people who stutter, and how Capital Region non-profit social service agencies responded to the pandemic—among many others. The College also supports faculty applications for

external grants through the grants review process. While faculty are provided with various forms of professional development opportunities for innovation and growth, the financial circumstances of the College have limited what is available and, indeed, various forms of professional development have been reduced or eliminated.

Individual departments provide other kinds of support to foster an engaged community. For example, the English Department has long supported the instructors of “English 105: Expository Writing, Research, and Speaking,” a required Core course, with annual orientation/professional development days in August and a learning community run throughout the academic year by the Coordinator of First-Year Writing. Compensation is provided for adjunct instructors who attend these events. These forms of support offer full-time and part-time faculty a sense of community and spaces for discussing and developing their teaching of first-year writing.

For the College overall, Provisions, a long-running “monthly faculty development series dedicated to exploring, publicizing, and disseminating innovative teaching and learning across the disciplines,” offers a space for conversations across the disciplines with faculty, administrators, and staff (The College of Saint Rose, VPAA Office, n.d.a.). Indeed, Provisions has been a site for discussions about antiracism, the value of the liberal arts, and much more. There has been some discussion at the College about the establishment of a Center for Teaching and Learning, but it has been placed on hold due to financial constraints. That said, the support for Provisions makes it clear that the institution contains a vibrant culture of discussions about teaching and learning.

The faculty have risen to the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 public health emergency and have promptly and successfully transitioned to virtual delivery in March 2020. In the summer of 2020, the College established the Fall Planning Core Team and tasked it with creating a campus-wide plan for course delivery addressing NYS guidelines on social distancing. Implementing the plan, the faculty managed to offer students choices over virtual, hybrid, and in-person delivery modes in Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 semesters.

#### **Criterion 4: Learning Opportunities and Resources**

College provides sufficient opportunities to support both programs and students’ academic progress.

The **Academic Success Center hosts various academic support services** that students have access to while at The College of Saint Rose (The College of Saint Rose, Academic Success Center, n.d.). To promote continuous excellence, these support services are assessed annually through the Strategic Administrative Unit Outcomes Assessment Report (SOAR) process (The College of Saint Rose, Office of Institutional Effectiveness, 2021c).

The Academic Success Center hosts drop-in content tutoring in subjects like computer science, nursing, and business and accounting—along with study clusters that focus on a specific course. The Academic Success Center also offers students tutoring for the math placement test. Incoming students have the option to participate in Summer Bridge for intensive mathematics tutoring prior to taking (or retaking) the math placement test. In Summer 2020, the last year the program was held, all students who attended every class and tutoring session in the program received a score high enough for the math courses within their respective majors. Students in general express satisfaction with the service (The College of Saint Rose, Office of Institutional Effectiveness, 2021d). In response to the Covid-19

pandemic, the Academic Success Center took the opportunity to build up its online tutoring options to tutor students remotely and saw an increase in student demand for the service (The College of Saint Rose, Office of Institutional Effectiveness, 2021d).

As part of the Academic Success Center, the Writing Center offers one-on-one online and in-person writing support to all registered Saint Rose students (The College of Saint Rose, Writing Center, n.d.). The Writing Center offers a writing lab every Friday and a variety of tutoring hours including evening and Sunday hours. The office has continuously encouraged students and faculty to utilize its services and has seen an increase of usage over time, notably in online tutoring during the pandemic (The College of Saint Rose, Office of Institutional Effectiveness, 2021e). In anonymous student evaluations, the Writing Center received high marks for its services. Students consistently rank the Writing Center in the “4” range, the highest score on the scale (96% of the time or more) in categories relating to the helpfulness of the tutors and the extent to which they would recommend the Writing Center to others.

The Office of Services for Students with Disabilities provides individuals with disabilities an equal opportunity to participate in college programs and activities through academic accommodations and environmental modifications (The College of Saint Rose, Office of Services for Students with Disabilities, n.d.). The office works closely with other campus offices including Academic Advising, Residence Life, and Counseling to offer a support network for students with disabilities. The office has noted the gaps in staff and student access to and skill level in the use of technology, which were revealed during the period of online learning due to the pandemic and suggested the creation of college-wide policies on use of technology (The College of Saint Rose, Office of Institutional Effectiveness, 2021f). In Spring 2021, the Office of Online Learning Services began working with faculty teaching online in the School of Arts and Humanities to ensure that all online courses were ADA compliant. This process was completed in the Spring of 2022, and OLS is currently working with faculty in the other 3 schools to ensure compliance. In addition, a new policy on online teaching requires faculty who teach online to either work directly with OLS staff to develop their courses, or to complete a self-paced online training on best practice in online pedagogy.

Departments of the Academic Success Center also collaborate across campus to promote student success. They work with the Academic Opportunity Experience (AOE) summer launch to teach mathematics and writing courses for first-year AOE students (The College of Saint Rose, Academic Opportunity Experience Program, n.d.). (See Standard IV for more information.) They also coordinate with the deans and other departments and support students on academic probation as academic success mentors.

The **Neil Hellman Library supports student learning by providing access to physical and digital resources**, which include the book collection, academic databases, and audiovisual collections, along with robust interlibrary loan services (The College of Saint Rose, Neil Hellman Library, n.d.). The Patricia Standish Curriculum Library contains over 12,000 resources and materials to support students within the School of Education. The libraries have faced various challenges related to funding and staffing. In recent years, the library’s budget has been cut, necessitating difficult decisions about subscriptions to academic databases and other resources (The College of Saint Rose, Office of Institutional Effectiveness, 2021g). The library has suffered from staff turnover and has been operating for a period of time without a library director, an archivist, three faculty librarians, and various other key staff positions in the 2021-2022 academic year. The College has launched searches and has successfully hired a new library director and an instructional librarian.

**The Online Learning Services department (OLS) works closely with faculty to provide support for their online and hybrid teaching** (The College of Saint Rose, Online Learning Services, n.d.). OLS focuses on helping faculty become more proficient with online tools to strengthen the student learning experience and foster faculty innovation in teaching. In addition to hosting numerous virtual workshops, generating blog posts and newsletters, and creating video tutorials, OLS hosts weekly office hours for faculty. Additionally, OLS assists students in navigating online learning environments. The OLS YouTube channel and blog offer students assistance with specific tools; in Spring 2022, OLS launched a student resource course called “Succeeding in an Online Course” in Canvas. In 2018, OLS successfully supported the College and faculty in migrating from one learning management system (Blackboard) to another (Canvas). The instructional designer is currently working closely with the deans and the Provost/VPAA to develop a codified course development process, review process, and course refresh schedule, along with quality standards for online courses. Another major initiative is focused on working with faculty to improve the accessibility of online courses. In the past three years, OLS has experienced severe challenges related to staff turnover and the shift to remote learning (The College of Saint Rose, Office of Institutional Effectiveness, 2021h).

**The Office of Academic Advising supports students in their progress toward their degrees** (The College of Saint Rose, Office of Academic Advising, n.d.). General academic advisors in the office meet with students in scheduled one-on-one meetings each semester (and as needed) to provide developmental advising support. In doing so, they aim to assist students in their decision-making processes and support them in pursuing their goals. As a result of the pandemic, the Office has pivoted to using Zoom for advising appointments; this virtual option has improved the reach of the Office and will continue to be offered as an option for students. The Office has faced challenges related to budget constraints that have prevented replacement hiring for a general academic advisor and administrative assistant positions since August 2019 (The College of Saint Rose, Office of Institutional Effectiveness, 2021i); considering that the Office serves the entire undergraduate student body, these unfilled positions are a significant burden. In addition to meeting with general academic advisors, students also meet with faculty advisors who provide them with specific support related to their majors; these meetings generally occur on or around Advisement Day, a day each semester set aside for students to meet with their advisors. Throughout the semester, instructors may also submit early alerts and progress reports via Navigate, an online system that facilitates communication between students and various offices on campus, to provide information on student challenges to the Office of Academic Advising, faculty advisors, the Academic Success Center, and the Counseling Center. In other words, students are supported in a number of ways—academic, logistical, and emotional—to assist them in attaining their goals.

In supporting underprepared or struggling students, the Advising Office has identified the following areas for possible improvement: The Strategies for Academic Success courses (CDS 021 and CDS 022) are designed to assist students in improving their grades. In order to increase their effectiveness, the College may consider offering them before students’ GPA fall below 2.0, offering them as for-credit courses to enhance participation and engagement, and making them available prior to first-year underprepared students’ arrival on campus. The office also noticed that failing to complete ENG 105, a required four-credit course that covers written and verbal communication, with a grade of C or higher during a student’s first semester is often traumatic for students and makes it difficult for them to improve their GPA. In response, the College is piloting ENG 105 labs starting in the Fall 2022 semester. In addition, the College may consider establishing a writing placement test and evaluate other options for improving the first-time pass-rate for this course. Options might include offering a college-level remedial

course for students who are inadequately prepared for ENG105, or breaking the course up to include a fall and spring component, each valued at 2 credits.

As part of the 2020-2021 program elimination process, the Office of Academic Advising was charged to collaborate with faculty and create detailed teach-out plans for all students in terminated programs, including minors. Teach out plans were generated in the Summer of 2020 and used to guide students to complete their programs. Many students in eliminated programs opted to transfer to different institutions, and the College helped with this process. For instance, all sophomores and first year students in Art & Design programs transferred. Such transfers were facilitated by College efforts to coordinate with other institutions. As an example, an agreement was reached with Sage College to accept all student transfer credits and for transferred courses to fill major requirement. Teach out plans have been monitored to ensure that appropriate courses are offered to allow students in affected programs to complete their degrees.

**The College encourages undergraduate students to participate in research** with faculty mentors. A college-wide Undergraduate Research Symposium is held each spring semester, during which students across the campus present posters showcasing their projects and their findings (The College of Saint Rose, VPAA Office, n.d.b). From 2010 through 2021, an average of 56 students presented every year on a wide range of topics, including the effects of ecotourism and technology on wildlife, the effects of media images on public perceptions of police officers, and the reliability of synthetic blood for crime scene reconstruction. The College also publishes a *Journal of Undergraduate Research*, although publication has been disrupted by the pandemic and other factors (The College of Saint Rose, VPAA Office, n.d.c). The most recent issue—a double issue from 2019-2020—includes student papers from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds, such as English, Biology, and Philosophy. To further support student research, the College offers summer undergraduate research grants which provide housing and a stipend for student researchers (The College of Saint Rose, VPAA Office, n.d.d). Students supported by these grants have worked on such topics as microplastic pollution in local aquatic environments, neurological effects of malnourishment, and approaches to teaching among early and later stage educators.

Saint Rose students also have opportunities to present their research at local and national conferences. For example, chemistry students at Saint Rose regularly participate in the annual undergraduate chemistry research symposium hosted by the Eastern New York Section of the American Chemical Society. Students have also successfully secured off-campus research opportunities over the summer. For example, Saint Rose has recently placed students with the New York Department of Health's Wadsworth Center, the University of Nebraska Medical Center, and the Neural Stem Cell Institute. Through these efforts, the College actively promotes and supports a culture of undergraduate research on campus.

**The College recognizes the benefits study-abroad programs provide to student growth and development.** Saint Rose students have the opportunity to study abroad in 35 countries; since Spring 2019, popular countries included England, Australia, Ireland, and South Korea. From Spring 2017 to Fall 2019, an average of 18 students studied abroad each Fall or Spring semester (The College of Saint Rose, Center for International Programs, n.d). The study-abroad programs have been on hiatus during the pandemic, but students are now able to apply for these opportunities again. Recognizing that not all students are able to dedicate a full semester or academic year to studying abroad, the College provides shorter term options including 4-8-week summer sessions and 1-2-week faculty-led short-term trips

(The College of Saint Rose, *Study Abroad Webpage*, n.d). Students enrolled in 12 credits of approved credits abroad may apply their Saint Rose financial aid to their study- abroad tuition.

Saint Rose students are encouraged to participate in **internships and other career preparation experiences** off-campus. Of all the continuing undergraduate degree programs, 68% require either internship or field experiences and 26% offers optional internship and strongly encourage participation; only 5% of all programs do not explicitly require or encourage career preparation experiences (The College of Saint Rose, Registrar, 2021). Post-graduate surveys show that 80% of our students participated in an internship or similar training experience during their time at the College (The College of Saint Rose, n.d.).

Part of the mission of the College is to engage in effective leadership in society. Students are provided with a multitude of **opportunities to help prepare them to take on leadership roles** on campus and beyond. For example, students may participate in the campus community as orientation leaders, club leaders, resident assistants, and members of the student government. The L.E.A.D. (Learn. Engage. Apply. Dedicate) and BOLD Women’s Leadership Network programs provide students with leadership training opportunities (The College of Saint Rose, Office of Student Life, n.d., The College of Saint Rose, BOLD Women’s Leadership Network, n.d.). (See Standard IV for more information.)

#### **Criterion 5: Liberal Arts and Sciences Core Curriculum**

The College of Saint Rose catalog declares, “Education liberates the mind, freeing it from the constraints of unexamined convention and habit. Our faculty envisions a liberating education that develops students’ skills, knowledge, and perspectives in many contexts, empowering them to critically evaluate and appreciate the full range of human experience” (The College of Saint Rose, Registrar, 2021). The notion of education as liberating is foundational to the liberal arts and sciences core curriculum and to the overall mission of the College. As a result, The Core curriculum is truly at the heart of the Saint Rose experience.

The College of Saint Rose has long offered a liberal education curriculum. However, in Fall 2021, a core curriculum, which focused on the liberal arts as offered at Saint Rose (rather than liberal education), was put into place. The impetus for revising the core curriculum was sparked by the program elimination process in Fall 2020. The Representative Committee of the Faculty (RepCom) proposed revisions to streamline the curriculum and provide cost-savings for the College overall. In early Spring 2021, UAC constituted a subcommittee with representatives from each of the four schools to look into this matter. Within a compressed timeline, the representatives researched the issue and developed a proposal for a new core, which would provide students with a solid academic foundation. In order to receive buy-in from faculty, ensure curricular substantiveness grounded in disciplinary expertise and the needs of Saint Rose students, and resolve logistical issues, the representatives discussed the core on various levels within the institution—including with chairs, departments, UAC, deans, the provost/VPAA, schools, and the full faculty. In the end, the new core was approved with broad support. In late spring of 2021, UAC voted to accept the new liberal arts and sciences curriculum; this curriculum was approved by the full faculty and, eventually, the Board of Trustees and put into place in Fall 2021 (The College of Saint Rose, VPAA Office, 2021e).

By streamlining the CORE requirements from 41 to 33 credits, the College reduced degree credit requirement from 122 credits to 120 credits, aligning the College with other institutions, and expands

general elective requirement allowing students additional freedom to explore subjects outside their major by taking more electives and consider adding another major, a minor, or a certificate. The previous liberal education curriculum was broader in scope, including elements such as a physical education requirement and some professional courses, and thus did not focus solely on the liberal arts. The more focused liberal arts and sciences core aligns with the New York State Education (NYSED) guidelines, which state that core courses should not be “directed toward specific occupational or professional objectives” (New York State Education Department, 2020).

**The Core is made up of courses that offer students the ability to encounter diverse and essential fields of knowledge** and also to acquire important skills for living in today’s world. With the exception of Expository Writing, Research, and Speaking Techniques, which provides many students with their first engagement with college-level writing, research, and presentations, students are offered a range of choices in each category, even as they are required to take courses in particular disciplines to ensure that all students possess a strong foundation in various knowledge areas before they graduate. Many of these categories overlap in offering an expansion of a student’s cultural and global awareness and cultural sensitivity. For example, while students are certain to encounter these ideas in the Study of World Languages and Cultures category, they are also likely to engage with them in courses that fulfill the Philosophical and Religious Traditions, Literary Study, Social Scientific Knowledge and Inquiry, and Historical Knowledge, Analysis, and Perspectives requirements. In this way, the courses approach these issues from different methodologies and viewpoints to reinforce learning and offer students an understanding of different approaches to the world. This scope prepares Saint Rose students to draw from their storehouse of knowledge in navigating their personal lives, professional work, and lives as citizens of the world. The Core gives the Saint Rose graduate the agility to negotiate the expected and unexpected paths that their post-college life takes them.

Beyond the broader goal of the acquisition of knowledge, **The Core curriculum fosters the development of essential skills.** The Expository Writing, Research, and Speaking requirement provides the foundation for the acquisition of strong skills in oral and written communication, along with information literacy. The Core builds upon this requirement through multiple categories that work toward the strengthening of skills in critical analysis and reasoning. For example, the requirements of Scientific Knowledge and Inquiry, Mathematical Reasoning, and Computational Logic and Reasoning offer students the skills to understand how to approach scientific and quantitative materials and how to use the methodologies of these disciplines to grasp the world around them and solve problems. The pandemic has made it clear how important it is for a layperson to be able to determine what medical and scientific information is reputable to allow them to make decisions for their personal lives and their community, and teaching students how to reason and ask questions like a scientist is essential and a key component of the development of information literacy.

The built-in reinforcement of essential skills in The Core allows students to learn about and practice these skills in a number of courses. For example, the Computational Logic and Reasoning requirement offers students the ability to gain technological competency, but students will also attain these skills in many of the courses offered under the Study in World Languages and Cultures category as language courses have often been at the pedagogical forefront of the integration of digital media in teaching and learning. The category of Philosophical and Religious Traditions highlights the study of values, ethics, and diverse perspectives, but courses that fulfill the Literary Study category do so as well. The Social Scientific Knowledge and Inquiry category fosters the study of diverse perspectives through the requirement that students must take two courses in this category from two separate disciplines; this category makes it explicit that different social science disciplines have different approaches. At the same

time, all students are required to take a course that fulfills the diversity requirement. Every course that fulfills a requirement in The Core is assessed annually based upon learning outcomes developed by discipline faculty with the relevant expertise (see Standard V); these learning outcomes are clearly stated in the College Catalog and on course syllabi (The College of Saint Rose, Registrar, 2021).

Currently, UAC is holding discussions about how to strengthen The Core, as it is a curriculum that needs to grow and adapt—instead of staying stagnant. For example, the diversity requirement is being examined to determine how to make it a more meaningful component of a student’s education. At the same time, the absence of the disciplines of art and music in The Core—removed as part of the program eliminations process—is an acknowledged weakness of the curriculum, and the College should work toward the return of these disciplines to The Core. UAC is also discussing the potential for a first-year seminar. These ongoing discussions about The Core demonstrate how the institution prioritizes academic excellence and the support of the student experience; these priorities are seen not as goals to be accomplished but goals that are continually being worked toward.

### **Criterion 6: Graduate Programs**

**Graduate and professional students at The College of Saint Rose are offered opportunities to develop their research skills, scholarship, and independent thinking.** The College offers 17 master's degree programs, seven of which are also offered as certificates of advanced study. Additionally, Saint Rose offers four other certificates of advanced study.

The degrees and programs at The College of Saint Rose are registered and fully approved by the New York State Education Department (NYSED). All graduate-level courses are taught by adjunct and full-time faculty, with terminal degrees in their fields of study (New York State Education, 2018). NYSED requires that all graduate programs include a research component; courses on research methods are central to every graduate curriculum at Saint Rose (New York State Education Department, 2020). Additionally, The College of Saint Rose offers many opportunities for graduate students to participate in research in their chosen field of study. Across the 21 graduate programs that are offered, there are roughly 47 courses that focus on research, or contain a strong research component (The College of Saint Rose, Registrar, 2020).

In addition to embedded opportunities within coursework, the College offers the opportunity for graduate students to apply for a research grant, through the Graduate Student Research Grant Program (The College of Saint Rose, VPAA Office, 2021c). The purpose of these grants is to provide students with a stipend to support an original scholarly project or the presentation of their completed scholarly project at a professional conference. Students are encouraged to consult with faculty members regarding scholarly opportunities within their academic discipline. Grants have been awarded for research projects on stuttering, instructional strategies with adult learners, voice training for transgender women, and more. Graduate students have multiple opportunities to collaborate with faculty on research and publication. And these collaborations have led, for example, to posters presentations at conferences, including those hosted by the American Psychological Association and the McGill Summer Institute for School Psychology, and an article on ecological intervention for stuttering in school-age children.

Approximately 120 graduate assistantship (GA) positions are sponsored by the College each academic year (The College of Saint Rose, Financial Aid Office, n.d.). The assistantship awards offer

opportunities to work alongside faculty, in administration, or within operational divisions of the College including Information Technology Services, Online Learning Services, and Marketing. Students are able to obtain assistantships that align with their academic program and their career goals. At its core, this program is designed to offset the cost of a graduate degree and to give the student relevant field experience.

In response to the increasing need to offer more flexible programming for graduate students, The College of Saint Rose offers multiple modalities for attaining a graduate degree, in addition to on-campus degree programs:

- Flex MBA: In 2019, the College instituted its Flex MBA program (The College of Saint Rose, Graduate Admissions Office, 2021). This program allows students to attend classes where and when they choose based on their personal schedules. Students can attend class in person, online synchronously or asynchronously, or a combination of these attendance models.
- Fully online graduate programs: The College offers four fully online graduate programs, which meet the state's requirement for licensure (The College of Saint Rose, Graduate Admissions Office, n.d.). These programs are the Master of Science in Education (MSEd) in Educational Psychology, Certificate of Advanced Study School District Business Leader, Certificate of Advanced Study in Special Education, and Certificate of Advanced Study in Teaching English as a New Language.
- CITE: In partnership with the Center for Integrated Training and Education (CITE), Saint Rose offers graduate-level special education courses in New York City and a 24-credit Education Administration Certification Program to provide students in the greater NYC area with the opportunity to earn their New York School Building Leader (SBL) Certification (CITE, n.d.).

### **Criterion 7: Third-Party Providers**

The College's School of Education produces the area's best teachers, and now these courses are available to teachers in the New York metro area through the Distance Delivery Program (The College of Saint Rose, Registrar, n.d.a). **The College contracts with three carefully chosen independent organizations**, which handle the administrative details, to offer the program and expand its reach (The College of Saint Rose, Registrar, n.d.b). As discussed in criterion III.6, the College partners with the Center of Integrated Teacher Education (CITE). It also has a partnership with the Teacher Education Institute (TEI) to allow for expanded graduate-level education course offerings, including online options. At the same time, by working with the New York State United Teachers (NYSUT), the College is able to offer courses throughout New York state.

All professional development courses are listed in the Graduate Catalog, and both courses and instructors are approved by the College's Teacher Education Department. **Saint Rose faculty with the appropriate expertise review readings, assignments, and course content for depth and breadth in the Distance Delivery Program.** Instructors in the Distance Delivery Program must meet the same high standards as those teaching courses on campus must and are periodically observed to ensure that excellent standards are maintained.

### **Criterion 8: Program Assessment**

**All major and minor programs—graduate and undergraduate, as well as concentrations—are assessed through the program review process.** A new process has been instituted for the academic year 2021-2022; it changes the previous 10-year cycle to a seven-year rotation with modified and expanded guidelines. The goal of the program review is to offer programs the opportunity to reflect on their successes and challenges and plan for the future (The College of Saint Rose, VPAA Office, 2020). Programs take six months to complete and submit their reviews to UAC (and GAC, as needed). There is a “response to program review” composed by UAC, the appropriate school dean, and the Provost/VPAA, which addresses specific recommendations and findings included in the review. UAC sends completed program reviews to the Educational Programs Committee (EPC) of the Board of Trustees. Historically, all program reviews have met with approval by these bodies based on their “depth and thoroughness,” thereby highlighting the continued cohesiveness and effectiveness of our academic programs.

The College’s previous (The College of Saint Rose, VPAA Office, 2012a; The College of Saint Rose, VPAA Office, 2012b) and current (The College of Saint Rose, VPAA Office, 2020a) program review guidelines ask programs to assess learning outcomes and curricular revisions. Sections new to the program review include an exploration of program costs, as well as additional statistical data on student enrollment and program participation. The previous program review process contained only one small section on “Instructional Support Services,” while the current program review process looks at support services for the student learning environment, as well as academic support related to advisement and retention efforts. The revised process also introduces a method for prioritizing and approving initiatives. The new program review is designed to provide a more complete picture of the quality and health of our programs (The College of Saint Rose, VPAA Office, 2020a).

Program review process is comprised of 10 sections:

1. Program Objectives and Structure
2. Assessment of Learning Outcomes and Curricular Revisions
3. Student Characteristics and Academic Support
4. Faculty
5. Learning Environment and Support Services
6. Student Enrollment and Program Participation
7. Costs
8. Summary and Recommendations
9. Statistical Data
10. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Notably, the current program review contains a section on the implementation of previous program review recommendations, thereby “closing the loop” on the assessment process. Programs are asked to reflect on what they have accomplished in the past seven years and their goals for the years ahead as they work to extend and support a rigorous and coherent learning experience. The “memorandum of understanding,” a new feature of this revised review process, is of particular importance in terms of making program improvements. The MOU is meant to be developed in consultation with the appropriate school dean and details “the guidelines, expectations, and plans for program improvement over the next five years.” It also acts as “an agreement between the program and the dean regarding future actions that will occur as a result of the review” (The College of Saint Rose, VPAA Office, 2020a).

Additionally, the annual Student Learning Outcomes Assessments (SLOAs) are used to measure student learning within the programs that contribute to the liberal arts and sciences curriculum. SLOAs are an “inventory of program level assessment activities” for courses that are part of The Core (The College of Saint Rose, Institutional Assessment Working Group, 2020). Like the program review process,

SLOAs are intended to help programs improve the student learning experience through careful documentation and assessment of evidence related to teaching and learning. (See criterion III.2 for more details.)

While improvement is always possible and underway, the program review and SLOA assessment processes help ensure that the College's programs are responsive to student needs by building on the outcomes of that assessment to create innovative teaching. Through the examination of the practices and outcomes of the institution's curricula, the College of Saint Rose assures the continuity and coherence of our educational programs.

### **Requirements of Affiliation and Institutional Priorities**

With its rigorous and coherent learning experiences and its multi-pronged assessment of these experiences, as demonstrated by the evidence in this standard, the College of Saint Rose meets the Requirements of Affiliation #8 and #15:

- Requirement of Affiliation #8: The institution systematically evaluates its educational and other programs and makes public how well and in what ways it is accomplishing its purposes.
- Requirement of Affiliation #15: The institution has a core of faculty (full-time or part-time) and/or other appropriate professionals with sufficient responsibility to the institution to assure the continuity and coherence of the institution's educational programs.

At the same time, the College of Saint Rose's design and delivery of the student learning experience supports and works toward Institutional Priorities 1, 2, 3, and 4:

- Priority 1, Support Student Experience
- Priority 2, Sustain Academic Excellence
- Priority 3, Fostering an Engaged Community: Encourage Professional Development and Support
- Priority 4, Ensure Financial Health

### **Areas for Improvement and Innovation**

As the core business of The College of Saint Rose, the academic programs provide opportunities of improvement and innovation. In supporting underprepared or struggling students, the group suggest the following areas for possible improvement: In order to increase the effectiveness of the Strategies for Academic Success courses (CDS 021 and CDS 022), the College may consider offering them before students' GPA fall below 2.0, offering them as for-credit courses to enhance participation and engagement, and making them available prior to first-year underprepared students' arrival on campus.

In addition to piloting ENG 105 labs, the College may consider establishing a writing placement test and evaluate other options for improving the first-time pass-rate for this course. Options might include offering a college-level remedial course for students who are inadequately prepared for ENG105, or breaking the course up to include a fall and spring component, each valued at 2 credits.

The working group also makes a number of recommendations for Standard III:

- Turnover on the levels of faculty, staff, and administration is an acknowledged concern of the College, as noted in the 2021-2024 Strategic Plan. To lessen the disruptive impacts of turnover on the institutional processes responsible for maintaining the rigor and coherence of student learning experience, the group recommend that the College take a two-pronged approach. First, the College develops clearly defined procedures to allow for sustainability over time, including, but not limited to succession planning, as well as exemption of these protected positions from any future hiring freezes. Second, the College takes measures to identify positions central to the student learning experience that should always be filled and ensure replacement lines in areas of The College that include the library, student advisement, Online Learning Services, the Registrar's Office, and the Student Success Center. One important example is the position of the Writing Center's designated ESL tutor, which was never replaced after 2018. This position is currently needed given the return of international students to the College. Indeed, the College has already begun to take steps in responding to these causes by increasing pay, rolling back administration salary reductions, and increasing its contributions to eligible retirement plans. In addition, the College has also modified the process to fill open positions in order to reduce turnover: Since the time when The College identified a budget deficit, one of the strategies to address the deficit was to keep positions open for either three or six months once the incumbent leaves the position. While effective in generating savings, the six-month hold was particularly difficult for managers and departments, where the remaining employees had to take on additional responsibilities for an extended period of time. The increased workload at times resulted in additional resignations. In the spring of 2021, a procedure was introduced that allowed managers to seek an exception from the hold requirement by providing a rationale for immediately filling the position (see attached exception form). Most exception requests were approved, resulting in a regular hiring timeframe. In some cases, this process helped managers come up with a more efficient way to structure their department. In the fall 2021, the 6-month hold requirement was completely eliminated. Managers are still required to justify filling open positions but are usually approved to do so immediately. More work is necessary, however, to prevent adverse effects on the student experience and burnout on the part of remaining faculty, staff, and administration.
- This group notes the substantial decrease in number of programs and faculty and, thus, recommends that the College conduct research into the impacts on the student experience due to the interconnections between terminated and remaining programs and impacts on invisible workload of faculty. It is recommended that the College proactively and systemically seek input from remaining programs to evaluate the actual impacts on the College's mission, student learning experience, and faculty scholarship and service. Insights gained from this process should be used for future decision-making and to work toward a vision of what the College as an institution and community should be in the future.
- The group also recommends that the College continue to monitor the execution of the teach-out plans for students of the eliminated programs.
- To support the College's efforts with retention and improving graduation rates, it is recommended that a process to obtain feedback from students and advisors on the four-year plans be established. The feedback garnered from such an effort can help the College strengthen these four-year plans in ways that better assist students on their paths to graduation.
- The College's Institutional Assessment Working Group and the Liberal Education Assessment Committee have recommended that the College work to increase response rates for the annual SLOAs. Specifically, response rates could be increased by 1) the hiring of an assessment director and 2) compensated training for faculty on both the software used for assessment and the

creation of reports and how to read, understand, and assess those reports. These two recommendations will also support the assessment feedback loop that allows for reflection and action.

## **Summary**

The College fulfils the criteria as outlined in Standard III as well as the related requirements of affiliation related to this standard. Well-designed and assessed programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels, as well as a strong CORE curriculum and well-credentialed faculty, ensure that students engage in rigorous and coherent learning experiences that prepare them for active, effective, and fulfilled lives.

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## Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience

### Executive Summary

The College of Saint Rose attracts and supports students whose interests align with the College's mission and values. In order to encourage student retention and persistence, the College provides an engaged student experience grounded in our mission. Effective and coherent support systems, co-curricular activities, and supportive staff ensure an environment conducive to learning and student growth. Despite recent financial challenges and the COVID pandemic, the College has maintained a commitment to creating a student experience that is positive, supportive, mission-focused and provides "the opportunity to cultivate their creative and spiritual gifts in a diverse learning community that fosters integrity, interdependence, and mutual respect." The institution regularly assesses its student support programs, including components offered by third-party vendors, and uses findings from these assessments to improve continuously the student experience.

### Criterion 1: Policies and Processes to Admit, Retain, and Facilitate Success of Students

The College has clearly stated ethical policies and processes to guide student admissions and retention, and to facilitate the success of students whose interests, abilities, experiences, and goals provide a reasonable expectation for success and are compatible with the institutional mission. Policies and processes relevant to this criterion and its four sub-components are described below.

The College of Saint Rose serves students of all socioeconomic backgrounds and **communicates accurate information about tuition, fees and how to pay for college through its website, electronic College Handbook, and other mechanisms.** The Financial Aid Office, in collaboration with the Office of the Bursar, ensure that students receive information regarding payment plans and refund procedures. The Financial Aid office provides customized award packages to all accepted students. These packages detail out the cost of attendance and state, federal, and institutional aid.

With most of our students coming from low- to moderate-income homes, financial aid is integral to student success. According to the (*College Navigator - The College of Saint Rose*, 2020) in 2019-2020 100% of first-time, full-time students received some form of financial aid. Of those, 47% received federal Pell grants, and 99% received institutional awards.

To **ensure student access to a robust array of financial aid options**, the College's Financial Aid Office created its Financial Aid King website, a single source for user-friendly information about the financial aid process. The site provides an overview of the financial aid process, offers guidance on completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), and helps students and their families assess college affordability (*Get financial aid & FAFSA support*, 2021). The site differentiates various forms of financial aid and provides resources relevant to new, transfer, and continuing undergraduate and graduate students. The site includes videos, an FAQ page, and the opportunity to submit questions to the College's financial aid director.

The College encourages students to file their FAFSA as early as possible. Continuing students are reminded to complete their annual FAFSA through direct communications as well as signage and flat

screen presentations throughout campus. Specialized FAFSA information, including video instructions, is accessible via the College's website with specific pages tailored to first-year, transfer, and graduate students. The Financial Aid Office also provides eligible students with counseling on financial assistance available through state sources.

**The College offers multiple opportunities for students to work while on campus.** Students who complete the FAFSA and demonstrate financial need may be eligible for the Federal Work-Study Program. These students are assigned to appropriate positions on campus and earn \$15.00 per hour. The College hires sophomore, junior, senior, and graduate students who have a 2.5 or higher GPA to work as resident assistants. First-year resident assistants receive a 75% reduction in room and board, which increases to a 100% discount in subsequent years. Graduate students can apply for assistantships that provide a \$3,200 tuition-based grant in return for 150 hours of work each semester. Graduate assistants are assigned to various academic and support offices across campus.

The College of **Saint Rose helps students find and apply for both internal and external scholarships.** The Financial Aid Office, in collaboration with academic and non-academic offices at the College, supports students in identifying and applying for external awards. The College also has internal scholarship programs, typically endowed by our alumni network. Current scholarships include:

- Project 70, an endowed award established by the Class of 1970, offers two, \$2,500 stipends annually to offset costs associated with summer internships.
- The William and Camille G. Ruggiero Endowed Summer Honors Internship Scholarship provides tuition, fees, and internship related expenses annually for up to eight students in the Huether School of Business.
- The BOLD Women's Network Scholarship offers financial assistance for students who are a part of the Bold Women's Leadership Network (*Saint Rose BOLD Women's Leadership Network, 2022*).
- Emergency Assistance: The Dennis McDonald Student Emergency Loan Fund assists students experiencing financial emergencies and short-term crises during the semester. Students can borrow up to \$500 for emergency needs. Students can apply for the funding by submitting an online application. The Annie Sheeley Emergency Meal Swipe Program addresses food insecurity by offering students who demonstrate financial need and are not on a meal plan to use campus dining services. Finally, in Fall 2021 the college opened the Golden Knights Shop to offer no- or low-cost food and clothing for students in need. These programs provide temporary assistance to students who suffer from financial hardships and provide them with the support they need to continue to focus on their academic success.

The Bursar's Office **oversees student tuition accounts, invoicing, payments, and refunds.** According to the tuition refund policy, students who formally withdraw during the first week of the semester receive a full refund. Prorated refunds are given to students who withdraw between the second and fifth week of the semester. No refunds are available on fees, and tuition is fully refundable if the College cancels a course at any time. Students have access to information on information on tuition and refund policies through the website, the student handbook, and talks at New Student Orientation.

In order to better serve our student, we suggest that the Office of Financial Aid may wish to increase its visibility by organizing on-campus presentations to promote Financial Aid programs, notably

the Federal Work-Study Program. In addition, the College may consider establishing a Scholarship Office to serve as a one-stop shop for students seeking scholarships to continue their undergraduate education or pursue a graduate degree.

**The College offers services to identify, place and support students who are not adequately prepared for their chosen level of study** with the goal of helping them to achieve their educational goals. Programs that contribute to supporting under-prepared students are described below.

Established 25 years ago, the Academic Opportunity Experience (AOE) Program has supports first-time, first-year undergraduate students who show academic promise but do not meet the College's general admissions guidelines. Students who are admitted to this program participate in a week-long Summer Launch Experience before arriving on campus for the fall semester and receive continued support and mentorship throughout their time at The College (*Admissions & Aid* 2019).

A student's disability status has no impact on admission to the college; however, once on campus, a student with a disability can submit confidential documentation to the Disabilities Services Office to request individualized accommodations. When approved, students are provided with a letter outlining their needed accommodations to be presented to their instructors each semester (*Disability Resource Guide for Prospective Students* 2021). Typical accommodations include extra time or quiet space for taking an exam, housing accommodations, or physical accommodations.

The College uses Navigate to monitor student success in real-time and to intervene early if problems arise (*Navigate App* 2021). Navigate is used to identify and support students who are not adequately prepared or are struggling. The program strengthens communication between students, advisors, and faculty. Using Navigate, students can set appointments with professors, advisors, and campus offices, receive academic alerts, access personalized advising, view their class schedule, access help through an online one-stop resource shop, and to stay organized by creating reminders and to-do lists. Faculty and staff use Navigate to alert academic support staff and faculty advisors if a student is struggling in class. When an alert is issued, a student's Circle of Success team (faculty, coach, advisor, mentor) is notified to enable prompt and early intervention. Navigate also facilitates faculty and staff messaging students and scheduling meetings.

Undergraduate students who achieve lower than a 2.0 GPA are automatically enrolled in CDS-021 and/or CDS-022, Strategies for Academic Success. CDS-021 is a mandatory, 7-module, non-credit course for undergraduate students on academic probation that covers techniques and strategies to enhance academic performance and requires students to utilize the resources offered by the College to support their academic achievement, such as the Writing Center and the Academic Success Center. Students are also required to meet with their assigned success counselor three times during the semester. CDS-022 includes students who continue to be on academic probation and have already successfully completed CDS-021.

The Academic Success Center offers numerous supports for students who are inadequately prepared for their studies. Tutoring is offered in seven major disciplines: business/accounting; computer science; communication and speech disorders; math, natural sciences; nursing; and, psychology. In 2019-2020, the Center provided 1,641 sessions resulting in 1,875 hours of tutoring support (*Mathew Woods, Associate Director of Student Development* 2021). The Academic Success Center also coordinates and provides tutoring for the Math Placement Review, which all students must complete before registering for mathematics or natural science courses. The Center created videos and a study

guide to help students prepare for the review. These materials are also available via the website to support students in their mathematics classes. (*Math Placement Test Review 2020*) The Academic Success Center also offers individual academic counseling, which provides students with holistic skills, strategies, and behaviors to increase their learning potential. During the 2020-2021 academic year, the center developed resources to help students who struggled with online learning (*Resources for students 2022*)

The Writing Center, a unit of the Academic Success Center, provides tutors who are trained to support both native English speakers and English language learners with writing skills. During 60-minute tutoring sessions, tutors assist students with all stages of the writing process including topic selection, outlining, drafting, organization, research, documentation, and revision. The Writing Center also helps students learn to use MLA, APA and CMS citation styles.

The Bachelor of Arts degree in Interdepartmental Studies offers students the opportunity to design a course of study that supports individual academic, career, and/or personal goals. In addition to offering students the flexibility to meet their unique learning goals, the Interdepartmental Studies Major assists students who, after completing a substantial number of credits, find themselves unable to fulfill the academic requirements of their selected major. Rather than starting over with a new major, students are advised by faculty, department chairs, school deans, and academic advising staff in developing an individualized plan of study that incorporates their existing courses (*Academic advising forms and information 2021*).

To further support underprepared or struggling students, the College should consider bolstering staffing in all academic support areas.

The College offers **orientation programs for new students, intensive academic advisement opportunities, and counseling programs to support student well-being throughout their educational experience.** These events and programs are designed to acquaint students with the resources on campus so they feel more at ease in using them, to engage new students in various activities where they can meet others, and to build a sense of community, and help create a smooth transition during their first year. The goal is to make Saint Rose feel like HOME.

Prior to enrollment, prospective students have an opportunity to be a *Knight for the Day* and shadow current students, attend a class, eat in the dining hall, see a dorm room, and participate in student activities. Financial aid and admission counselors are available all day for individual meetings. *Accepted Students Day* includes meetings with faculty and other students. Current Saint Rose students take part in these activities, so prospective students can ask questions about the student experience. While attendance is voluntary, these events are well attended and contribute to a strong yield. In the 2019 academic year, The College hosted three Accepted Students Days and ten Knight for a Day events attended by a total of 910 students. In 2019, the April 14 Accepted Student Day was attended by 263 students, 68.1% of whom decided to attend The College. These programs provide strong evidence of The College's ability to engage with students early and maintain their interest even before they decide to enroll (*Undergraduate Admissions Visit Report 2019*). The College is continually looking to improve this experience. In 2022, a new component, "Love This Class," was added. This provides prospective students to attend mini-classes with faculty from across programs to get a flavor of what classes are like at Saint Rose.

*STAR Day* (Student Transition, Advisement and Registration) is a pre-orientation program designed to prepare students for the start of their experience at Saint Rose. Students meet with a faculty advisor or academic counselor to review their first-semester course schedules and learn about the academic support services available to them on campus. Many students begin to establish their friend groups through the activities at STAR Day and find roommates for the upcoming semester. Required for incoming undergraduate students, STAR Day helps students gain a better understanding of academic expectations and student life opportunities. They also meet other future and current students through ice breaker activities. After attending a 2019 STAR Day, 94.8% of participants felt reassured about their decision to attend The College of Saint Rose; 96.6% developed an understanding of the academic skills needed to be successful as a student; 81.0% felt more comfortable seeking help from others; 74.6% understood costs and options for paying their bill; 77.9% knew how to access their bill online; 98.3% felt welcomed to The College of Saint Rose; and 91.5% expressed an interest in joining a club or organization (First-Year Programs (2019). I:\Orientation\STAR\2019\STAR 3 7-11-19\Survey. Albany, NY; The College of Saint Rose; The College of Saint Rose (2021). *Student Transition, Advising and Registration Day. (Star Day 2022).*

Prior to the COVID pandemic, new students were invited to participate in *Pathways Experience*, an early-arrival experience that provided unique opportunities to work on teamwork and leadership in small groups of peers with similar interests (7-20 students each). Many students stay connected with the friends they made during these experiences through to graduation. Fostering such connections supports retention. Sample programs in the *Pathways* program include *ALANA is Leadership*, which offers professional and leadership development and attracts students who support diversity and inclusion on campus. *Arts Encounter* offers fun activities and trips centered on fine art and theatre. It attracts students who are interested in contemporary art and culture. *Adventure Challenge* is an intensive, high ropes, low ropes, raft-building, non-competitive team-building challenge by choice experience. It attracts students who are interested in the outdoors and physical activity. *Urban Launch* was the founding program of the Pathways Experience. It immerses students into the Albany community, especially in places of struggle. It attracts individuals who like to be of service, who like to volunteer, or like to be urban adventurers who get out there with others (*Orientation 2022*).

A two-day comprehensive *Orientation* takes place immediately prior to the first week of Fall semester classes with a primary goal of introducing campus resources and services that will support students during their time at Saint Rose. Students are assigned to small groups facilitated by a student orientation leader who organizes ice breakers and other getting-acquainted activities. Orientation leaders stay connected to many of the students in their group throughout the first year by creating group chats and texting new students about campus events. Another goal of orientation is for students to get to know each other through activities and excursions in the local community. In 2021, such activities included trips via public transportation to a local shopping mall (which familiarized students with bus routes), a chartered bus trip to Guptill's Roller Skating Rink, an on-campus comedy show, a movie night and game night hosted by student leaders. Other activities included walking tours of the local community to help students locate pharmacies, supermarkets, cleaners, restaurants, parks, et cetera (*Welcome home. your saint rose orientation at-A-glance schedule 2022*).

Following orientation, the *Week of Welcome (WOW)* offers programming geared to bringing the entire campus together around the start of classes. It provides opportunities for students to engage in their new environment and welcomes returning students back to campus. It also engages faculty and staff who can serve as resources and guide students on their educational journey. As part of a student's Circle of Success, a faculty advisor, academic advisor, Golden Knight Guide (which is a staff or

administrator), a Financial Aid Advisor and a Peer Mentor (a Residence or Commuter Assistant) are available to answer questions the student may have about the campus. The week begins with a kick-off event, followed by the two-day orientation experience mentioned above, and continues with daily programming for a week to ten days providing opportunities for all students, staff, and faculty to engage. Getting students involved early in activities, clubs, and programs helps to keep their interest throughout the semester. Some of the events which pull together students, staff and faculty facilitated in 2021 included trip to see a Valley Cats game (a local professional baseball team), walking trips throughout Albany, yoga on the campus green, a community service project, a seminar on budgeting, a class photo, a College Mass, a pool party and a campus barbecue (*Welcome home. your saint rose orientation at-A-glance schedule 2022*).

After Welcome Week ends, the semester gets underway with one of the biggest events on campus, *Reach Out Saint Rose*. Reflecting the mission and vision of the College's founders, the Sisters of Saint Joseph, this is an opportunity for the Saint Rose community to give back to the local Albany community. As one of the most highly anticipated activities of the year, Reach Out Saint Rose reflects the College's core belief that being of service in the world around us is an essential part of each person's education and a shared community value. Hundreds of students participate in this event each year, along with dozens of staff members, administrators, and faculty. Despite the pandemic, the College provided service to more than 15 organizations in 2020 and 30 organizations in 2021(*Reach out Saint Rose 2022*).

**The Office of Academic Advising works collaboratively with faculty to ensure that students successfully meet academic requirements of the College and their selected major.** Academic advising at The College of Saint Rose is built on the belief that students bring a wide variety of needs and goals to their education, and that these needs and goals may change over time. The Office of Academic Advising strives to combine careful attention to the hopes and dreams students express with an informed awareness of where they are academically, offering an appropriate response to both. In some cases, academic advising is relatively straightforward, guiding students in course selection or program requirements. In other cases, it involves an extensive discussion of student aspirations, values and/or concrete academic situation. At the beginning of their first semester, students are assigned a faculty advisor who can help them explore options and provide them with resources concerning careers, choice of major, and course selection. Students can elect to change their advisor by submitting a request through the Office of Academic Advising. The College schedules an advising day each semester during which faculty schedule one-on-one appointments with all advisees to review progress and discuss course selection for the upcoming semester. Faculty advisors are also available to discuss problems impacting academic performance, and offer guidance on adding, dropping, or withdrawing from a course. Faculty advisors also use this opportunity to provide academic and career mentoring.

The Office of Academic Advising pre-registers all incoming first-year students for their first semester class based on the requirements of their academic major, their score on the math placement test, and the liberal education courses they select. Students then adjust their schedule as needed when they meet with their faculty advisor during STAR Day.

Advising for new transfer students begins prior to STAR Day. The Undergraduate Admissions Office completes the student's transfer credit equivalency in accordance with the College's transfer policy and a copy is mailed to the student so they understand how credits transferred toward their degree. The College maintains an online Transfer Equivalency Database which enables students to determine in advance how courses will transfer from area community colleges and that ensures

consistency in this process. New transfer students then complete and submit to the Office of Academic Advising a pre-registration worksheet which will be reviewed with Office of Advising Staff and department faculty during STAR Day.

The Office of Academic Advising provides additional support for students who are placed on academic probation (defined as having attempted at least 15 credit hours with a cumulative GPA below 2.0). Specific services include working with the Director of the Academic Success Center to provide enhanced advising support; providing information and counseling on improving their GPA and reflecting on whether a major is a good fit; answering individual questions about College programs, academic performance and academic support; offering pre-advising sessions to help students prepare for Advisement Day; and, following up with students who have been reported by faculty as struggling with attendance or academic performance during the semester.

Finally, the Office of Academic Advising assists students with course substitutions, changing majors, degree planning, resuming studies following a leave of absence, requesting an advisor change, obtaining transfer course approval, schedule planning, and course withdrawal. Academic advisors provide thorough service to students. Students rated the quality of their interactions with academic advisors higher than with any other constituency group on campus, (e.g., other students, faculty, administrators and student services staff) (*Institutional advancement* 2019).

**The College offers services to ensure that students are successful in achieving educational goals including certificate and degree completion, transferring to other institutions, and post-completion placement.**

**The Office of the Registrar provides effective and efficient academic support and assistance to students, faculty, staff, and alumni** of the College. The Office complies with institutional policies and procedures, as well as with applicable federal and state regulations and other standards of American higher education (*Registrar* 2019). Students seek assistance from the registrar related to policies on pass/fail grading, repeating courses, academic grievances, resumption of study, and commencement. While some of these processes are initiated during academic advising sessions, they are overseen by the Registrar's Office.

The College maintains agreements with other educational institutions that **enable students who earn undergraduate degrees from the College to pursue advanced degrees** (such as an MS in clinical laboratory sciences or a Juris Doctorate) from institutions such as Albany College of Pharmacy, Albany Law School, Pace University Law School and Western New England University School of Law. (*Our School* 2021; *Undergraduate programs* 2021; *Graduate Programs* 2019).

**Students at the College of Saint Rose have access to health services, counseling services, career services, and other services and programs to support and enhance their spiritual, academic and personal well-being on campus.** Health Services at The College of Saint Rose enhances learning and living by helping students remove health barriers that interfere with their academic, personal and social success. Services include evaluation and treatment for illness, first-aid for non-life threatening injuries, diagnostic testing, assistance with visits to specialists and personal health education. Some of the programs offered include "The Butt Stops Here," a smoking cessation program and Sexual Wellness Program, flu-shot clinics throughout the year, and on-campus COVID testing. On average, Health Services provide more than 1,000 student appointments a year. The clinic, which is staffed by a nurse

practitioner, is open for same day and follow-up visits Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Students can also schedule a same day telehealth appointment. Services are available to all students registered for six or more credits and who have paid a health service fee. When Health Services is closed, students who need medical attention are advised to contact a resident assistant, residence life professional staff, or security. Students are in getting medical attention at either an urgent care center or local emergency room. Taxi vouchers are available, or, if necessary, an ambulance will be called (*Health Services 2020*).

The College's Counseling Center is staffed by three full-time mental health professionals including the Clinical Director, who is a licensed psychologist. Appointments are available Monday through Friday with evening appointments available on Tuesday and Thursday. Students may elect to schedule an initial appointment or walk-in. Students who walk in are typically seen by a counselor within 5-10 minutes for a brief assessment. After the screening visit, a counselor will set up a full appointment, typically within a week. All full-time students are eligible for counseling services. Part-time students are eligible for an initial consultation and referrals to off-campus treatment providers in the area. The clinical staff offers diverse counseling approaches to meet the student's individual needs. Services include individual counseling, one-time consultations, thematic support groups, workshops and trainings, confidential referrals, couples counseling, consultations with families, and 24-hour crisis intervention. Students who need medication management are referred to an off-campus prescriber. In all cases, the student and counselor will work together to decide on treatment goals and time frames. Sessions are typically 45 minutes long and offered on a weekly, bi-weekly, or check-in basis. Students are informed that services are confidential and information will not be released without their written permission to do so (unless the student is a danger to themselves or others, or in cases where the student reports child or elder abuse).

The Counseling Center serves the diverse Saint Rose community. In 2019, students who received counseling services averaged 4.4 sessions (Balbuena, 2019). Counseling Center programs have been some of the most well attended programs offered on campus. Recent programs include: Two Ways to Make Safe Drinking Choices during Spring Break; Chasing the Dragon: The Life of an Opiate Addict; Wellness Fair Information Table; Therapeutic Drumming; and, Pet Therapy (Balbuena, *Tables of Clients Fall 2018-Spring 2019 2019*).

In addition to providing direct services for students, the Counseling Center offers information for faculty, staff, administrators, and families on how to support students who are struggling with mental health issues. The Center maintains an online listing of local substance abuse resources, a handbook for assisting students in distress, as well as resources for students of color. The Counseling Center also coordinates the College's participation in the JED Campus Program, a national suicide prevention initiative (Counseling Center, *Program Summary 2016*)

**The College also offers other support services to students.** Through advisement, resources, and programming, the Career Center supports undergraduate and graduate students, as well as alumni, through every step of their career development process as they explore career interests and options, gain experience, develop a professional network, conduct a job/internship search, and apply to graduate/professional school. The Career Center assists students in finding on-campus, off-campus, and summer jobs and helps with cover letters, resume writing, mock interviewing and job searching techniques (*The Career Center 2021*).

The Office of Spiritual Life provides students with an array of programs to develop as a whole person, grow spiritually, foster their leadership potential, and see and serve the needs of others. Located in the Hubbard Interfaith Sanctuary, the Office of Spiritual Life seeks to provide a safe place for people of all beliefs to feel welcome. The office provides students with opportunities to pray, meditate, and do yoga; explore faith and “big questions;” participate in community service and social justice initiatives; hear interfaith lectures from distinguished scholars; and, participate in service trips in the United States and abroad. The Office of Spiritual Life coordinates several student groups, including the Better Together Interfaith Club, the Catholic Student Organization, the Muslim Student Organization, the Jewish Student Group, B.A.S.I.C – Brothers and Sisters in Christ, yoga, and the Happiness Support Project. The office also links students to houses of worship within the capital region.

The College of Saint Rose provides a comprehensive package of services to support students’ ability to achieve academic success. These programs and services acquaint students with the variety of resources available to them and encourage campus engagement. The collaboration between and connectedness of many of these services and programs demonstrates The College’s holistic approach to academic success. Anticipating a full return to campus, the College should consider reinstating the Pathways program to allow students to continue building bonds of friendship which help enrich their educational experience. **In order to better support transfer enrollment**, the College should consider establishing a customized orientation for transfer students to ensure a smooth transition into their desired degree program and enhancing advisement for students in accelerated degree programs. Additionally, the College should consider collecting and reporting program-specific post-graduation data.

**The College offers services to ensure that students are successful in achieving educational goals including certificate and degree completion, transferring to other institutions, and post-completion placement.**

**The Office of the Registrar provides effective and efficient academic support and assistance to students, faculty, staff, and alumni** of the College. The Office complies with institutional policies and procedures, as well as with applicable federal and state regulations and other standards of American higher education (*Registrar 2019*). Students seek assistance from the registrar related to policies on pass/fail grading, repeating courses, academic grievances, resumption of study, and commencement. While some of these processes are initiated during academic advising sessions, they are overseen by the Registrar’s Office.

The College maintains agreements with other educational institutions that **enable students who earn undergraduate degrees from the College to pursue advanced degrees** (such as an MS in clinical laboratory sciences or a Juris Doctorate) from institutions such as Albany College of Pharmacy, Albany Law School, Pace University Law School and Western New England University School of Law. (*Our School 2021; Undergraduate programs 2021; Graduate Programs 2019*)

Students and Alumni have full access to our Career Center which provides advice, resources and programs to support students and alumni. They receive expert guidance and support from career advisors, staff and industry employers, focusing on developing and strengthening professional competencies with direct link to real-world applications and experience. provided opportunities to network with career professionals.

The most recent post-graduation data is from 2019. Eighty-four percent of undergraduates and 97% of graduate students were employed full-time post-graduation. Fifty-two percent of undergraduates and 93% of graduate students earned a salary of \$35,000 or above post-graduation. Forty-seven percent of undergraduates and 85% of graduate students obtained a position in their desired or related field post-graduation. Of those students who continued their education, 15% of undergraduates and 33% of graduates pursued a doctoral degree. Fifty-nine percent of undergraduates and 45% of graduate students continued their study in master's programs. Twelve percent of undergraduates went on to study in the fields of medicine and medicine or continued in a professional studies program. Twenty-two percent of graduate students continued their education in certificate programs. Fourteen percent of undergrads have continued their study in a category considered other advanced education programs (*Fact Book 2020*).

### **Criterion 2: Policies and Procedures Regarding Transfer, Other Credits and Partnerships**

The College of Saint Rose has clear policies and procedures regarding evaluating and accepting transfer credits. Qualified students from two-year institutions may transfer up to 70 credits toward a bachelor's degree at the College, while students who have previously attended a four-year institution may transfer up to 90 credits. Students must complete 32 resident credit hours to earn their degree. These policies are clearly articulated on the institution's website and in published materials such as the College Handbook.

Students who earn an associate's degree within the SUNY/CUNY systems before enrolling at Saint Rose can benefit from the College's seamless transfer program. Through this program, these students are exempted from the College's liberal education requirements as these are deemed to have been met in the process of earning their A.A., A.S., or A.B. degree at their community college. This process allows transfer students to focus on major requirements and electives (*The College of Saint Rose – Seamless Transfer, n.d.*)

Many of our academic programs, including accelerated programs, require students to complete an internship or field placement for credits. The institution collaborates with government agencies, hospitals, schools, nonprofit organizations, nonprofits and private sector corporations to link students with these opportunities. The College also offer other for-credit opportunities for study abroad and other experiential learning opportunities (see Standard III, Criterion 4 for details).

In collaboration with two local hospitals, The College of Saint Rose offers two degrees in the Nursing Program — an associate degree and a bachelor's degree. Students supplement their studies with relevant electives and leadership opportunities within nursing, biology, psychology, medical technology, and other fields.

The College of Saint Rose collaborates with Albany Law School on a unique program. The curriculum allows students to obtain their undergraduate degree and a J.D. in law in six years. Qualified majors include Criminal Justice, English, History, Political Science, and Psychology.

### **Criterion 3: Policies and Procedures to Secure Student Information and Records**

The College ensures the confidentiality of student educational records in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Students have the right to: (1) inspect and review their educational records; (2) seek an amendment to their records, when appropriate; (3) limit disclosure of education records and the personally identifiable information without a student's written consent; and, (4) file formal complaints alleging a FERPA violation with the Family Policy Compliance Office of the U.S. Department of Education.

Students and parents can review College definitions, policies, and procedures related to FERPA on the College's website and download a copy of its disclosure policy (*FERPA 2019*). Through a link on this website, students can learn how to grant permission to allow parental access to their educational records. Students also have access to detailed information about the College's FERPA-related policies and procedures in the College's Student Handbook (*Student Handbook 2021-2022*). FERPA information is also covered during new student orientation.

The College supports faculty and staff compliance with FERPA by requiring all new employees to complete training that covers the law and College policies within 30 days of hire. Completion is monitored by the College's Human Resources Office. Finally, the College maintains a FERPA Checklist for Faculty on its website to provide guidance related to issues relevant to their specific role (*FERPA 2019*).

Students are provided description of the process for handling FERPA-related issues. A student who believes that record is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise violates their FERPA rights may submit a written request for an amendment to the Registrar's Office, clearly identifying the record(s) they want to have amended and specifying the reasons they believe the records to be inaccurate. The Registrar's Office will notify the student of its decision and, if the decision is negative, inform the student of their right to a hearing regarding the requested amendment. If a student requests a hearing, it will be conducted by a College official who does not have a direct interest in the outcome. The student may present evidence relevant to the issues raised with assistance or representation by individuals of their own choice at their own expense, including an attorney. The College official conducting the hearing will, after considering all relevant information, make a recommendation to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost. Within a reasonable period after the conclusion of the hearing, the College will notify the student of its decision in writing. The decision will be based solely upon evidence presented at the hearing and will include a summary of evidence and the reasons for the decision. If the College decides that the information in the student's records is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the privacy or other rights of students, the College will amend the records accordingly. If the College decides that the information is not inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's FERPA rights, the College will inform the student of their right to place in their record a statement commenting on the information and/or explaining any reasons for disagreeing with the College's decision. Any such explanation will be kept as part of the student's record for as long as the contested portion of the record is kept and will be disclosed whenever the contested portion of the record is disclosed.

#### **Criterion 4: Activities to Enhance Student Experience**

**The College offers athletic, student life, and other extracurricular activities designed to enhance the student experience which are guided by the same academic, fiscal, and administrative principles and procedures that govern all other programs.** These activities reflect the College's goal of

educating well-rounded individuals. The following overview of extracurricular activities describes how their administration complies with academic, fiscal, and administrative principles and procedures.

The College offers 19 NCAA Division II intercollegiate sports and intramural athletics open to all students. Men's intercollegiate teams include track and field, swimming and diving, soccer, lacrosse, golf, esports, cross country, basketball, and baseball. Women's intercollegiate teams include basketball, cross country, esports, golf, lacrosse, soccer, softball, swimming and diving, track and field, and volleyball. Intramural sports are offered every semester on Thursday and Sunday evenings and are open to all students. All student-athletes must be enrolled full-time; they are expected to maintain good academic standing (minimum 2.0 cumulative GPA each semester); Coaches will work closely with student-athletes to avoid class/game conflicts but, when conflicts do occur, student-athletes are expected to make arrangements to miss class for competition (2021-2022 Student-Athlete Handbook). Saint Rose student-athletes adhere to all academic, fiscal and administrative principles that are in place for all students. The NCAA also has academic standards (GPA, credit hours) that student-athletes must uphold. Athletic department staff ensure these standards are met, and address any inadequacies in this regard on a case by case basis. There are no other special provisions (fiscal or administrative) for student-athletes.

The Student Association of The College of Saint Rose, as the governing organization of the student body, is charged with, among other things, allocating funds from student activity fees, recognizing and chartering student organizations, revoking charters or suspending funding of organizations, reviewing policies and procedures of recognized student groups, identifying student group policies that are inconsistent with established College guidelines and policies, and presenting Student Association approved proposals, resolutions, and reports to the College President, appropriate office, and/or designated committee. Student Association members are elected by the student body each spring and their work is guided by the Student Association Constitution and By-Laws (2013) in carrying out these tasks. Tasks relevant to this standard are described below.

The Association's Budget and Grant Committee is charged with considering all funding and reallocation requests and determining the final budgets of all Student Association-sponsored groups. Budget and Grant Committee decisions may be appealed to the Student Association.

The Student Association maintains its checking and savings accounts in a local commercial/savings bank. The Student Association Comptroller is responsible for issuing checks, making deposits, and maintaining a record of every transaction. The Comptroller provides the Student Association with quarterly budget reports, keeps records of financial activity for every Student Association club/organization, maintains the general ledger, and keeps blank checks secure within the Student Association office. Per organizational by-laws, these activities fall to the Student Association President if the Comptroller is unable to perform these duties. All other Student Association Directors must keep records of their respective clubs'/organizations' budget activity (See Table 1 below). Running balances of their respective clubs' budgets must be maintained, as well as a record of all their financial transactions. The Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs and the Student Association President have full powers to review all financial records and bank statements. Annually the College Office of Finance and Administration reviews a sample of Student Association receipts and disbursements, to test compliance with Student Association financial policies and procedures. In conjunction with the Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs, the Vice President of Student Affairs, the Student Association President, and the Comptroller.

The Student Association hires an external Independent Accountant to inspect all the records kept by the Comptroller, and to ensure that all Student Association constitutional and legal regulations are followed (Student Association Constitution and By-Laws, 2013). This inspection is performed at least monthly. Two financial audits are conducted annually: an annual fiscal audit conducted by the College's external, independent auditing firm and an audit conducted annually by the Vice President and Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs, in collaboration with the Student Association Independent Accountant. A representative from the Office of Financial Services may be invited to participate. All audit reports are available to the Executive Board and open to the review of the Student Association. All financial records are maintained for at least seven years.

Students interested in establishing a new student group and receiving funding through the Student Association must submit a formal constitution to the Student Association. A Constitution Checklist is provided to guide that process. The constitution must include the organization's title and purpose. While the organization must be open to all students, groups may target people who are interested in the group's special focus. Criteria for membership must be included in the constitution. The officer structure, committee structure, and meeting plans must also be outlined in detail. The process for making amendments to the organization's constitution must also be described. Finally, every organization's constitution must include the College's policy against hazing and identify a faculty, administrator, or staff advisor.

As highlighted in Table 3 below, the College offers a substantial complement of extracurricular activities covering a wide range of personal and professional interests. As an example, the college offers students the opportunity to join nationally affiliated student organizations such as Best Buddies and the National Association for Education of Young Children. Best Buddies is an organization dedicated to enhancing the lives of people with intellectual disabilities by providing opportunities for one-to-one friendships and integrated employment. On our campus, Best Buddies is a vibrant and active student-run organization that won an award for being one of the most active chapters in the nation. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) is dedicated to improving the well-being of all young children, with particular focus on the quality of educational and developmental services for children from birth through age 8. On our campus this student-run organization has organized children's events, sponsored children's authors for presentations to teacher candidates, and been active in leading the way to end childhood poverty by engaging in social advocacy and policy making discussions within New York State.

**Table IV.1: Student Groups**

Special Groups Related to Communications	The Chronicle, Radio St. Rose, The Girls Next Door, Golden Knights Dance Team, Golden Notes, Golden Vybz, His Image Gospel Choir, St. Rose TV, The Other Guys, The Silhouettes
Special Groups Related to Academic Activities	American Choral Directors Assn., AIGA, Capital District Assn. for the Education of Young Children, Council for Exceptional Children, English Club, Environmental Club, Geology Club, Heuther School of Business Assn., Minority Assn. for Pre-Medical Students, National Assn. for Music Education, National Science Assn., National Student Speech, Language & Hearing Assn., Phi Alpha Theta, Psychology Club, Social Work Organization, Student Nursing Assn., Student Psychology Assn., St. Rose Jazz Educators, Saint Rose

	Business Professionals and Sales Organization, United Math Organization
Special Interest Groups	Adventure Club, Best Buddies, BASIC, Big Brothers, Big Sisters, Colleges Against Cancer, Crate of Apes, Debate and Oratory Arts Club, Geeks of the Round Table, House of Arts Identity, International Student Organization, Karate Club, Leading Ladies, League of Extraordinary Gentlemen, Outside the [Box], Purely Positive Women of Purpose, Sabor Latino, Spectrum, St. Rose Board Games Club, Ultimate Frisbee Club
Social Activities	Fall/Spring Activities Fair, Student Assn Interest Meetings, Blood Drives, Harvest Fest, Rose Rock

In addition to the oversight of extracurricular activities by the Student Association, the College uses multiple mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of these programs and ensure that they meet the changing needs of students. The Higher Education Data Survey is administered to graduating students and covers an array of academic and non-academic indicators including satisfaction with food services, student housing, health services, and student center programs and facilities. Relevant to this particular criterion, 77% of students reported that being able to easily get involved in campus organizations was important to them and 65% reported being satisfied with their experience at St. Rose.

While The College has mechanisms to ensure that extracurricular activities are administered in a manner that complies with academic, fiscal, and administrative principles and procedures that govern other programs, it should be noted that the Student Association has struggled to fill available positions since the start of the pandemic. The group has not been staffed to capacity since the 2019-2020 academic year. Many organizations, including several long-standing ones, have struggled to maintain participation. Other organizations have also struggled to recruit participants. Student activities and student affairs administrators at The College are currently investigating this issue with the goal of resuming an active complement of extracurricular activities during the 2022-2023 academic year. Staff are in the process of conducting focus groups with student leaders and the general student body to explore these issues.

**Criterion 5: Review Student Support Services Delivered by Third-Party Providers**

The College regularly reviews and seeks student input on student support services that are designed, delivered or assessed by third-party providers. The College contracts with a limited number of providers: Dining Services, Campus Store, and Print Shop & Mailroom Services.

In November 2018, the Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) was administered to 2,403 full-time undergraduate students. Only 24% of Saint Rose students were satisfied that there was an adequate selection of food available in the cafeteria. This was significantly lower than the results from comparison colleges. It is worth noting that 79% of Saint Rose students reported that this as an important issue. In response, the College has explored alternative Dining Services providers. The ultimate change was made over the summer of 2021 and the departing provider did not leave the College with any assessment data. The new provider, Sodexo, conducted a survey to assess student dining needs, but due to limited response it was determined that the results could not be used. Results from the Higher Education Data Survey (HEDS) administered to seniors in Spring 2021 found that 56% were very or generally satisfied

with food services compared to 59% of seniors at a comparison group of similar colleges (Office of Institutional Effectiveness, October 2021).

The contract for Campus Store services is due to expire in June 2022. A Bookstore Committee was created to consider viable options for bookstore services. The Bookstore Committee recently completed the process of determining the best solution for Campus Store options based on feedback from the campus community. Three surveys were sent out to Students, Faculty/Staff, and Parents (Campus Bookstore Committee, 2021). The options considered included a) continuing with a full-service bookstore where books can be purchased in the store, b) changing to an online option where books must be purchased online, and/or 3) creating an online option with a Spirit Store where branded merchandise can be purchased along with supplies. As a result of the process, a new vendor, Branes and Noble, was selected and will begin managing bookstore operations in FY 2022-23.

The services are assessed periodically as part of the College's Student and Faculty Technology Surveys. Although the Student and Faculty Technology Surveys are used primarily to assess the services of Information Technology Services (ITS), other departments such as the Library, Residence Life, Safety and Security, and the Print Shop & Mailroom often request that questions be included for their respective areas. The last recorded assessment of the Print Shop & Mailroom services was in spring 2016. At the time, 60% of students were very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with printing services (*CSR, Faculty & Student Technology Surveys Report 2016*). The College should consider implementing a more coordinated effort to collect, curate, and disseminate ad-hoc assessment data related to third-party providers.

#### **Criterion 6: Assessment of Programs Supporting the Student Experience**

The College of Saint Rose undertakes regular assessment of the effectiveness of programs supporting the student experience and uses findings from these assessments to inform continuous improvements across a range of student support domains. The primary tool for assessing effectiveness of student support programs is the *College's Strategic Administrative Unit Outcomes Assessment Report (SOAR)* process. This is an inventory of assessment activities conducted by each unit (*Institutional advancement 2019*). In addition, the process draws on data from the *National Survey of Student Engagement* and the *Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement*. The *Office of Institutional Effectiveness* supports the SOAR process by providing training and consultation, as well as student and institutional data.

The SOAR assessment begins with the vice president of each administrative division determining the staff member who will complete the SOAR for each unit (*Institutional advancement 2019*). The SOAR unit lead may complete the process alone, but typically works in collaboration with department staff. Key SOAR activities occur throughout the year and include defining/reviewing the unit's mission and goals; planning and organizing assessment activities; collecting data and analyzing results; using findings to inform practice, procedures, and policy; completing the SOAR during the College-wide Assessment Day. Senior administrative staff and deans review the SOARs in mid-June. The *Institutional Assessment Working Group* provides feedback on SOARs. This requires that college-wide trends and themes be identified by August 1. The findings are reported to the President by the end of each calendar year. The SOAR process is standardized yet sufficiently flexible to allow units to identify assessment processes and data sources most relevant to their work. Following is an example of how the SOAR process contributed to meaningful improvements in the student experience at the College of Saint Rose.

Through the SOAR process, the Office of Academic Advising identified a challenge related to the number of first-year students who attend their pre-advising sessions and set a goal to increase participation (*Academic advising 2022*). The office partnered with the Office of Residence Life to advertise pre-advising sessions and to have resident assistants offer reminders for students to participate, stressing the importance of the meeting to their academic success. The office also on-boarded a work-study student who was charged with increasing the office's presence on social media and managing the office's Facebook and Instagram accounts. In addition to offering best practices for academic success, the office used social media to remind students of upcoming advising opportunities. The office has monitored changes over time with the percentage of first-year students who attended a pre-advising session increasing from 80% in Fall 2019 to 81% in Fall 2020. (It should be noted that the increase may have been impacted by the percentage of students who were not on campus during the 2020-2021 academic year due to the pandemic.) Comparing Fall 2020 and Fall 2021, the percentage of first-year students who attended a pre-advising session increased from 81% to 85% (*Academic advising, Hankin, J. 2021*).

As part of the assessment process, staff attend the annual assessment day, which provides focused discussion of the SOAR process and for staff engaged in assessment activities to better understand how to conduct assessments, create SMART goals, and other ask questions related to the assessment process.

In addition to the regular assessment process, various offices at the College periodically implement various surveys to directly collect feedback from campus community. Examples include the Student and Faculty Technology Survey, Book Store Survey, STAR Day Survey, etc.

### **Requirements of Affiliation and Institutional Priorities**

As has been demonstrated throughout this Standard report, the services and programs offered by the College's related to the student experience works support all of the institutional priorities.

- Priority 1, Support Student Experience:
- Priority 2, Sustain Academic Excellence
- Priority 3, Foster an Engaged Community
- Priority 4, Ensure Financial Health

### **Areas for Improvement and Innovation**

The Division of Student Development underwent a number of transitions in the summer of 2021 which carried throughout the 2021-2022 academic year. With each professional staff vacancy, the College took the time to re-evaluate the roles that existed compared to the needs of our students and make recommendations on how we could better serve our students. We identified our obligation to serve and celebrate our diverse student population as a priority. To better support our students, we brought our student clubs and organizations under one umbrella instead of there being a divide between groups.

The College also acknowledged how critical it is for the team working with our Academic Opportunity Students to focus on advising and supporting this cohort of students to support their success and retention. This new focus meant that they could not also oversee New Student Programs. In recognizing these needs and having vacancies in both our Director of Student Life and Director of Diversity and Inclusion positions, the decision was made to create a Director of Inclusion and Engagement who would oversee a Coordinator of Student Leadership and New Student Transitions, and a Coordinator of Student Engagement and Campus Activities. The Coordinator roles were created to be live-on positions to be available for evening and weekend programming for students and to assist Residence Life with on-call responsibilities. In addition, the College was without someone leading the area of Community Service for our students. We know our students are committed to serving our local, national, and global community as well as advocating for social justice. It was important to bring the role of the Assistant Director of Community Service back to support our students in this way. Finally, the College understands that students are still in a time of growth and development, both in and out of the classroom. That said, it is one of the College's many responsibilities to help our students see how they are part of a larger community and that the decisions they make affect both themselves and those around them. To do this, the position of Assistant Director of Student Conduct was newly redefined to be the Assistant Director of Student Support and Development. Although these recent staffing and organizational changes have helped to support the College's ability to deliver a high quality student experience, we suggest that further support is required for underprepared or struggling students, and that the College should consider bolstering staffing in all academic support areas.

## **Summary**

The College fulfils the criteria as outlined in Standard IV. The College provides effective support of students regardless of their program or level of preparation, Supports and programs are regularly reviewed and the results of these assessments are used to improve our work with students. Despite COVID and financial constraints, the College has continued to support the development of the whole person, providing many opportunities for engagement and growth. The suggestions noted in this report will provide for continued improvement in the areas covered by this standard.

## Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment

### Executive Summary

The College meets its standards through clearly defined educational goals at all levels of the institution. Using the Strategic Plan as a framework, assessments have been identified that evaluate academic, administrative, and institutional effectiveness which then inform institutional decision-making and define clear goals for improvement of outcome measures. Continuing targeted training on data collection and analysis will improve the institution's ability to move forward in undergraduate education and expansion of accredited graduate programs.

### Criterion 1: Clearly Stated Educational Goals

The College of Saint Rose has clearly defined goals for educational excellence at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. The mission statement for the College notes that the school delivers distinctive and comprehensive liberal arts and professional programs that inspire our graduates to be productive adults, critical thinkers, and motivated, caring citizens ("History & Mission."). Our engagement with the urban environment expands the setting for educational opportunities and encourages the Saint Rose community's energetic involvement and effective leadership in society. Educational goals at the College are informed by the progressive tradition of the founding Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet and encourage the development of intellectual capacities, cultivation of creative and spiritual gifts, and the creation of a diverse learning community that is energetically involved in effective leadership in society. The College has focused on achieving and maintaining the standards set by multiple accrediting agencies, which ensure that programs maintain and assess the quality of education on an ongoing basis ("Charter & Accreditations."). All degree programs are registered, and professional programs are approved by the Board of Regents through the New York State Education Department.

At an institutional level, the College utilizes established procedures to assess, maintain, and improve educational goals across the academic spectrum ("Academic Policies and Procedures," 2017; "2020-2022 Graduate Catalog," 2020; "2021-2023 Undergraduate Catalog", 2021). Assessment strategies, both formal and informal, are established for the College, the Schools, and all Departments (Office of Institutional Effectiveness [OIE], 2018; OIE, 2019a; OIE, 2020). The College of Saint Rose asks all academic programs and administrative departments to develop their own Student Learning Outcomes and Unit goals, respectively. Academic programs are tasked to match outcomes to the institutional goals and administrative departments are tasked to match Unit Goals to the Strategic Plan. A new Strategic Plan, developed for 2021-2024, codifies new assessment strategies and goals for the institution, including ensuring that all academic programs reflect the highest standards of excellence while honoring the College's founding value of "service to the Dear Neighbor."

The goals for the working group for Standard V include the examination of assessment strategies to evaluate academic advisement, student success, evaluation of faculty, departments and programs, strategic planning initiatives, student support, third party providers, and of assessment practices. Tools used for assessment throughout the institution are detailed to inform strategies for achieving student success, the achievement of goals, and changes that might be made to conform to the goals of the Strategic Plan.

The College created a new strategic plan in FY 2020-2021, which was implemented in the Fall of 2021. This plan was based upon broad community input. **College goals are interrelated, tied to the College mission, and relevant to the College's educational purpose.**

The Strategic Plan Policy Committee, a group of stakeholders from throughout the college, assesses the Strategic Plan twice a year and is in the process of developing a new evaluation matrix (SPPC, 2021). The 2021-2024 Strategic Plan Committee identified specific goals for the continued growth and development of the College community:

- Academic Excellence - Ensure all academic programs reflect the highest standards of excellence and integrate the College's founding values, with an orientation toward measurable learning outcomes.
- Student Support - Redesign student support services to ensure all students have access to programs that enhance their experience at the school and help them launch careers, pursue graduate opportunities, and explore post-college pursuits.
- Campus Climate - Foster an engaged, inclusive, and supported community with highly motivated and vibrant administrators, scholars, and staff, working towards excellence.
- Fiscal Strength of the College - Develop a college-wide, multi-year budget plan that will achieve a balanced budget based on revenue and operating cost projections by the 2024-2025 budget year.

## **Criterion 2: Organized and Systematic Assessments**

The College of Saint Rose and staff conduct organized and systemic assessments to evaluate and improve student achievement of programmatic and institutional goals. This assessment includes regular assessment of courses, curricula, and programs, as well as of learning outcomes related to programs and the Liberal Education CORE, in addition, administrative offices conduct regular assessments to improve academic and support services for students. Each level of assessment is tied to the College's mission and strategic plan. A new strategic plan developed for 2021-2024, informs assessments. Academic and administrative goals work together to provide a meaningful experience for students. The goals and tactics in this plan provide continued opportunities for assessment and improvement in student achievement.

The assessment process begins with an annual Assessment Day, held in May of each year. Assessment day did not occur as scheduled in the spring 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic but was reinstated in Spring 2021. Assessment Day provides departments, administrative offices, and student assistance centers with the opportunity to efficiently review data. All administrative offices and academic programs submit assessment reports to the Institutional Assessment Work Group (IAWG) using standardized templates. The establishment of both the campus-wide annual assessment cycle and parallel electronic reporting forms facilitate resource allocations based on common needs, themes, and trends.

A key component of this process is the assessment of all programs and administrative departments. which are based on stated Student Learning Outcomes and Unit goals, respectively. Through the Student Learning Outcome Assessment (SLOA) process. Faculty in each academic program identify outcomes and develop measures for assessment. Outcomes for each program are assessed annually, and programs may choose to assess all program outcomes each year, or develop a regular

cycle to assess only some outcomes in a particular year. Similarly, the College assesses the Liberal Education requirements (CORE) through the SLOA review, to ensure that all undergraduate degrees align academic programs to the College's mission (Undergraduate Academic Committee [UAC], 2020). Students are required to take courses in history, language, philosophy, and other topics regardless of major program, **ensuring the comprehensive liberal education promised by the College's mission.**

In the Strategic Outcomes Assessment Report (SOAR) process, administrative departments are asked to match Unit Goals to the Strategic Plan (Strategic Planning and Priorities Committee [SPPC], 2021). All of this is mapped by the Institution's Mission and Charter.

The assessment of the Marketing and Communication Office is accomplished primarily through the yearly completion of the SOAR. With the SOARs now being widely available to the college community through Microsoft SharePoint, the accomplishments of the Marketing and Communication Office are more visible to a wider range of stakeholders. As a result of some administrative changes, the Office of Marketing and Communication was moved out of Enrollment Management and into its own division. As a result of competitor analyses undertaken by program faculty, in the past year, the Office of Marketing and Communication has begun to assist Academic Programs with improving the programs specific web pages with details like outcome information, facilities, and stories from current and former students. Web traffic increased for program pages with these updates. These changes also resulted in individual program learning outcomes being more visible to students (Office of Marketing and Communications, 2021).

Accreditation is another part of our regular assessment. Accreditation ensures that education provided by institutions of higher learning **meets acceptable levels of quality.** The College maintains institutional accreditation by The Middle States Commission on Higher Education. The College also maintains multiple specialized accreditations, which include, but are not limited to:

- The School of Business, inclusive of its degree programs at the bachelor's and master's level, is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (Huether School of Business, 2021a; Huether School of Business, 2021b).
- The Communication Sciences and Disorders program at the master's level is accredited by The Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders, 2021).
- The Counseling Department, including both master's level School Counseling and Clinical Mental Health Counseling, are accredited by The Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP; Counseling Department, 2019).
- The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) (2018).
- The School Psychology program is approved by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), a specialized professional association of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NASP, 2021). In May 2022, NASP obtained recognition from the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) as an accrediting organization.
- The Social Work program is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education's Standards (Department of Social Work, 2021a; Department of Social Work, 2021b; Department of Social Work, 2021c)
- The College's Art and Design programs were previously accredited by the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (membership resigned as of 6/30/2022).

- The College’s music programs were previously accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music (membership resigned as of 12/31/2021).

For each academic program that is externally accredited, goals are in line with accreditor requirements as well as with the College’s own institutional goals and strategic plan. Programs that lead to professional licensure (e.g., counseling, teaching, school psychology, communication sciences and disorders, social work, etc.) also shape educational goals around requirements for certification or licensure. Particular attention is paid to New York licensure and certification requirements, providing a framework for career advancement with an emphasis on self-care and sustainability, and the ethical and legal requirements for continuing education.

### **Criterion 3: Assessment to Improve Educational Effectiveness**

The College regularly engages in assessment of academic programs and services and uses this information to improve educational effectiveness. SLOAs, SOARs, and external surveys are tools used to conduct the assessment. The assessment and improvement of educational effectiveness occurs within the official assessment cycle as well as outside it through collaboration of Academic and Administrative sides of the College.

Faculty advisors guide students to the completion of their degree. Students are invited to meet with their academic advisors twice yearly to discuss their academic plans. Each year the College’s Office of Academic Advising creates an Annual Strategic Administrative Unit Outcomes Assessment Report (SOAR) that analyzes the office’s success in meeting the College Mission through their efforts in academic advising students (Office of Academic Advising, 2021).

The College of Saint Rose uses Navigate to track advising for graduate and undergraduate students. Faculty use Navigate to schedule advisement meetings and to track at-risk students. This process of reviewing and revising academic programs and support services helps our students remain organized and successful. Faculty are routinely offered training in the software that tracks the advisement sessions for both graduate and undergraduate students.

The Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium Senior Survey was completed in Spring 2021 (OIE, 2021b). The survey received a 32% response rate, totaling 172 senior responses. The results of the survey illustrate the strong academic programs and advising the students receive:

- Saint Rose seniors are planning employment at the same rate as the comparison group (56% Saint Rose vs. 59% National Comparison Group).
- More Saint Rose seniors plan to attend graduate or professional school compared to similar institutions (29% Saint Rose vs. 25% National Comparison Group).
- Saint Rose provides a welcoming environment for diverse students with 66% of Saint Rose Seniors finding the climate for minority students satisfying or very satisfying.

The results also show areas for improvement:

- 26% of Saint Rose seniors had accepted an employment position at the time of the survey compared to 37% of Seniors in the National Comparison group.

- Saint Rose also lagged in bringing in additional lecturers and speakers to enhance the student's education (77% of Saint Rose Seniors satisfied vs. 90% of seniors at the national level satisfied).

Further research by program of study, and the current analysis of the HEDS Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) survey results by the Inclusive Excellence Committee may provide additional insight into additional student-focused adaptations in programs.

The College of Saint Rose Faculty Manual (2016) established policies for recruitment, evaluation, promotion, and tenure. According to the Guidelines for Faculty Searches, "the procedures used to evaluate tenure track candidates will conform to the highest professional standards of the respective discipline or field" (The College of Saint Rose Faculty Manual 2016, p. 142). Adjunct faculty are expected to address educational outcomes as stated in the approved syllabus for the course(s) they teach, as well as communicate with the department faculty regarding appropriate content, assessment, and instructional expectations. Clinical faculty hired to supervise student teachers, interns, and candidates in clinical settings must provide documentation of certification in the field in which they supervise and evidence of successful supervisory experience.

**Both course evaluations and teaching observations are used to improve pedagogy and educational practice.** The SmartEvals online evaluation system is used for all courses at the College. SmartEvals is available to all students and faculty through the College website, and it is also integrated with the Canvas online learning system. Students are sent reminders through the SmartEvals system and evaluations are tracked by faculty and administration. Department Chairs review probationary and adjunct/clinical faculty forms, and records are kept for probationary faculty. Deans review all course evaluation forms. Individual faculty use these course evaluations to improve their practice and educational effectiveness. For example, the student feedback allows faculty to learn which techniques and methods were effective and/or appropriate. Classroom Observation Reports are also collected each year during the probationary period and every probationary faculty member is observed in their classroom at least three times by tenured faculty members from an allied discipline.

The Rank & Tenure Committee evaluates probationary faculty using accumulated data detailed within the Faculty Manual and sends recommendations to the Dean and Provost for consideration. Chairs meet yearly with probationary faculty to discuss course assessments, classroom observations, and other information to provide feedback to faculty for improvement. To improve their skills and knowledge, faculty have access to a set amount of professional development funds each school year; they can also apply for professional development grants once per semester. Depending on tenure status, faculty can also apply for sabbaticals to take time for more rigorous professional development opportunities.

At the end of each school year, faculty are required to turn in end-of-year faculty data forms where they document all their relevant academic and non-academic activities for the school year. The faculty data forms are collected by the provost to determine the level of engagement faculty have regarding professional societies, professional presentations of research, and dedication to the larger community. These forms have been used to inform the Board of Trustees and apply for grants.

The **process for assessing administrative departments and academic programs** at Saint Rose has changed since the last self-study. There is a campus-wide assessment cycle that involves Academic and Administrative departments assessing Student Learning Objectives and Unit Goals using forms called a Strategic Learning Outcomes Assessment (SLOA) for Academic programs and Strategic Outcomes Assessment Report (SOAR) for administrative departments. The process is overseen by the

Office of Institutional Effectiveness and the Institutional Assessment Working Group (IAWG) which includes the provost, the deans of all four schools, and other individuals from administrative departments on campus.

Each academic program identifies Student Learning Objectives, and each administrative department identifies Unit Goals. The various groups identify how and why they are going to assess each of these goals or objectives. The process allows for multi-year cycles of assessment of goals. Every year in June, the SLOAs and SOARs provide a department's narrative of assessment that year, including what they assessed, how they assessed, what they learned from the assessments, and actions taken because of the assessments. These data are then processed by the IAWG and turned into a yearly assessment report, which serves as an executive summary of assessments that year (OIE, 2018; OIE 2019a; OIE 2020). The SLOAs and SOARs from the previous year inform the next year's assessments through review between Deans and their department chairs or between Vice Presidents and their teams.

Assessment information from SLOAs is used to **improve pedagogy and curriculum, as well as supporting necessary program revision**. For example, the Communications department was able to identify the need for two new minors in their program. The Biology Department made changes to its curriculum to incorporate vocabulary specific to the discipline earlier in a student's coursework. The School of Business introduced business-centric writing earlier in its curriculum. Many of the academic programs at The College of Saint Rose are externally accredited. These external accreditations, along with the internal process detailed above, ensure that student learning outcomes are met. Programs externally accredited at Saint Rose are available on the College's website ("Charter & Accreditations").

The administrative SOAR assessments provide **for review and revision of academic support services**. For example, based on information in its assessment, ITS streamlined the process of logging on to guest WIFI. The Academic Advising and Counseling Centers changed their appointment availability to better fit the requirements of students, especially as the COVID-19 pandemic generated additional needs (OIE, 2018; OIE 2019a; OIE, 2020).

The recent **strategic planning process also provided an opportunity to assess our academic and administrative functions**. This process included multiple focus groups and surveys that provided data used to create both College-wide and specific tactics to address identified needs. The academic review process has been revised and approved by the faculty. Program review by discipline faculty will occur on a 5–7-year cycle. Graduate programs will identify and/or develop distinguishing academic experiences that fully define, expand, and embrace the theory-to-practice model.

The College's **assessment process for assisting students to improve learning outcomes** includes multiple components. Among these components is the use of SLOAs that help departments determine how to make meaning of assessment data and improve student outcomes. The college also holds an annual Assessment Day, where individual assessment reports from educational programs and offices are reviewed. As a result of activities on this day, a review of program and office reports leads to recommendations, as well as the distribution of a comprehensive assessment report that synthesizes the information gleaned from these processes. This comprehensive assessment informs future choices for pedagogic discourse and analysis.

For students on academic probation, the college requires them to take CDS-021 Strategies for Success. After reviewing data on student performance after taking CDS-021, the deans revised the program in Fall 2020. In the past, these strategies programs only involved students meeting with success

counsellors. In Fall 2020, students were required to take an online CDS course consisting of 6 modules, each focused either on skill development or on helping students better understand and utilize College resources. In addition, students were also required to meet with success counsellors. At the end of the Fall semester, an analysis was done to gauge whether students who successfully completed CDS-021 had improved their semester GPAs. Adjustments were made to the course based upon this data, and for Spring 2021 revisions were made to the online curriculum, success counsellors were given responsibility for teaching specific sections of the course, and a face-to-face course was created. At the end of the Spring 2021 semester, the results were again analyzed, and the curriculum and process were tweaked. A new CDS-022 (Intensive Support for College Success) was created for those students still on probation who had successfully passed CDS-021. Assessment showed that changes had a positive outcome on student success. 74.5% of students who passed CDS-021 had their GPA increased. The results of CDS classes are assessed each term and these assessments are used to improve our efforts for these at-risk students.

**The College uses assessment to improve key student success indicators.** In November 2017, the Associate Vice President (AVP) for Institutional Effectiveness assembled a workgroup to review data from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE), administered in 2017 and 2016, respectively (OIE, 2017). The workgroup included representatives from Enrollment Management, Student Success, Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, Academic Leadership, and Institutional Effectiveness. Through intense, focused conversations, the group identified key goals to share with the College community (OIE, 2018). Primary focus was placed on student recruitment and retention efforts in the Office of Assessment. As a result of this analysis an outside contractor was brought in to help develop a comprehensive retention plan. It was also found that changes to Academic Advising following the 2015 NSSE (Office of Institutional Effectiveness, 2015) were successful in improving key advising behaviors. Students in 2015 had the Academic Advising office as their primary source of academic advice at 28% of the time versus 41% in 2017. The changes to Academic Advising are still in effect as of this report due to their continued effectiveness.

The College provides support for student placement post-graduation, and these efforts are regularly assessed. The Career Center at the College of Saint Rose creates connections between students, employers, and faculty that assist with job placement post-graduation. As the career center has had to adapt to a post-pandemic reality, it has recognized the need to host virtual, instead of in-person, career fairs, informational sessions, and student appointments. As COVID restrictions eased, the career center conducted a survey to seek student opinions on a return to in-person Career events. This survey determined that students preferred in-person career fairs to virtual career fairs. In response to this recognized need, the career fair is again hosting in-person career fair events ([Career Center, 2021](#)). In 2019, students were surveyed to better understand the geographic areas in which they wanted to live after graduation. In response to these results, the career center adapted its goals and operations to foster connections with employers in locations in proportion to the number of students who wanted to live in those geographic areas (Career Center, 2019).

The external communication of assessment outcomes, data, and other essential information is handled by the Office of Marketing and Communication. Along with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, the Marketing and Communication office is responsible for the completion and updating of the *Fast Facts* section of the Saint Rose website. Here students and others can find valuable information regarding admissions, enrollment, and student body diversity. Additionally, the required Higher Education Act (HEA) disclosures of graduation rate and student body diversity is made available in this section, as well as in the *Consumer Information* section of the website (“Consumer Information”).

#### **Criterion 4: Assessment of Third-Party Providers**

There are three Third-Party Providers associated with the educational program at The College of Saint Rose. These are:

- The Center for Integrated Teaching (CITE) – CITE is a distance delivery partner of the College. Classes for the program, available to applicants who possess a New York State Teaching Certification, bachelor's, and master's degrees, have a minimum of three years teaching or pupil personnel experience, and live and work south of Poughkeepsie. Offerings are in Educational Leadership and Administration. Classes are held in Westchester, Nassau, Suffolk, and New York City.
- The Teacher Education Institute (TEI) – TEI delivers graduate and professional development courses for K-12 classroom teachers covering a wide range of topics, including reading, language arts, math, instructional technology, classroom management, and science. Other academic partner schools are Carlow University (PA), Madonna University (MI), and Notre Dame College (OH). The syllabi, all readings, and credentialing are facilitated by the faculty. If TEI proposes a course, it must be approved by the College. All materials, including syllabi, are routed by the Dean to the appropriate department within the School of Education, and reviewed for rigor and relevance by tenure-track faculty prior to approval. TEI courses cannot transfer into degree programs. Most people take courses for professional development. No certificates are awarded through this partner.
- New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) - NYSUT's program brings The College of Saint Rose courses to teachers throughout New York State, including the greater Rochester, Syracuse, Utica/Rome, Hudson, and Capital District areas. NYSUT also offers courses entirely online. Just as with TEI, the tenure-track faculty in the appropriate department must approve courses based on rigor and relevance. These courses do not count toward a degree at the College. Courses may qualify as electives, but only if approved by a full-time faculty member. No certificates are awarded through this partner.

Third party education providers meet with the Dean of the School of Education on at least an annual basis. During these meetings, partners collaboratively review course offerings. TEI and NYSUT engage in a course review process like the review for on-campus courses. CITE courses are reviewed annually. A main list of approved faculty who teach the courses is kept on file in the Dean's office. The Educational Administration programs and the certificate of advanced study in special education are assessed by tenure-track program faculty on an annual basis, as these two programs are a part of AAQEP accreditation.

#### **Criterion 5: Assessment of Assessment Practices**

Assessment at The College of Saint Rose is a continuous process of improvement powered by faculty and administration together. The integrity of the process is maintained by the departments themselves and by the IAWG who reviews each SLOA and SOAR. The IAWG uses feedback from program completers to improve the process as well. Modifications to both the SLOA and SOAR form include an executive summary. However, improvement in IAWG feedback continues. New training has emphasized the importance of assessment planning to departments as they review their Student Learning Outcomes or Unit Goals.

As stated throughout this document, multiple offices on campus have illustrated how useful assessment practices can be in the improvement of their own offices or curriculum. Assessments have led to the creation of new academic programs, new minors, and new initiatives to support employee well-being and morale. The Academic Advising office has used assessments to improve the student experience by responding to their feedback on how long appointments should be. As a result of this assessment, the School of Business has changed curriculum to add courses in Business Communication earlier in a student's course of study (OIE, 2018; OIE 2019a; OIE 2020). With the help of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, a new Data Visualization software was adopted and implemented to provide data to decision makers more efficiently. The data from the new Data Visualization software is in addition to the College Fact Book that is distributed to the campus community through the Office of Institutional Effectiveness SharePoint (OIE, 2021a). The Office of Institutional Effectiveness also makes available numerous Retention and Persistence Reports that show one-year retention and graduation rates on the College, School, and Program level (OIE, 2021c; OIE, 2021d; OIE, 2021e; OIE, 2021f). With this enhanced data, it is believed that more programs will have the information to make program improvements.

A revised comprehensive program review process was instituted in Spring 2022. Seven programs went through intensive reviews of their programs and made recommendations for improvements. This process includes discussion of findings and recommendations with School Deans and the Provost, and will result in MOUs that include agreed upon actions for supporting and improving academic programs

The College also regularly reviews the both the process for SLOA and SOAR reporting and the reports themselves. The completion of assessment reports in the 2019-2020 was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Programs and offices collaborated over Zoom and email to complete the assessment cycle. Though delayed, the rate of compliance was 81% on SLOAs and 100% on SOARs. Due to COVID-19 and time restrictions, the IAWG decided to forego the SLOA and SOAR rubric review process used during the previous two years (OIE, 2020). The IAWG reviewed all submitted SLOA and SOAR reports, identifying strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement. The IAWG developed several recommendations based upon review of SLOA and SOAR documents. These included both recommendations for individual offices/programs, as well as recommendations for improvements in the assessment process (OIE, 2018; OIE, 2019a; OIE, 2020).

The IAWG developed an ongoing SOAR reporting that continues to inform the College's academic and administrative strategies. Several of the SLOA reports noted concerns about student proficiency in written and oral communication, leading to a deeper analysis of the liberal education outcomes and strategies for supporting students in improvement in these areas (OIE, 2019a).

### **Requirements of Affiliation and Institutional Priorities**

The evidence provided in this standard demonstrates compliance with the following Requirements of Affiliation (ROA):

ROA 9. The institution's student learning programs and opportunities are characterized by rigor, coherence, and appropriate assessment of student achievement throughout the educational offerings, regardless of certificate or degree level or delivery and instructional modality.

The College of Saint Rose meets the Requirements of Affiliation for ROA 9 by assessing the effectiveness of programs throughout the institution. The institution has effectively consolidated outcome measures for academic and institutional achievement leading to accreditation and affiliation

for all undergraduate and graduate programs. Continuing use of targeted outcomes will allow the institution to move forward, guided by the Strategic Plan, in increasing student support, academic excellence, and fiscal security.

Assessment affects all areas of the College, and the information in this report shows how the College's assessment efforts support all of our institutional priorities by providing regular opportunities for reflection and data that can be used to improve our work with students and each other.

- Priority 1, Support Student Experience:
- Priority 2, Sustain Academic Excellence
- Priority 3, Foster an Engaged Community
- Priority 4, Ensure Financial Health

### **Areas for Improvement and Innovation**

The College of Saint Rose has been both intentional and effective in its use of assessment instruments across the college environment. The Strategic Plan for the College informs suggestions to meet the needs of the current generation of students and beyond. We suggest that the institution include assessment practices as part of employee orientation, defining both needs and expectations that allow for the improvement of the institution (Strategic Plan Objective 2.4, Tactic 2.42). We suggest that the institution attempt to reduce complexity in achieving assessment goals by choosing new technological systems that integrate with existing systems (Strategic Plan Objective 2.4, Tactic 2.41). While Navigate has proved to be a useful tool, it is not integrated with Canvas OLS. Likewise, if the College continues to use Chalk & Wire for data collection and aggregation, extended training should be offered to stakeholders given that the system is not particularly intuitive. Finally, assessment practices will increase in efficacy as the institution continues to enhance internal communication (Strategic Plan Objective 3.3) and utilizes reorganization strategies to support efficiency and distribution of assessment responsibilities (Strategic Plan Objective 4.6).

It is worth noting, that a number of the recommendations made in the 2019-2020 College of Saint Rose Assessment Update have not been implemented. The assessment efforts overall have been hampered by a lack of continuity. While progress seemed to have been made with the hiring of the College's first Director of Assessment in 2017, the position has remained unfilled since the summer of 2019. As noted in the Liberal Education Assessment Report, "there is a need for consistency in the creation of reports of outcomes that are ultimately posted to SharePoint/Chalk and Wire" (The College of Saint Rose, VPAA Office, 2020b). Actual hands-on training in software used for assessment — particularly Chalk and Wire, the ePortfolio software, through which the SLOAs are completed—would help ensure consistency and cohesiveness in the process. Another recommendation from the more recent assessment report to "[e]xplore formalizing a feedback loop to ensure that units are receiving thoughtful and substantive feedback on their assessments, thus fostering continuous institutional improvement" needs more attention (The College of Saint Rose, Institutional Assessment Working Group, 2020). (See Standard V for more on program review and SLOA outcomes, as well as changes that have resulted from those assessments.)

### **Summary**

The College meets its standards through clearly defined educational goals at all levels of the institution. Grounded in our mission and based on established institutional goals, our existing assessment practices evaluate academic, administrative, and institutional effectiveness. This assessment

informs institutional decision-making and the setting clear goals for improvement. Continuing targeted training on data collection and analysis will improve the institution's ability to move forward in undergraduate education, the expansion of accredited graduate programs, and in the academic and administrative services that we offer our students.

DRAFT

## Standard VI - Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement

### Executive Summary

The College of Saint Rose consistently reviews its plans and processes at every level of the institution, from the Cabinet to academic departments, as well as individual members of the Saint Rose community, including faculty, administrators, and staff. By using our five-year strategic plan (SPPC Committee, 2021), the College can provide the community with a framework for decision-making and planning for a successful future. The need for swift, decisive action during the pandemic put many of our processes to the test. While it revealed some areas for improvement, The College of Saint Rose proved able to transition to online learning and remote working, which took place across offices at the College. The College's planning and resource allocation processes supports Institutional Priorities 1, 2, 3, and 4.

### Criterion I: Clearly Stated and Assessed Institutional Objectives for Planning and Resource Allocation

The College recently completed a new Strategic Plan that was implemented in January 2022. The development of the strategic plan began in March 2021. Initial planning and information gathering was conducted jointly by the Strategic Planning and Priorities Committee (SPPC) and the Middle States Steering Committee using input gathered from all sectors of the campus community. Early on, focus groups, listening sessions, and surveys were conducted with faculty, staff, and students to determine future needs and priorities. Data collected from community participation was compiled by the Middle States Steering Committee and shared with the SPPC. SPPC refined the goals to ensure that the mission was prominently addressed. Once goals and sub-goals were developed, the community viewed the plan for reflection and feedback. Finally, after revisions and further refinement, the plan was shared with the Cabinet and Board of Trustees for final approval. The Strategic Plan was previously on a five-year cycle, but is now on a three-year cycle for the purpose of making it more adaptive and responsive to changing conditions

Planning and resource allocation at the College of Saint Rose are based upon the goals and objectives of the College's Strategic Plan and the individual unit goals created as part of the Strategic Outcomes Assessment Report (SOAR) process. **Based upon its mission, the College's strategic plan sets out institutional objectives.** These College-level goals are:

1. Academic Excellence
2. Student Success
3. Foster and engaged, inclusive, and supported community
4. Fiscal Strength

Each goal is supported by underlying objectives, each of which is actualized by tactics designed to achieve the objectives.

Periodic assessment is an essential part of the financial sustainability of the College. Through periodic assessment, the College can determine if resources are being allocated efficiently. All institutional planning is based on these institutional goals, and **individual units use these institutional goals as the basis for creating and assessing annual unit-level goals.** The Strategic Plan includes a goal

to create a college-wide resource allocation and assessment process, with recommendations from the annual and periodic assessment.

## **Criterion II: Clearly Documented and Communicated Planning and Improvement Processes**

The College's planning and improvement processes are clearly documented and ensure that data gathered through assessment is incorporated into future planning. The goals and objectives of the College start at the strategic level filter down to unit/department objectives. Administrative departmental objectives are developed through the SOAR process, which requires that unit goals align with the Strategic Plan objectives. Individual unit objectives are set in consultation with Vice-Presidents, directors, or supervisors as deemed appropriate, and reviewed with units during their annual performance appraisals. SOAR and SLOA reports are reviewed and assessed by the Institutional Assessment Working Group (IAWG) on an annual basis. The IAWG publishes an annual assessment report with the results of their review. In addition, the annual Assessment Day at the end of the Spring semester provides feedback and guidance on the planning process as part of our improvement loop. In addition to the IAWG report, SLOA reports are reviewed with faculty chairs by the respective School Dean. SOAR reports are reviewed with staff by the appropriate Vice President or Director. The IAWG reports are forwarded to The Strategic Planning and Priorities Committee (SPPC) for final review and assessment as related to the Strategic Plan. Finally, all goals and objectives are linked to financial plans/objectives and the multi-year budget.

Unit goals are assessed annually through the (SOAR) process. As discussed in previous standard reports, individual offices use this assessment to measure their effectiveness and improve their processes. These assessments also inform annual budget requests.

The annual SOARs submitted by individual units/departments address many aspects of process improvement and link to both the Strategic Plan and Mission of the College. Administrative units are tasked with examining processes and procedures with an eye towards efficiency and effectiveness. Division leaders regularly review and examine operations to maintain continuity and improve campus services. Metrics used across all divisions ensure the College meets its overall goals and objectives. Standard metrics used by multiple departments include student retention, graduate rates, student enrollment, and national survey results such as Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium (HEDS).

The SOAR/SLOA process allows for the formalization of assessments and provides for a broadened constituent participation. Typically, the SOAR is written with input from staff to provide transparency in the process and a greater understanding of how departmental units/goals are linked to the Strategic Plan and Mission of the College. Academic departments use the SLOA process to conduct annual evidenced-based analyses directly linked to student performance. Departments align key course assessments to their content/performance standards set by each program.

Existing academic programs undergo critical evaluation and assessment through the Program Review process described in Standard V. This process includes assessment of both program content and program finances and supports. To ensure the effective use of resources, the Academic Program Review process includes an assessment of program financials. All new academic programs go through a well-documented and transparent approval process. Department faculty and the department chair develop the program, curriculum, required courses, and a facility plan if necessary. Proposals must support the Mission of the College and be fiscally sound. The Vice President for Finance and Administration (VPFA)

and Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA) discuss cost metrics associated with launching new programs and balance estimated revenue with estimated expenses. After financial reviews, program proposals are voted on by department faculty, school faculty, and either the Undergraduate Academic Council (UAC) or Graduate Academic Council (GAC) before moving to the entire faculty and the Board of Trustees for final approval. Once approved, the revenue and expenses are folded into the current and multi-year budgets. For example, the BS in Nursing, a joint venture with St. Peters Health Partners, was launched in 2020 and now enrolls 22 students.

One example of a recent improvement to an established process is the decreased application decision time implemented by the Graduate Admissions team. During an annual meeting of the Graduate Admissions team after the Fall 2018 admissions cycle, the team expressed concerns regarding yield rates of accepted students, which had remained flat at 45% (yield at the graduate level is calculated by the number of enrolled students divided by the number of accepted applicants) (Graduate Admissions, 2020). While researching the issue, the Graduate Admissions team found that the faculty rendered admissions decisions on average 50 days after a student applied. Though the average decision time was just beyond industry standards (2021 Marketing and Recruitment Practices for Graduate Students, Ruffalo Noel Levitz, 2021), it was determined that a quicker response could improve yield. Working with the faculty, the Graduate Admissions team put procedures and protocols in place that would result in a quicker decision, while allowing faculty the time needed to review each applicant carefully. The table below illustrates the correlation of the improved average length of time between application and notification with the rate of enrollment. While total acceptances decreased, new graduate student enrollment remained strong, with a 2.3% increase in yield rate. This improvement to our graduate admissions application process addressed a departmental goal from the 2019 Graduate Admissions Department SOAR to “build a graduate enrollment funnel that achieves the overarching goals.”

**Table VI.1: Average Time from Application to Accept – Graduate Admissions**

	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020
<b>Average day from Application to Acceptance</b>	48	52	41	42
<b>Number of Accepted Applicants</b>	408	471	446	403
<b>Number of Enrolled Applicants</b>	186	211	223	211
<b>Yield Rate</b>	46%	45%	50%	52.3%

The implementation of TargetX, a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software tool, serves as a primary example of divisional improvement. This software package allows the Undergraduate and Graduate Admissions offices a shared communication platform for handling prospective student engagement, reviewing student applications at the undergraduate level, and managing application flow for faculty review at the graduate level. TargetX was purchased and on-boarded in 2018 and is fully integrated into all admissions functions from recruitment to yield. The

implementation of this enterprise solution demonstrated how multiple departments joined together to improve efficiency, customer experience, and admissions metrics. This improvement to our admissions communication process addressed a departmental goal from 2016-2017, as referenced in the 2019 Graduate Admissions Department SOAR, to “develop a segmented, purposeful, and continuous communication plan for all interested students”.

Process improvements also aid future enhancements at the College. For example, the Physical Plant office has formed a committee in January of 2022 to review space utilization on campus to create efficiencies and a more carbon-neutral footprint for the College (Office of Facilities, 2021). This development resulted from a recommendation by the National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO) after performing a campus-wide space utilization evaluation to determine the current and future space needs of the College (NACUBO, 2021).

### **Criterion 3: Financial Planning and Budgeting Process**

The College’s annual budget process is aligned with the institutional goals set out in the strategic plan. This process begins with a needs assessment carried out by individual units. After determining their needs, college administrators, faculty, and staff requesting funds complete a Budget Request Form. (Office of the AVP for Financial Planning, 2021). That these forms require a thoughtful and linked rationale illustrates how the budget process is aligned with the college’s strategic plan and mission. New requests must be categorized as either a new program/initiative or as an increase to an existing budget and identified as recurring or non-recurring, with a high or low priority. The budget form requires managers to connect the request to the appropriate Strategic Initiative/Budget Goal/Priority and to the departmental/unit operating plan and/or mission. The request must include a detailed explanation of the purpose and identify the strategic initiative and resources. It should also describe how the impact of the budget request will be evaluated and provide a timeline for implementation and any impact on revenue. The budget request also must identify any other departments or programs that will be affected by the proposal and discuss how those areas will be affected. Finally, the requestor identifies budgetary resources and either describes alternatives or explains the impact of not funding this request. Budget managers submit their proposals to their respective Vice Presidents who must approve them for the proposal to be considered.

Once a budget request is approved by the area Vice President, it is evaluated by the Vice President for Finance and Administration (VPAA) and the AVP for Financial Planning and Auxiliary Services as part of the entire budget. All new budget requests are compiled, and evaluated against the revenue budget. Revenue budget models and assumptions are created in collaboration with Finance and Enrollment Management. The enrollment models, along with enrollment market studies and data, consumer price indexes, and bench marketing data, are reviewed to determine where tuition should be for the upcoming year. Based on these analyses of budgetary need, Finance and Administration creates recommendations for tuition, fees. These recommendations are reviewed by the Strategic Planning and Priorities Committee (SPPC) who make a recommendation to the President. The President makes final recommendation on parameters for enrollment goals, tuition and fee rates, etc. to the Board of Trustees. Once the Board approves the tuition rate, the budget is finalized.

The College's needs in staffing, maintenance, etc., are assessed annually as described above and in the criterion 6 section, and are then incorporated into both the current year’s budget process as well as the multi-year budget. The Finance department drafts the budget with input from all Vice Presidents

and cabinet members, the cabinet then reviews the draft budget, and the board approves the budget annually. Budget reforecasts are presented to the board at least twice a year. The Finance department, Cabinet, and the Board also review multi-year budgets, which are updated with every budget reforecast. (Office of the VPFA, 2021). Currently, staff participation is limited to senior leadership during the budgeting process. Discussions are underway to consider a campus-wide Budget Advisory Committee to increase constituent participation.

As reflected in our strategic plan, financial stability and sustainability are key interests for the College, and Saint Rose has worked to ensure both. As a result of recognized financial issues, the College actively addressed fiscal concerns through detailed assessment, resulting in reductions in both administrative and academic areas.

In the Fall of 2020, the College announced that it would cut programs to ensure the long-term financial sustainability (Saint Rose News & Media, 2020). The approved plan reduced educational expenses by approximately \$6 million. Programs were eliminated based on declining and/or low enrollment or the cost to maintain individual programs. There were also \$8 million in administrative reductions achieved through layoffs, salary reductions, freezing the pension plan, not filling vacant positions, reduction of departmental operating expenses, and sale of properties considered not mission critical. The FY22 budget included \$1.5 million in savings through not filling or delaying to fill open positions. In 2021 the College instituted a revised Academic Program Review process that includes examination of program financials. Through this regular assessment cycle, the College can evaluate programs from a financial point of view. All students who were impacted due to program eliminations were provided with teach-out plans and will be able to complete their degrees at Saint Rose.

These actions, although difficult, put the College on firmer financial footing and informed the institutional goal of Fiscal Strength in the strategic plan. As part of that goal, the College looks to develop a college-wide, multi-year budget plan to achieve a balanced budget by the 2024-2025 budget year. The College is preparing multi-year budget plans based on conservative enrollment estimates and reducing the blended discount rate back down to 60%. The goal of the Strategic Plan is to increase enrollment by 7% annually. Achieving this goal will include developing a new financial aid model, updating recruitment goals in consultation with deans, department chairs, and faculty, and engaging faculty and staff in recruitment efforts.

The Strategic Plan also includes diversifying revenue streams to become less tuition-dependent and increasing both restricted and unrestricted fundraising. In 2019-2020, tuition and fees accounted for 78.04% of revenues, thus making the College tuition-dependent. The College has established a goal to increase the endowment, both restricted and unrestricted, starting with a goal of \$6 million per year in 2021-22. The balance for 2020-2021 was \$44 million.

#### **Criterion 4: Fiscal and Human Resources and Technical Infrastructure**

The College consistently assesses its **fiscal and human resource needs** to ensure adequate support of operations. The College regularly monitors liquidity required to meet its operating needs and other contractual commitments, while also striving to maximize the investment of its available funds. For purposes of analyzing resources available to meet general expenditures over a 12-month period, the College considers all expenditures related to its ongoing mission-related activities as well as the conduct of services undertaken to support those activities to be general expenditures.

The College's strategy to achieve financial sustainability is based on developing a plan for a future Saint Rose that is grounded in its founding values of meeting the needs of students. The College continues its commitment to financial discipline including: increase net tuition revenue, decrease the financial aid discount rate, continuously control expenditures, review of vacant positions, increase unrestricted gifts fundraising, and reduce debt service.

The College of Saint Rose revenue derives primarily from tuition and fees charged to undergraduate and graduate students. In the past five years, the college has experienced some downward pressure on enrollment from the combination of New York State changes to how SUNY tuition is charged (Excelsior Scholarship) and the drop in traditionally aged students attending college in the Northeast (Knocking at the college door projections of high school graduates through 2037, December 2020). The result has been a strain on the enrollment at the college for the last few years, however, recent budget cuts and federal relief funds from the Pandemic closed budgetary shortfalls. Moving forward, the college is placing a greater emphasis on admissions processes, yield activities, market position, and program differentiation. The following steps are under way:

1. Implement a new strategic marketing plan to go into effect July 2022. This plan will emphasize the distinct features of Saint Rose to prospective students, alumni, and potential donors;
2. Contract with an Enrollment Consulting agency to support top of enrollment funnel activities to ensure a large enough applicant pool that will benefit from the improved yield strategies;
3. Recast the admissions team into a strategic recruitment team - well trained, data driven, and result oriented along with strong customer service experience;
4. Refinement of the admissions standards through empirical research to improve first-year retention.

The net effect of these changes will be a larger applicant pool with more students considering Saint Rose in their top choice set, resulting in improved yield rates and higher confidence factor for senior leadership when developing future year budgets.

The other department that is primarily responsible for generating revenue is the department of Institutional Advancement. It is the fundraising and alumni relations arm of Saint Rose. In coordination with the Board of Trustees, Advancement engages and solicits alumni and other donors to financially support Saint Rose priorities with the highest priority being student scholarships. We are on track to close our comprehensive fundraising campaign by December 31, 2024 – reaching the \$50 million goal.

As noted elsewhere in this report, staff turnover is a challenge that the College is addressing. Staffing needs are assessed annually and requests for new positions, or to fill vacant positions, must be justified based upon relevant metrics for that position. In fiscal year 2021-22, there were fewer residential students, so we reduced the staff accordingly and have seen savings in maintenance personnel, resident assistants, and area coordinators. When a vacancy occurs, that position is re-assessed to determine if it is still necessary and if the responsibilities continue to fit current needs. The assessment process recently approved by the Cabinet requires that these assessments directly link the need for the position to the institutional goals outlined in the Strategic Plan. Prior versions of the assessment did not explicitly reference the Strategic Plan and connections to College goals were only implied. For approval process for new faculty positions requires assessment of programmatic needs, including justification based upon historical enrollment trends. The College's effort to recruit a diverse workforce is also directly linked to the Strategic Plan. Part of the process for recruiting faculty and other

key positions is the creation of a diversity plan to attract candidates with diverse backgrounds. The College's Chief Diversity Officer is part of the assessment and approval of these plans. While there has been some modest improvement in the diversity of employees at Saint Rose in the past ten years, we are continually striving to create an increasingly diverse workplace.

In addition to hiring, the College also looks to maximize the effectiveness of existing staff. One example of alternative staffing solutions occurred in the Physical Plant department. When a position opens, the department evaluates its function to see if those functions and responsibilities can be combined with other positions to increase efficiency. Since the start of the pandemic, Physical Plant has had difficulty finding employees to fill two grounds positions and two custodial positions due to a shortage of viable candidates. As a result, one of the open grounds positions was temporarily converted into an operating expense, and a contractor now supplements the staffing shortage. The department is also assessing whether the starting pay rate may contribute to the lack of viable candidates.

Faculty needs are determined through an assessment of program needs. This process is outlined in the *Faculty Manual* (Office of Human Resources, 2016) and includes input at the department level, school level, and cabinet level. Recommendations are made to the President for final approval. External factors such as program accreditations and state requirements also influence faculty staffing levels. The College believes its faculty levels are adequate for our needs and reflect our values in pedagogical approach and requirement of program accreditors (Institutional Research, 2021). The Saint Rose community prides itself on classroom innovation and exceptional teacher pedagogy, which occurs more often, in our opinion, when classes are smaller.

The College makes continual efforts to recruit and keep qualified faculty, staff, and administrators; however, some college positions are more challenging to recruit and retain. For example, positions in the IT department have been hard to fill due to competition from the private sector. To improve employee retention, the College conducts exit interviews, uses salary data from other institutions (CUPA-HR), and assesses positions when turnover occurs which could provide good data for discussing staffing levels.

Currently, the College operates with approximately 150 fewer positions than in 2019-2020. Much of this is to be the result of the administrative and program adjustments discussed above, and reflects changed circumstances and reduced enrollments. Some of this reduction is the result of attrition for other reasons. As noted in other sections of this report, this attrition, especially in critical areas, is of concern to the campus community. Analysis by Human Resources shows that the top three reasons people leave Saint Rose include retirement, job security, and pay and benefits. To address the latter, a Benefits committee comprised of faculty, administrators, and staff make recommendations on benefits offered to all employees. This committee meets annually to ensure benefits offered are competitive, appropriate, and appealing. After reviewing the exit interview analysis prepared by Human Resources, College management decided to invest in employee retention and approved a salary increase for all non-union employees, increase in retirement benefits for all employees, and elimination of the temporary pay reductions approved in April 2020. To address concerns over job security, College management engages in open discussions with the campus community. Community wide convocations are held periodically to discuss College finances and update the community on initiatives to increase revenue.

The College continuously assesses its technical infrastructure to ensure it is adequate to support both the academic needs of our students and College operations. One of the Information Technology

Department's (ITS) unit level goals is to provide technology resources, support, and education needed to support the College's academic, professional, research and institutional objectives. An ITS Help Desk ticketing system is used to track all user issues and evaluated to assess whether changes are needed to ITS supported systems. Satisfaction surveys are sent to a sample of ticket submitters in order to regularly assess the overall level of satisfaction with Help Desk services.

An annual student survey gauges student satisfaction with the College's technology inventory and capabilities and helps to inform budget requests. Survey data is used to improve technology services and support. This past year's survey revealed that the College's Wi-Fi was not meeting student usage needs; thus, the College has begun upgrading the Wi-Fi, partially funded by grant money. When the College decided to add additional Flex Classrooms, ITS developed a survey that was administered to faculty members who had taught in the existing Flex Classrooms to find out what worked well and to gather suggestions and recommendations for anything that did not work well. The data from the survey informed the decision making process for the new Flex classrooms.

ITS meets with members of the Academic Technology Committee and the Super Users & Programmers group to identify College priorities and review a variety of technology topics including the College's technical infrastructure. The Academic Technology Committee uses surveys to monitor satisfaction with academic technology. An annual survey is sent to all faculty to assess the current level of academic technology and whether or not it is meeting the needs of educators and students. There is also a section in student course evaluations that addresses technology. Annually the Academic Technology Committee meets to discuss the results of these surveys and make recommendations. One example of a decision made based on survey results is the transition to Canvas from Blackboard after both faculty and students expressed much dissatisfaction with Blackboard functionality and usability. Another example is the decision to add technology in common areas in the Albertus Hall hallways and corridors and in the lounge in the campus center after students and faculty expressed desire for more study spaces with access to technology.

Most of the College's technology systems generate regular logs that document system performance and record any issues. Alerts are also generated when certain performance indicators deviate from desired parameters or specifications. Issues are investigated with the intention of preventing reoccurrences of the same issues. ITS is currently considering contracting with a cybersecurity vendor to provide 24/7 monitoring of Saint Rose systems.

#### **Criterion 5: Well-defined Decision-Making Processes and Clear Assignment of Responsibilities**

The College's leadership structure follows industry standards with a Board of Trustees, President, Executive Cabinet, and mid-level managers. The Board of Trustees has a well-documented process of recording and archiving the minutes and presentations from each meeting. At the cabinet level, the President holds weekly executive cabinet meetings where college wide issues are discussed and each cabinet member provides updates for the departments under their purview. Guests are also invited to address the Cabinet as needed. Cabinet members then communicate decisions and recommendations to the employees in their departments. The Cabinet is responsible for enterprise risk management – adhering to policies, procedures, and regulations that are global in nature and generally require reporting to local, state, and federal governments. Decision-making is appropriately spread throughout the organization in positions and levels appropriate to the work being done, and is guided by College policies as well as applicable federal and state rules and regulations.

High-level decisions, such as upgrading our Wi-Fi network, are made at the Cabinet level. Cabinet sets goals and policies and the responsible department executes and enforces these policies. All cabinet meetings are documented, including meeting notes, executive decisions, and follow-up tasks and responsibilities. An example of cabinet-level decisions is the College’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Prior to the pandemic, the Emergency Management Team met monthly and reported to the Cabinet on policies and plans related to disaster and emergency protocols. In February 2020, the Cabinet made the decision to reframe this team to form a Pandemic Committee made up of various units across campus. This group was tasked with addressing issues specifically related to the outbreak of COVID-19. This committee was formed in February of 2020. The committee updated an existing disaster policy to reflect the issues presented by COVID-19, made recommendations for dealing with the pandemic in regards to campus safety. The Committee reported weekly to the Cabinet to share information and make recommendations for decisions related to the College’s response to the pandemic. While the Cabinet does not have a formal process to review and assess decision-making protocols, all decisions are reviewed after they are implemented. Standard procedures of cabinet meetings include taking minutes in all meetings, with all decisions documented from the previous meetings' deliberations.

As an example of campus wide decision-making processes that are designed to be flexible and responsive, the pandemic highlighted the strong inter-departmental communication and clear assignment of responsibility that allowed the campus to quickly move to an online learning platform and remote work format.

In January 2020, campus discussion commenced regarding the nature and effect of COVID-19 on the campus community. As a result, the Emergency Management Team (EMT) reviewed plans and met regularly to assess the impact of the fast-moving and highly contagious pathogen. The Team examined the Pandemic Influenza Plan (Saint Rose, 2012) created years earlier during another pandemic to develop a benchmark for decisions moving forward. In February 2020, the EMT transformed into the Pandemic Task Force as it became clear that COVID-19 was going to impact the region and potentially disrupt campus operations. The table below illustrates the personnel changes between the EMT and Pandemic Task Force.

**Table VI. 2 Pandemic Task Force Membership**

<b>Emergency Management Team</b>	<b>Pandemic Task Force</b>
President	Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs
Vice President for Student Affairs	Vice President for Student Affairs
Chief of Staff to the President (co-chair)	Chief of Staff to the President (Chair)
Associate Vice President for Marketing & Communications	Associate Vice President for Marketing & Communications
Associate Vice President for Human Resources & Risk Management (co-chair)	Associate Vice President for Human Resources & Risk Management
Director of Safety & Security	AVP for Facilities
Dean, School of Math & Science	Director of Health Services
Chair, Emergency Operation Group (EOG)	Vice President & Director of Athletics
	Director of Residence Life

	Faculty Member
	Director of Health & Safety
	Director of Campus Events
	Assistant Vice President for Undergraduate Admissions

In early March, the College decided to close all residence halls and have students return home by March 15. College classes switched to remote instruction effective March 18. These decisions were made prior to any local, state, or federal policies, mandates, or directives. Deliberation among the members of the Pandemic Task Force revolved around the safety of the students. Approximately 35% of the undergraduate students at that time were from areas hardest hit by the pandemic, such as New York City, so there was a prominent concern as to whether travel restrictions or bans would prohibit students from returning home. The Pandemic Task Force also recommended that residential students remove all of their belongings, as the college anticipated the pandemic would last well beyond the end of the semester in May. This turned out to be a fortuitous decision, since many other colleges required students to return home temporarily, a decision that made retrieving belongings more difficult later in the semester. (Dorm Evictions for the Public Good, April 2020).

Academically, the most pressing concerns of the committee members revolved around preserving the academic integrity of instruction and the students' ability to maintain their enrollment. Faculty were trained in remote modalities over two days after the decision to teach remotely was made. The departments of ITS and OLS were heavily involved in this effort. Faculty were familiar with Canvas, the online learning platform, having used it as a course management tool, so most of the workshops related to using video streaming tools such as Zoom. Academic leadership met frequently during this time to assess academic policies and discuss with faculty how to adapt rules during the remote learning period. Faculty also expressed concerns regarding student access, and the college made laptops and other learning devices available through a loaner program.

After the Spring Semester, the Academic Restart Group, made up of faculty and academic administrators, considered the return to campus instruction in the Fall of 2020. Discussions with faculty and student surveys determined that returning to campus would result in a better educational experience. Careful coordination with facilities to ensure classroom and study spaces had the proper protections, such as the removal of desks to provide required social distancing, the installation of Plexiglass barriers, and a schedule to ensure frequent cleaning. The College provide additional resources where necessary. An example is the singing masks and protective devices for wind instruments for music students. Online Learning Services provided additional training and support of online and hybrid teaching. In subsequent terms, faculty were supported to move their classes back to face-to-face or hybrid modes to ensure that students received as much face-to-face instruction as possible while still responding to the changing nature of the pandemic.

The campus created its own vaccination policy to prioritize the health and safety of our students, and developed a policy that could be enforced effectively. Students received vaccinations throughout the semester to help them as much as possible when the policy was enforced in Spring semester 2022. Information on vaccines and safety was made available to students with questions. Mask mandates allowed for a return to campus.

By the beginning of the Spring 2022 semester 95% of all students were vaccinated.

Overall, the assessment of the Pandemic Task Force and decisions made by the College during the pandemic were largely favorable. Communication was frequent and included clear and thoughtful instructions. Offices also needed to adapt to the pandemic (i.e., making processes and forms electronic).

The decision to transform the EMT into the expanded Pandemic Task Force resulted in greater confidence and trust from the College community. Having a faculty member on the committee who could address their concerns was invaluable. Finally, it is important to note how budget resources were reallocated to address health and safety concerns as well as technological needs. The new federal grant funds we applied for and received during the pandemic was an example of how the college assessed available resources and re-projected the bottom line and were able to generate new non-tuition revenue to offset unanticipated expenses and lost revenue.

Two areas of improvement were noted by members of the Task Force. First, while the team worked well and implemented the plan very successfully, there was an unequal distribution of some responsibilities. Meal delivery to students in quarantine started slowly but improved over time, for example. Second, managing the return to in-person instruction and balancing social distancing, with requests for hybrid modalities, proved challenging and provided an important lesson: that accommodating all requests by students and faculty may not be possible.

Cabinet members are responsible for decisions affecting their areas of responsibilities. Decisions for units within broader areas are made by Deans, Directors, and Managers. For instance, as part of the pandemic response, the Provost tasked the Dean of Arts and Humanities with creating a Team to develop the College's academic plan for return to studies in Fall 2020. This academic team was made up of faculty and staff from academic departments. It worked closely with the Pandemic Committee to ensure consistency.

College policies act as guides in decision-making. These policies indicate decision-makers, processes, and timelines. For example, the Bursar, Accounting, Registrar, and Finance Aid committee have decision-making policies for student withdrawal and medical leave. Academic management decisions are also well-documented and up to date in the college catalog, outlining common procedures and policies related to student activities such as registration, academic standing, and advising. The governance document included in the Faculty Manual outlines roles and responsibilities for input, recommendations, and decisions in the academic areas. This includes identifying the responsible parties for each role. Administrative policies are posted on the College's Human Resources SharePoint site, while student policies are set out in the Catalog and Student Handbook. In addition to policies, Human Resources also maintains current copies of manuals for Full-time tenure/tenure-track faculty, visiting faculty, and adjunct faculty, handbooks for administrators and staff, as well as the collective bargaining agreements for the latter two groups, as well contracts for facilities and security employees. Where appropriate, these documents also provide information on decision-making processes and provide clear guidelines on responsibilities. Human resources also provides guidelines for processes and decision-making for hiring faculty and staff

#### **Criterion 6: Comprehensive Planning for Facilities, Infrastructure, and Technology**

Decision-making on facilities, infrastructure and technical infrastructure is grounded in the needs of users. For instance, the college takes direction from the Academic Affairs regarding the need

for new facilities or renovations to support academic programs. The case of the new BS in Nursing program is an example. The Facilities Department was informed well in advance that the program would require the construction of an additional microbiology lab to aid the program and other science students. Working with several campus partners from various departments, a preliminary budget was developed outlining construction costs and means to secure grants and donations for construction of the new space. The lab is planned for operational use by the Fall semester of 2023.

In September of 2019, the Facilities Department held an "unexpected events" planning exercise. The result of this exercise determined that the College needed to encumber funds in the event of unexpected expenditures that may fall outside of the Facilities operating budget. As a part of capital project planning, the department now holds a pool of contingency budget funds to support these potential expenses, such as a collapsed sewer line and subsequent emergency repair, flood or storm damage, environmental remediation, including mold or sewage cleanup, or replacement/repair of a significant piece of campus utility infrastructure.

The Facilities Department has several recurring costs associated with operating the College's physical plant that make easier year-to-year resource planning. The department holds contracts with several outside vendors to help maintain areas on campus that staff members may not have the experience or necessary certification to repair. For example, a three-to-six-year contract is in place for the college-wide sprinkler system maintenance. Continuity of service offers a degree of cost stability and helps with budget planning. Vendors also benefit from holding their costs steady for the contract term in return for a longer commitment from the College.

To assess the overall efficiency and adequacy of resources, Facilities annually examines budget utilization. The department can see where spending fluctuated and has the opportunity to work with Finance and Administration to adjust the budget allocation between expense accounts for the current fiscal year and request additional budget funds for future fiscal years. For example, Facilities saw the need to increase the amount of money budgeted to the "HVAC Service Contracts" account line for the Physical Plant budget. HVAC staff could not perform proper preventative maintenance on the campus chillers and maintain the cooling systems properly, so Facilities initiated a service contract with a local HVAC company with expert-level experience. This decision was not necessarily unexpected, but the need arose, and the department moved forward with outsourcing to maintain proper facility usage.

In 2019, Facilities created a five-year capital plan to guide decision-making and provide for long-term planning. This plan will be re-evaluated next year (Goss, 2021). Based on the given year and available capital for expenditures, Facilities receives a list of approved capital projects scheduled to be funded in that budget year. The list is generated through a campus-wide project request/approval process. When the projects request form is released to the campus community, those new requests are added to the list of projects that were not completed in the previous year (Office of Facilities, 2021). The entire list is reviewed and prioritized by both the Facilities Management team, the VP of Finance and Administration, the office of the President, and various other campus stakeholders as deemed appropriate. One priority is our energy expenditure and drive toward net neutrality. An example of a campus-wide effort to lower our energy foot print was an upgraded lighting initiative in the gymnasium and parking lots to LED. Initial investments will be recouped in 2.9 and 11.4 years respectively. The Finance and Administration office uses the five-year capital plan in that decision-making process and the College updates that plan annually as needed, based on changing priorities. Routine maintenance expenses, such as annual maintenance contracts (Elevator Maintenance and testing, sprinkler system inspection and testing, etc.), are charged to the annual operating budget.

Facilities maintains a list of buildings and equipment within its Computerized Maintenance Management Software system (CMMS). The department uses the CMMS for generating preventative maintenance tasks for the facilities staff, but not for planning upgrades or equipment replacements. As equipment degrades, the capital planning list is amended to schedule replacements or equipment/system upgrades. The department seldom experiences a situation in which it does not foresee a significant mechanical failure of a piece of equipment that requires it to perform an emergency replacement. The facilities Management team keeps close track of critical campus systems, making sure plans are in place to replace parts as necessary. Two years ago, for example, the department noticed that the cooling tower water basin had started to corrode severely over the summer, resulting in small leaks. The department maintained functional operation of the equipment through the end of the cooling season and added to the capital budget a total cooling tower replacement project for the following spring. This cooling tower was replaced in April of 2020.

Whenever there is an urgent project, the situation is studied as a whole rather than focusing on one item. When a single boiler replacement project turned into a more complex job, redundancy was built into the system by installing two smaller capacity boilers and a hot water storage tank, a decision that allowed the boilers to make the domestic hot water as well. This enabled the department to eliminate four electric water heaters, which reduced energy usage. The decision to take this approach was reinforced by reviewing the recently completed campus energy efficiency study, (Energy Efficiency Report, 2020) which demonstrated that this building used the most electricity of all residence halls.

One of the Information Technology Department's (ITS) unit level goals is to responsibly manage College technology resources by utilizing appropriate planning and management. The Associate Vice President for Information Technology monitors the current technology budget weekly to ensure we stay within approved budget parameters and to plan for additional needs in future years. Information Technology Services (ITS) has created a five-year plan for technical infrastructure (Ellis, 2021). This plan outlines when technology systems, equipment and software should be upgraded and the projected costs. This plan is reviewed with the AVP for Financial Planning annually and informs the development of the technology budget for the upcoming year. Technology contracts and licensing agreements are also evaluated annually and re-negotiated at the end of each contract term. These negotiations resulted in cost savings to the College over the past few years.

The College's technology planning is informed by the College's Strategic Plan, and supports the goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan. ITS is involved in the planning of new construction, acquisitions of new properties, and major renovations of existing properties. The College had made progress in addressing deferred maintenance by upgrading and replacing technology systems and equipment. Over the past two years, the College provided funding to replace the network firewalls, replace Intermediate Distribution Frame (IDF) network switches, acquire additional physical servers to support the virtual server farm, replace the wireless network, and build three Flex classrooms. ITS was able to complete most scheduled classroom, computer lab, and other academic computer replacements as specified in the Five Year Technology Plan. Budget constraints have delayed some technology projects and upgrades. Due to staffing shortages within ITS, the College is currently considering the use of a third party company to provide support with certain ITS functions.

#### **Criterion 7: Annual Independent Audit**

The College's financial statements and schedule of expenditures of federal awards are audited annually by an independent audit firm. The auditor's opinion for the past five years has been unmodified with no material weaknesses or significant deficiencies identified and no noncompliance material to the financial statements noted. The College has consistently qualified as a low-risk auditee. (UHY, LLP, CPA, 2021). This history of a clean audit is evidence of the College's commitment to accurate financial reporting.

"In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of The College of Saint Rose as of June 30, 2021 and 2020, and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America." (UHY, LLP, CPA, 2021)

Prior to report issuance, the Board of Trustees approves the audited financial statements. They also receive a report from the independent auditors, with required communications to those charged with governance, including audit results. Any audit findings are discussed at the Audit Committee meeting and College management provides a response and corrective action for any reported findings.

#### **Criterion 8: Measuring and Assessing the Adequacy and Efficient Utilization of Institutional Resources and Criterion 9: Periodic Assessment of the Effectiveness of Planning and Resources**

Budget resources are assessed on a continuous basis. Monthly reports are run to identify expense overages and revenue shortfalls. Budget managers are required to transfer funds between budget accounts to cover expense overages. When it becomes apparent revenue is going to come in under budget, Finance first attempts to reduce operating expenses in order to cover the revenue shortfall. If that is not possible, a budget reforecast is developed. Budget reforecasts are presented to Cabinet and the Board. In most cases the revenue shortfall will impact future fiscal years, so the multi-year budget is also re-projected in order to determine the availability of resources for the upcoming budget years. Input from all Cabinet members is sought when cutting expense budgets and also when approving significant new budget requests. Due to limited resources, we need to prioritize which initiatives and activities are funded. Initiatives and activities which are deemed mission critical are given priority. As noted above, budget managers are asked to connect new budget requests to a strategic plan initiative or institutional mission or goal. Each year through the budget request process, Cabinet members have the opportunity to provide feedback on the adequacy of their current budgets.

The academic program review process also has a financial review component, to ensure the effective use of resources. Each program looks at enrollment metrics, net tuition revenue, and expenses to determine whether the program is operating at a surplus or deficit.

#### **Requirements of Affiliation and Institutional Priorities**

The evidence provided in this standard addresses compliance with the following Requirements of Affiliation (ROA):

10. Institutional planning integrates goals for academic and institutional effectiveness and improvement, student achievement of educational goals, student learning, and the results of academic and institutional assessments.

11. The institution has documented financial resources, funding base, and plans for financial development, including those from any related entities (including without limitation systems, religious sponsorship, and corporate ownership) adequate to support its educational purposes and programs and to ensure financial stability. The institution demonstrates a record of responsible fiscal management, has a prepared budget for the current year, and undergoes an external financial audit on an annual basis.

While planning and institutional improvement affects all aspects of work and life at the College, the information in this review primarily supports Institutional Priority 4: Ensuring Fiscal Strength. Paying close attention to budgeting and resource allocation, and the associated processes, supports the overall well-being of the College.

#### **Areas for Improvement and Innovation:**

As described in this report, the College relies on numerous policies and procedures in planning, resources allocation, and institutional improvement. In order to ensure that policies and processes are efficient and meeting our needs, we suggest that the College implement a policy on policy review. This would ensure that policies and processes are as effective as possible. Currently, the College has a draft of such a policy which could be updated and approved.

We also suggest that the College continue discussions of ways to expand participation in the budgeting process, such as the use of a Budget Advisory Committee as noted above or an expanded role for SPPC in the development of multi-year budgets.

#### **Summary**

The College of Saint Rose maintains a strong foundation comprised of thoughtful processes, adequate resources, and a well-built structure to support its goals of an academically challenging yet supportive environment for students, faculty, and staff to exemplify the founding values of the college. Standard VI criteria centered around financial planning, resource allocation, mission alignment, transparency, resourcefulness, accountability, and effectiveness have been met by The College of Saint Rose.

## Standard VII Governance, Leadership, and Administration

### Executive Summary

The institution's governance, leadership, and administration meet its purposes and support the College in fulfilling its mission and vision. The College meets the criteria of Standard VII, as well as the requirements of affiliation related to this standard. The following account of governance, leadership, and administration addresses the lines of inquiry identified for this standard.

### Criterion 1: A Clearly Articulated and Transparent Governance Structure

The College of Saint Rose is committed to shared governance between the Board of Trustees, College administration, and faculty. The Representative Committee of the Faculty (RepCom) facilitates full faculty meetings, elections for committees, and regularly communicates with the Provost. The components of governance align with and support fulfillment of the mission and vision of the College. The **governance structures are clearly articulated and transparent** and are set out in several documents that denote roles, responsibilities, and accountability for decision making at the College. These documents have been approved by the appropriate constituent groups: the Bylaws of the College approved by the Board of Trustees (BOT), and the Faculty Manual (FM) and Faculty Governance Document (FGD) approved by the faculty and Board. The College is chartered by the Board of Regents of New York state, and all programs are approved by the Board of Regents through the New York State Department of Education (NYSED) (The College of Saint Rose Faculty Manual, 2016; The College of Saint Rose, Board of Trustees [BOT], 2020).

The roles and responsibilities related to academic decisions are set out in the Faculty Governance Document (FGD) with 20 standing committees playing a pivotal role in providing input, review, and recommendations leading to decision-making. These include strategic planning, new program approval, review academic grievances, and the granting of rank and tenure to faculty (The College of Saint Rose 2021-2022 Committee List, 2021).

An example of how the shared governance process demonstrates the shared process between the faculty, standing committees, and the Board of Trustees is the development and approval of new degree programs. This process is delineated in the Faculty Manual and includes approval by the respective academic department and school, and then the Undergraduate Academic Committee (UAC) for undergraduate programs or the Graduate Academic Committee (GAC) for graduate programs. Only after approval at each of these stages do programs go to the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA) and then to the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board, the full Board of Trustees, and NYSED for approval. Only after NYSED approval has been received can a program be marketed and delivered to new students.

Another important example of how shared governance functions is reflected in the work of the Committee on Rank and Tenure (CRT). The Committee on Rank and Tenure is charged with evaluating faculty applications for tenure and advancement in academic rank. The committee is composed (as described in its Constitution) of six full-time tenured faculty members (no more than two from each School) with at least one year of service at The College of Saint Rose and the rank of at least Assistant Professor at the time when the membership is assumed, and three alternate members. Guidance for completion of application for tenure and advancement in rank are found in Chapters 3, Sections A and B

of the Faculty Manual. The Committee on Rank and Tenure uses these sections as a metric for evaluation of candidates and submits their recommendation to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. The VPAA writes their own recommendations and submits them and those from the Committee on Rank and Tenure to the President, who makes recommendations to the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees (AACBT), which in turn brings those recommendations to the full Board of Trustees in Executive Session (Academic Affairs Committee [AAC], February 10, 2022). The process successfully pivoted to electronic portfolios during the COVID-19 pandemic period and faculty voted to continue to use electronic portfolios.

The Student Association (SA) is the governing body for the students at The College of Saint Rose. SA was founded as an organization to represent the students and the voices of all students, as is clearly set out in its constitution: “We, the students of The College of Saint Rose, in order to establish and protect our rights and responsibilities as students, to promote the unity and effectiveness of the Student Body, to voice our opinions in the governance of The College, and to promote the independence and general welfare of the entire student community and The College as a whole, do ordain and establish this Constitution of The Student Association of The College of Saint Rose” (Student Association Constitution, 2013). The Student Association comprises the Executive Board and general members. The Executive Board includes a President, Comptroller, Director of Communications, Director of Academic Activities, Director of Special Interest Groups, Director of Social Activities, and an Executive Assistant. The general members are all students at The College of Saint Rose.

The Student Association is designed to function as a representative for the student body’s voice, as well as to work with student clubs and organizations. The president of the Student Association attends full Board meetings. In the past 10 years, the emphasis of the SA changed from representing student voices to managing clubs. Each SA student director on the board oversaw various clubs, processed paperwork, and planned campus events. In the last five years, involvement in SA has decreased. Fewer students attend meetings, clubs disbanded, and few students ran for board positions. This academic year (AY21-22), the College did not have an SA board, and many clubs are inactive due to lack of interest and limited in-person activities last year due to the pandemic. In order to find a sustainable student government model, a Student Leadership Survey was conducted in October 2021 to gauge student interest in leadership on campus and the value it has on their post-graduate careers. Focus groups are being conducted to engage in more in-depth discussion with students about student government, the structure of the organization, and the role the Student Association should have on campus. Interviews with alumni who were Presidents of the Student Association are also being held to analyze what challenges they faced, and how the administration could better support them. This multi-pronged assessment approach is being used to develop a revitalized approach to student government at the College.

Another example of shared governance is that the SA constitution currently being re-written will be brought to the students, the President, the President’s Cabinet and to the Board of Trustees Student Success Committee for review and input prior to final approval by the Board (Student Association, Proposed Constitution DRAFT January 2020).

## **Criterion 2: A Legally Constituted Independent Governing Body**

Article I of the Board Bylaws states that the purpose of the College is “to provide an education which recognizes the individual potential of each student, drawing upon the heritage of the past to meet

the needs of the present and to prepare for the future.” This defines the College’s purpose, and the Board’s role as the governing body in serving the public good. The Board’s Mission and Values Committee, as defined in the Committee’s Statement of Purpose, regularly reflects, and assesses whether the College is fulfilling its mission and founding values of excellence in all endeavors, fostering an inclusive community, caring for the “dear neighbor,” and meeting the needs of the times.

Aligned with Association of Governing Boards (AGB) **principles of good practice in board governance**, most of the work of the Board is carried out in its committees. Each of the Board’s 12 Committees, including the Executive Committee, has a statement of purpose that guides their work. Each year, the committees evaluate their statements of purpose, which are then reviewed and approved by the Trustees Affairs and Governance Committee and the full Board (BOT Feb 2022).

According to The College of Saint Rose Board of Trustees Bylaws, Article IV Section 2, **the BOT approves and adopts all major changes regarding the educational policies and programs** of the College; approves the granting of all degrees and honorary degrees; enacts and amends the statutes of the College, particularly concerning the appointment, promotion, tenure, and duties of the officers, administrative officials, and faculty of the College.

The approval of new programs, faculty promotions, and granting of tenure are initiated in the Academic Affairs Committee (AAC). A member of the Representative Committee of the Faculty attends the meetings of the Academic Affairs Committee and recently has been asked to provide a report to this Committee on behalf of the faculty. This motion was submitted to the Provost and to the Educational Programs Committee (EPC, now named Academic Affairs Committee) and approved by EPC at its February 13, 2020 meeting, and the February 14, 2020 meeting of the Board of Trustees (EPC, February 13, 2020). The Trustees will consider whether the submission of this report by the faculty could be codified in the bylaws when the Board reviews and updates them.

In the past five years, the fiscal viability of the institution has been at the forefront in matters of governance and decision-making of the Board. **The Board approves the College’s annual budget, tuition and tuition discount rates, and annual audit conducted by external auditors after approval by the Board’s Audit Committee.** The Audit Committee meets independently with the external auditors.

The Financial Affairs and Physical Plant (FAPPC) Committee brings matters of fiscal urgency to the BOT to ensure the financial sustainability of the College. In the past five years, these matters included expense reductions due to the decrease in revenue resulting from declining enrollment, the financial impact of the COVID pandemic, meeting the net asset covenant requirements of the Bank holding the College’s debt, and most recently refinancing the College’s debt of nearly \$50 million. This Committee then brought the issues facing the College, which include: the need to make cash draws from the endowment to cover operating expenses, and the risk of loan default and the resulting impact on the College’s accreditation and ability to accept Title IV funding, to the full board at special and regular board meetings (FAPPC Agendas, 2016-2021).

As described/stipulated in the BOT bylaws, the Executive Committee (ECBOT) has authority to act on most matters between board meetings. The BOT has also scheduled special board meetings to address urgent matters facing the institution. In the past five years, the BOT has elected to meet as a full board in Special Meetings (as delineated in the Trustee bylaws) between the regular board meetings as they considered matters that were of urgency to the future of the College.

This was the case as the Board considered the issues facing the College and higher education in the spring, summer, and fall of 2020 with the impact of the global pandemic on students, decline in enrollment and revenue, and increase in expenses, creating a critical financial situation. The FAPP, Audit Committee (ACBOT), and full board reviewed detailed financial analyses of the revenue and expenses of the institution, multi-year forecasts, and the impact of continual draws from the College's endowment to fund operations and debt service (The College of Saint Rose FAPPC 10/17/19; The College of Saint Rose BOT, 10/18/2019).

In February 2020, President Stefanco announced that she would finish her term as President on June 30, 2020. On March 9, 2020, the Board appointed Marcia White, an 18-year Trustee, as Interim President. With the onset of the pandemic, from late March to June 30, Interim President White participated in the day-to-day decision making of the institution to provide consistency in leadership at this time of crisis. Her term as President became fully effective on July 1. The full board met on March 24, April 9, June 12, and July 20. Shortly after this meeting, and following the procedures in the Faculty Manual, the President met with Representative Committee of the Faculty (RepCom) and shared with them the urgency of the College's financial situation, and the Board's approval for her to work with RepCom to convene a group to develop a plan for the reduction of academic programs and resulting retrenchment of faculty. The President appointed the Provost, the Associate Provost, the Vice President for Finance and Administration, and Chief of Staff to the group and the full faculty voted to have RepCom represent the faculty in the working group (Minutes from Faculty Meeting, September 2020). From August through mid-November, this group reviewed materials from each department.

The Joint Working Group (JWG) developed a plan in consensus, approved by each member of the group, and submitted it to the President on November 7 (JWG Report, November 7 2020). The President submitted this report, unchanged, to the Board of Trustees along with all the supporting material considered by the JWG. The report and materials, including all the academic department proposals/reports, were posted on November 13, one week in advance of the Board's special meeting on November 20. The summary of the report titled *Overview of Recommendations to Achieve Institutional Stability* was jointly presented by Dr. Angela Ledford, Ph.D., Professor of Political Science (Co-Chair of the Representative Committee of the Faculty); Rob O'Neil, Assistant Professor of Art (Co-Chair of the Representative Committee of the Faculty); Debra Lee Polley, Vice President for Finance and Administration; and Lisa Haley Thomson, G'94 Chief of Staff. The RepCom co-chairs presented the perspective of the faculty at this meeting to ensure that the Trustees heard directly from the faculty as they considered the recommendations of the President and JWG that would have a profound impact on the College. (Board of Trustees Meeting Agenda November 20, 2020).

The full Board met again in a Special meeting on December 7 and voted to accept the recommendations in the JWG's proposed plan to eliminate 25 undergraduate, graduate, and certificate programs out of a total of 109, leaving 81 academic programs open to new students. These decisions impacted 10% of undergraduate students and 4% of the enrolled graduate credits, and resulted in the elimination of 33 out of 151 full-time tenure and tenure track positions in December 2021. Some faculty elected to take a retirement incentive (Agenda Full Board Meeting, December 7 2021).

The Board took this action fully cognizant of its fiduciary responsibility to sustain the institution, to fulfill its mission, its role in the Capital Region and the City of Albany, and its sacred duty to the original vision of the founding sisters.

Another illustration of the BOT taking action on urgent matters was in the re-financing of the College's debt, which was re-financed through publicly held bonds underwritten by the City of Albany. This has reduced the College's annual debt service and alleviated the cumbersome bond covenants. This was shared with the College community only hours after the bonds had been issued (President's Remarks, Community Conversation, October 28, 2022). The College has made all of its bond covenants, and expects to make the June 30, 2022, covenants.

As stated clearly in its bylaws, **the Board appoints the Chief Executive Officer, and is responsible for the evaluation of the CEO.** It has been the tradition and practice that the appointment of the President by the Board is done in collaboration with a campus search committee comprised of Trustees, faculty, staff and administrators, and students. Campus wide input is sought, and finalist candidates have done day-long campus presentations.

The Board has an Evaluation and Compensation Committee (ECC) led by the Board Chair whose purpose is to evaluate the performance of the President and negotiate a presidential contract and compensation package. This Committee has a timeline and a process to evaluate the president. The Trustees are considering how the process could be made more inclusive and transparent to the College community and include input from the College Community on a periodic basis.

As stated in Article X of the Board of Trustees bylaws, **each Trustee and key persons at the College must submit a conflict-of-interest questionnaire annually** to the Secretary of the Board of Trustees. Any questionnaire that discloses a possible conflict of interest is reviewed by the Audit Committee for any potential conflict related to payment for services, contractual relationships, employment, family, financial or other interests that could be or could be perceived to be conflicts of interest. As stated in the bylaws, if a conflict is disclosed, the trustee shall recuse himself or herself from discussions of, and abstain from voting on, such matter under consideration by the Board of Trustees or its committees. In addition to the statement in the bylaws, the Board has a Conflict-of-Interest Policy that is reviewed and approved annually by the Board's Audit Committee and full board of trustees (Conflict of Interest Questionnaire and Policy, Approved February 2022). The Audit Committee is chaired by Trustee Jim Sandman, a highly regarded national attorney and currently the Distinguished Lecturer and Senior Consultant to the Future of the Profession Initiative at University of Pennsylvania Carey Law School.

**The Board exhibits diligence in supporting the President in maintaining the autonomy of the institution** while subject to the laws of the State of New York. In its bylaws, it states that the Board shall exercise ultimate authority over and ultimate responsibility for all acts of the College. No other entity is cited or referred to. The College's Board of Trustee bylaws, (Article II, Section 2) supported by the sponsorship agreement with the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, Albany Province, states that "not less than one-quarter (1/4) of the voting members shall be representatives of the Sisters of St. Joseph, one of whom shall be designated by the Province Leadership Team of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, Albany Province, from among its membership. There shall be thirty-six (36) voting members of the Board of Trustees." (CSJ Albany Province Sponsorship Agreement)

### **Criterion 3: Chief Executive Officer**

The **President of the College of Saint Rose is elected by and assessed by the Board of Trustees** ("BYLAWS OF THE COLLEGE OF SAINT ROSE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, February 14, 2020, Article IV, Section 2, p.4; Article VI, Section 4, p.8). For the purpose of providing the Board with a broader basis for

evaluating the President, Standard VII working group suggested that the Board solicit college-wide participation in this assessment. The President reports to the Board of Trustees (Organizational Chart, Sharepoint, HR area). The President is an ex-officio member of the Board without vote and does not chair the Board ("BYLAWS, Article II, Section 2, p.1; Article III, Section 1, p.3).

On March 3, 2020, Dr. Carolyn J. Stefanco, who had served as President of The College of Saint Rose since July 2014, announced that she would step down from her position on June 30 (Dr. Carolyn J. Stefanco Will Step Down June 30, 2020, as President of The College of Saint Rose, March 3, 2020 Press Release). At this time, concern about the spread of COVID-19 was rising globally and in New York state. On Wednesday, March 11, The College informed students that they needed to leave campus by Sunday, March 15, and that classes would be offered remotely beginning on Monday, March 16. Nonessential employees would work from home. On March 18, Jeffrey Stone, Chair of the Board of Trustees, taking note of this "time of unprecedented challenge and uncertainty, announced that the Trustees had "unanimously chosen Marcia J. White to serve as Interim President of the College" (The College of Saint Rose, March 18, 2020)

The Board chose Marcia J. White as Interim President in a time of crisis in which the College was in severe financial difficulties and COVID-19 was spreading rapidly. In announcing White's appointment, the Board Chair cited **her professional experience and commitment to the College and its mission**. He noted that she was well known in the Capital Region for her role as Director of the Saratoga Performing Arts Center (SPAC), where she restructured the Center's finances and reestablished it as a preeminent cultural institution. President White is a proud graduate of the College, who is familiar with the values of its founders and well equipped to foster the mission of Saint Rose. White, a former nurse, has a B.A. in Communications from Saint Rose. She had been serving as a Saint Rose trustee for 18 years. When she came to the Board, White was working as press secretary and aide to New York State Senator Joseph L. Bruno, the Senate Majority Leader. In 2005, having demonstrated a high level of skill in marketing, communications, public relations, White was named President of the Saratoga Performing Arts Center, a position she held for twelve seasons.

In Article VII, section 3 of the Board's bylaws, the Board also makes clear that **the president has the authority and autonomy to fulfill the responsibilities of the position**: "The President shall have the general and active management, control and other direction of the business operations, education activities, and other affairs of the College." This is evidenced by the Board's acceptance of the recommendation of President White to work with faculty to develop a plan to reduce academic expenses. The Board did not explicitly direct the President to make the cuts; rather they approved her developing a plan to address the College's ongoing structural deficit which was then presented to the Board in December of that year (Agenda Special Meeting of the Board, July 2020).

The President's autonomy is evidenced in other instances as well. One of these critical areas is the College's response to the pandemic. Under White's leadership, Saint Rose faculty and administrators developed plans for remote work and teaching and established guidelines and protocols to ensure the health and safety of the College community. The College returned to in-person classes and work in fall 2020 but provided options for remote and hybrid learning. The Pandemic Task Force continued to meet and make recommendations to the President. President White has continued to deal effectively with the COVID crisis. Another illustration of the president's autonomy and initiative was when students of color raised concerns about equity/racial issues in June 2020. White, in collaboration with Yolanda Caldwell, held numerous all-college conversations on racism, and drastically revised the system for reporting

incidents of bias. White also appointed Caldwell as Chief Diversity Officer and filled the position of Director of Diversity and Inclusion.

In August 2021, the Board named White President, extended her term through June 2023, and indicated that a national search would be launched for a new president in the summer or early fall of 2022. In making the appointment, the Board referenced her success in raising \$5.7 million and her facilitation of the efforts of the Representative Committee of the Faculty and a team of administrators to recommend painful but necessary cuts in the academic area and praised White's commitment to partnering with faculty.

In late October 2021, the College successfully refinanced its outstanding debt through the City of Albany Capital Resources Corporation thanks to the expertise and dedicated work by Debra Lee Polley, Vice President for Finance and Administration. White's effective leadership and ability to reach out to Albany's elected officials and business community for fundraising and building confidence in the future of the College were noted as contributing factors by the Board in this significant achievement.

The **President is supported in her work by senior administrators with responsibility** for high-level oversight of key areas of the College's operations. In addition to the President, the President's Cabinet is composed of the incumbents in the following positions. Associate Vice President and Director of Athletics, Director of Women's Leadership Institute and BOLD Women's Leadership Network and Chief Diversity Officer, Associate Vice President for Marketing and Communications, Associate Vice President for Human Resources and Risk Management, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Vice President for Finance and Administration, Associate Vice President for Student Development, and Chief of Staff.

The President has the authority to change the composition of the Cabinet to respond to altered circumstances. Recent changes have been the inclusion of the Associate Vice President for Human Resources and the Chief Diversity Officer. Information Technology and Office of Learning Services partner with relevant stakeholders to procure and support technological needs of the administration. A list of administrative information systems maintained by the College is in the document library. The College has a Super Users and Programmers Group composed of Information Technology staff and administrative technology systems users. The Group requests enhancements to systems and plans system upgrades. (The Super User Group has not met in the past year.) The Cyber Risk Mitigation Task Force is composed of senior employees in Finance and Administration, including the Associate Vice President for Information Technology. The Task Force reviews risks to College information technology systems and recommends solutions to identified risks

#### **Criterion 4: Administration**

The College has a **clearly defined and documented organizational structure** with an organization chart that notes each position and incumbent and shows reporting relationships. The organization chart is maintained and is accessible in the Human Resources area of SharePoint. **Administrative numbers are appropriate** for ensuring that necessary functions and responsibilities are fulfilled. The number of full- and part-time administrators<sup>1</sup> at the College has declined in the past 4 years, although the percentage of administrators in the overall employee population has remained

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<sup>1</sup> At Saint Rose, an administrator is any non-faculty employee who is salaried and not hourly.

consistent. While all current administrative work is getting done, declining administrative numbers and turnover have caused strain in some areas.

The College's hiring process ensures that **administrative hires have credentials and professional experience essential to the position and consistent with the institution's mission**. The College has job descriptions for all administrative and staff positions which include responsibilities, qualifications, and reporting relationships. The College's Recruiting and Selection policy for administrators and staff positions notes a review of the job description by the hiring manager and the human resources representative as an initial step in the recruitment process. This review includes an examination of the job's responsibilities and review of the required qualifications in relation to those responsibilities. The descriptions are revised, if appropriate, as an initial step in the process to fill an open position. The descriptions are also revised when an incumbent's job responsibilities change. As an initial step of the process to fill open positions, the hiring manager and the human resources representative review a job's responsibilities and review the required qualifications in relation to the responsibilities

**The College administration engages with faculty regularly** by holding meetings with faculty, administration, and staff prior to the start of the fall and spring semesters and has held special meetings with faculty as needed. Faculty are informed of these meetings in advance by email. Deans meet with the faculty in their Schools multiple times during the semester on set dates specified in the Academic Calendar, published at the beginning of an academic year. The Provost holds regular meetings with all department chairs to discuss matters relevant to academic affairs.

The **College administration engages with students** initially beginning the summer before their first semester, welcoming them to campus prior to Orientation and answering questions. In their first year, students are contacted after the first month to inquire how the student is progressing and reminding them about important dates (Advisement Day, Spring Registration, etc.). All students are reached to remind them about registration and Advisement Day, as well as contacted following the registration period if they have not registered for the upcoming semester. Students on academic probation are contacted by an assigned Academic Success Mentor. Students are also involved in administration sponsored activities such as Golden Knights Socials (once a month), Career Center events about potential job opportunities (several times a semester), and events like the National Day on Writing and Reach Out Saint Rose. Students are involved in ad hoc committees discussing topics of significance to the student population, such as the recent committees on diversity and inclusion. Students receive updates and reminders of these and other events through *In the Know*, a weekly newsletter sent from the administration to all students. The mental and physical health of students are prioritized as students receive weekly emails regarding the COVID epidemic, vaccinations, counseling services, and other important and relevant health information.

**The work performance of all non-bargaining unit administrators and staff is evaluated annually** by the administrator's or staff member's department head. This performance appraisal requires the setting and appraisal of success in achieving individually assigned objectives, as well as success in meeting the standards established for a set of College-wide performance factors. Through the SOAR process, each administrative department identifies objectives that are consistent with the College's strategic plan. Annually, departments review objectives and assess success in attaining those objectives.

#### **Criterion 5: Timely and Appropriate Assessment of Effective Governance**

Each standing and ad hoc committee established by the Board, “shall have a written statement of purpose and primary responsibilities...” “Each committee shall review such statements for their appropriateness and adequacy annually” (Board of Trustees By-Laws Article VII, Section 1). At the meetings at which their statements of purpose are reviewed, the Committees use this review as an opportunity to evaluate whether they are effectively fulfilling their purpose as outlined in the Committee’s statement of purpose. These statements are approved by the Board’s Trustee Affairs and Governance Committee, and subsequently by the full board. This requirement is explicitly stated in the Board of Trustees by-laws.

The Faculty Governance Document notes that “fidelity to the structures the College creates for governance, at every level and by every member of the College Community, is necessary to facilitate” positive outcomes (75). All members of the College work to ensure that governance is shared appropriately. Each governance standing committee is required to regularly assess and reaffirm its constitution. We suggest that the Faculty set up a committee to assess satisfaction with the operation of the shared governance process. The assessment could be done every other year.

Administrators are assessed by their immediate supervisor through a process managed and tracked by Human Resources through an online portal. The president is assessed by the Board and has a documented timeline and procedure for this assessment. We suggest that the Board facilitate a periodic college-wide assessment of the President, perhaps aligned with the President’s contract renewal process.

### **Requirements for Affiliation and Institutional Priorities**

The College fully complies with requirements for Affiliation #12, #13, and #14. The College shares its governance structure as outlined in the Board of Trustees by-laws and its sponsorship by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, Albany Province. The Trustees and key persons adhere to a conflict-of interest policy as outlined in the Board’s by-laws, and annually discloses any personal/financial interest that may pose a conflict. Those questionnaires are reviewed annually by the Board’s Audit Committee. The President serves on the Board without vote and does not serve as Chair of the Board.

The College submits in its Annual Institutional Update all information regarding enrollment, finances, and academic programs as required including the College’s annual external audit. This information is presented consistent with current best practices and standards in higher education. The College communicates in a timely manner with Middle States important news or changes in leadership, academic programs, or other issues that the College judges are of a level of which the accrediting agency should be made aware.

### **Areas for Improvement and Innovation**

Shared governance is a part of the effective working of the College, and ensures that we are able to serve our students and fulfill our mission. During the pandemic, much of the work of governance at all levels of the College shifted to virtual modes. The College can build upon this experience to enhance our governance processes and address Strategic Plan Goal 3 to foster an engaged, inclusive, and supported community. While this shift to remote meeting was made of necessity, our ability to

continue governance processes suggests that as we move beyond the pandemic there are opportunities to incorporate technology to ensure full participation in governance processes in ways that might not be possible in a strictly face-to-face environment. Such efforts would particularly support our strategic objectives to foster a shared sense of purpose and to enhance internal communication.

Other actions could also support increased transparency and improvement in governance processes. We suggest that the Faculty set up a committee to assess satisfaction with the operation of the shared governance process. The assessment could be done every other year. We also suggest that the Board facilitate a periodic college-wide assessment of the President, perhaps aligned with the President's contract renewal process.

## **Summary**

The College fulfills the criteria as outlined in Standard VII as well as the related requirements of affiliation. Processes of shared governance in the Faculty Manual and the by-laws of the Board of Trustees document interdependent processes of governance between the faculty, administration, and the board. Recent experiences within the College, as well as the external environment, inform continuing assessment of these processes, including by a task force reviewing the College's academic structure, by a committee of the board examining its by-laws, and by students, staff and alumni assessing student government. Assessment of the organization and its process is healthy and highlights the institution's commitment to improvement. In drafting this section, the Committee worked collaboratively with a group of Trustees including the Board Chair and the President. One area that was identified for greater clarity was the presidential search and assessment process, which could include a periodic evaluation in which the Trustees seek input from the campus community.

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<b>Charles Murray</b>	Assistant Professor of Economics
<b>Deborah Shea</b>	Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership

### **Standard VII - Governance, Leadership, and Administration:**

<b>Sister Honora Kinney, CSJ, <i>Co-Editor</i></b>	Professor Emeritus of History, Library Assistant, Archives and Technical Services
<b>Jeff Knapp, <i>2nd Chair</i></b>	Associate Vice President for Human Resources and Risk Management
<b>Rebecca Landsberg, <i>Chair</i></b>	Associate Professor of Biology
<b>Gerry Lorentz, <i>Liaison</i></b>	co-chair, Dean of School of Arts and Humanities
<b>Daniel Nester, <i>Co-Editor</i></b>	Associate Professor of English
<b>Lisa Thomson, <i>Document Specialist</i></b>	Chief of Staff, alumnus

### **Verification of Compliance Working Group:**

<b>Steve Dwire, co-chair</b>	AVP Financial Aid
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**Deb Liberatore**  
**Craig Tynan, co-chair**

Director of the Office of the Provost  
Registrar

DRAFT

**Evidence Inventory Manager:**

**Mary Lindner**

Cataloger/Collection Management/Reference Librarian/Library Faculty

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**Dandan Wu, Co-Chair**

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**Lisa Keating\*, Accreditation**

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Associate Vice President for Marketing and communications

**Valerie Myers**

Associate Vice President for Financial Reporting and Comptroller

\* Some of the members have either retired from or left the College during the self-study process. We still wish to recognize their contribution.