# Assurance Argument

## St. Norbert College - WI

### Review date: 4/17/2023

## 1 - Mission

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

## 1.A - Core Component 1.A

The institution’s mission is articulated publicly and operationalized throughout the institution.

1. The mission was developed through a process suited to the context of the institution.
2. The mission and related statements are current and reference the institution’s emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development and religious or cultural purpose.
3. The mission and related statements identify the nature, scope and intended constituents of the higher education offerings and services the institution provides.
4. The institution’s academic offerings, student support services and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.
5. The institution clearly articulates its mission through public information, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans or institutional priorities.

### Argument

St. Norbert College, a Catholic liberal arts college embracing the Norbertine ideal of communio, provides an educational environment that fosters intellectual, spiritual and personal development.

Its succinctly worded [mission](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1677366) has served St. Norbert College (SNC) well over time, remaining largely unchanged from the educational philosophy espoused in 1898 by the College’s founder, the Rev. Bernard Pennings, O.Praem. Members of the founding order are called Norbertines, honoring their founder, Norbert of Xanten.

The spiritual values or charisms that characterize the founding order include:

* Localitas (meeting local community needs)
* Actio (animating faith with action)
* Contemplatio (emphasizing contemplation to give greater meaning to one’s actions)
* Communio (a loving community, united as one)

SNC is the only Norbertine institution of higher education in the world, and the College’s mission emphasizes three distinct yet interrelated traditions evident in multiple areas of College life: Catholic, Norbertine and Liberal Arts.

Adopted in 2018, SNC’s [Catholic Identity Statement](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1677364) — “Richly Rooted and Growing Stronger” — expresses the essential relationship between the Norbertines and the College, highlighting their shared Catholic heritage and identity.

In 2019, the SNC [faculty endorsed](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1677367) the [Liberal Arts Identity Statement](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1677363): “The Pursuit of Freedom through the Spirit of Inquiry.” It emphasizes education that teaches range and depth and allows students to “become and remain free.”

In 2022, the Norbertine sponsors approved the [Norbertine Identity Statement](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1677365), further articulating the particular charisms and focus of the founding order.

1.A.1 - The mission was developed through a process suited to the context of the institution.

By intention and reflecting the founders’ spirit, constancy over time is evident in SNC’s one-sentence mission statement. Distinct from changes to its essence, explanations of the mission’s core elements are updated as needed. The wording has been revised periodically to ensure its focus is embraced by contemporary audiences, while always emphasizing SNC’s commitment to whole-person development. As examples, articulations on the website and on a widely disseminated [bookmark](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1677369) reinforce the College’s mission, as do numerous art installations and the presence of the parish church on campus.

1.A.2 - The mission and related statements are current and reference the institution’s emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development and religious or cultural purpose.

Although the mission statement is intentionally succinct and may be criticized for its lack of explicit reference to Criterion 1-A.2, the College intentionally links mission to every document, plan and written expression of SNC’s central purpose. Mission is widely evident in marketing materials; campus events and speakers; on the website and bookmark described above; in media and print materials; and in many classroom, service-learning and co-curricular opportunities available to students.

Prior to a leadership transition in 2022-23, a senior mission officer reporting to the president was responsible for overseeing all three SNC mission elements, embracing the charge to express the depth and breadth of each element — Catholic, Norbertine and liberal arts — and meaningful integration of all three. During the transition, the interim president and interim academic vice president — both with substantial and, in one case, national experience in mission integration within Catholic institutions — continue this work with the able assistance of the chief of staff, who formerly held the mission integration role.

SNC faculty continue the “rigorous and untainted pursuit of knowledge that is a hallmark of the Catholic Intellectual Tradition,” often explicitly connecting their pedagogical and scholarly pursuits to the College’s mission. As examples, [Political Science](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1677375) emphasizes public scholarship centered around global and community service; [English](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1677373), the importance of encountering religious, spiritual or moral questions; and [Music](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1685757), the role of the arts in creating community. Specific scholarship statements extend the SNC mission in each discipline’s particularly applicable manner and guide faculty seeking promotion or tenure. The [Program Document Archive](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1677377) houses current scholarship statements.

Collaborative engagement with local Native American leaders yielded the [Land Acknowledgement Statement](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1677374), developed in synchrony with the Norbertine commitment to stabilitas loci, understood as a “deep commitment to the local community.”

Supporting the Strategic Plan as one of [three pillars](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1677372), Mission Radiance stands aside Educational Quality as well as Financial Strength and Operational Excellence. Through Mission Radiance efforts, SNC amplifies institutional traditions around mission in relevant, impactful ways to achieve deeper integration of the Catholic, Norbertine and liberal arts mission elements within every aspect of College life.

This vision further guides planning and decision-making: “St. Norbert will take its place among the most highly esteemed Catholic liberal arts colleges. ... Building on its traditions, it will be an exemplar that fully prepares students for success in a complex world, and its outstanding faculty, staff and students will live its motto: To Teach by Word and Example.”

1.A.3 - The mission and related statements identify the nature, scope and intended constituents of the higher education offerings and services the institution provides.

The SNC mission seeks to make evident the nature, scope and the intended beneficiaries of its educational programs and services. St. Norbert’s primary beneficiaries are its students. Ongoing renewal of, and investment in, the curricular and co-curricular student experience ensures quality education and meaningful outcomes.

As its first principle, the [2016-2021 Strategic Plan](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1677381) articulated a commitment to student development: “Every admitted student can succeed;” “providing an integrated and transformative educational experience that supports the development of the whole person;” “reimagining our programs to meet the needs of today’s students;” and “fostering a diverse and inclusive campus community.”

Faculty and staff, for whom SNC seeks to “deliver the policies, opportunities, tools and resources” needed to excel, also benefit from meaningful engagement in the mission, including through its outreach initiatives. Examples include the work of the [Center for Business and Economic Analysis (CBEA)](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1677382), where students and faculty conduct research for local businesses. Various centers provide both campus and off-campus constituents opportunities for spiritual and personal development, including the [College Parish](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1677388), [Cassandra Voss Center (CVC)](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1677386), [Center for Norbertine Studies (CNS)](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1677383), [Sturzl Center for Community Service and Learning](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1677385), and [Norman Miller Center for Peace, Justice and Public Understanding](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1677390). [Anti-Racism workshops](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1677387) and the [Program for Inclusive Excellence](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1677389) offered by the CVC are significant program examples serving both SNC and external communities, as are SNC’s slate of summer camps and work of the Center for Exceptional Leadership (CEL).

Through the 2021 Strategic Plan’s Financial Strength and Operational Excellence pillar, all key constituencies benefit from SNC’s careful fiscal planning and management.

1.A.4 - The institution’s academic offerings, student support services and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.

The [Core Curriculum](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1677395) reflects SNC’s essential purpose as an expression of its mission as a Catholic, Norbertine, liberal arts college by offering students intellectual preparation and experiential learning that will enable them to flourish within a complex, rapidly changing world. The Core offers students an approach toward examining personal values, habits of leadership and integrity, as well as spiritual integration so central to the College’s Catholic, Norbertine values.

Required courses engage students in theology and philosophy, as well as mathematics, writing and foreign languages. Other courses (e.g., Beyond Borders, Catholic Imagination, Difference and Diversity and Individual and Society) connect students with the central Christian message of principled action in the world. The recently launched [First-Year Seminar](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1677407) experience also seeks to reflect SNC’s mission and values and work continues toward that end.

A variety of [majors, minors and programs](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1677397) further demonstrates commitment to the liberal arts as foundational to a St. Norbert education. SNC offers 67 majors and 30 minors across five academic divisions, in addition to several pre-professional programs and three graduate programs.

Academic and student support services reinforce classroom instruction and support students’ intellectual, spiritual and developmental growth. Key examples include [Academic Advising](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1677403), [Career and Professional Development](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1677396), [Counseling and Psychological Services](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1677400), [Old St. Joseph Parish](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1677388), the [Emmaus Center for Spiritual Life and Vocation](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1677402), [Health Services](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1677399), the [Office of Academic Success, Support and Accessibility](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1677405) and the [Office of Student Inclusion and Belonging](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1677410). Careful planning encourages students to access the support they need, with staff available in-person and through virtual platforms.

Catholic and other interested members of the campus community benefit from the [sacramental](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1677404) and [other ministries](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1677409) of St. Norbert College Parish. Meeting students “as and where they are,” [Emmaus Center](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1677402) programs respond directly to student needs. Through service opportunities, speakers, religious services and retreats, peer ministry, and vocational programming, the center serves student spiritual needs, regardless of religious affiliation.

With the Sturzl Center, the Emmaus Center created the NetVUE [Scholars for Community Engaged Vocation](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1677406). Focused on learning for faculty and staff as well as students, the program integrates commitment to the common good with a deep sense of purpose, providing curricular and co-curricular options for service and vocational exploration. Professional development fosters expanded vocational understanding among faculty and staff, enabling them to guide students toward connecting justice-oriented service with meaning and purpose.

Achieving institutional goals for diversity, equity and inclusion is integral to SNC’s Catholic, Norbertine and liberal arts mission. In fall 2022, among 1,814 undergraduate and 68 graduate students enrolled, 56 percent were female and 43 percent were male. Undergraduate students came from 33 states and 13 foreign countries. The first-year class in fall 2022 was 82 percent white, 15 percent students of color, and 3 percent unknown or nonresidents, describing a class slightly more diverse than the fall 2021 student body. In fall 2020, the overall student body was 88 percent white, 10 percent students of color, and 2 percent unknown or nonresidents. For comparison, view the [enrollment summary for the past decade](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1677408).

1.A.5 - The institution clearly articulates its mission through public information, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans or institutional priorities.

SNC developed a [brand playbook](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680828) to visualize how it views its mission and to [publicly](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680827) articulate that mission in multiple venues — true as well for derivative mission statements of campus entities, for example, [Residential Education and Housing](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1677414). The mission also grounds the [Strategic Plan](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1677413) and [College-Wide Learning Outcomes (CWLO)](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1677412). In addition, the mission is amply evident in campus public art and on the physical campus itself. For example, the [Gehl-Mulva Science Center](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1677415), constructed to affirm connections between faith and reason, features prominent art displays and, through one of its [main entrances](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1677416), a reflection of the parish church across the street.

The CWLO goals connect directly to St. Norbert’s mission, ensuring that, within the context of the institution’s Catholic, Norbertine and liberal arts traditions: “Students think critically, communicate effectively, problem-solve creatively, behave ethically, interact respectfully, serve responsibly and live purposefully.” These learning outcomes were endorsed by [faculty](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1677417) as well as [staff governance](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1677418) groups, ensuring their recognition as College-wide in both scope and approval.

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## 1.B - Core Component 1.B

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

1. The institution’s actions and decisions demonstrate that its educational role is to serve the public, not solely the institution or any superordinate entity.
2. The institution’s educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.
3. The institution engages with its external constituencies and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

### Argument

The SNC mission serves the public in several ways, including educating students and providing community access to educational, artistic and civic opportunities. For example, during the pandemic, the [Fall 2020 Operations Plan](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1678388) named the “stabilizing and guiding effect of St. Norbert’s mission” in turbulent times, with each part of the triple tradition highlighted as a guiding light in this plan. Each planned construction project includes a budget for mission expression to ensure SNC’s public spaces align with mission. Other SNC public-good initiatives appear elsewhere in this document.

1.B.1 - The institution’s actions and decisions demonstrate that its educational role is to serve the public, not solely the institution or any superordinate entity.

St. Norbert’s purpose is to prepare students for principled engagement in the world. Nothing supersedes or replaces that commitment. However, various centers do address SNC’s important commitment to public service. The Norman Miller Center for Peace, Justice and Public Understanding (NMC) hosts free [lectures](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680054) and [programs](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680055), as do the CVC and the CEL, with programs often live-streamed or filmed for public viewing. The NMC hosts programming for students interested in public service; for example, a [comprehensive program](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680053) helped students engage in the 2020 national elections. The center also generates creative partnerships, with one such opportunity enabling faculty to offer a pre-college program and a [course](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1680059) for students to work with youth in the foster care system and social workers.

All student organizations [commit to service or educational hours](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1680057). For example, each varsity sport team engages in community outreach, with head coaches annually reporting the hours [athletes volunteer](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1680056). Although the pandemic affected service opportunities negatively, participation is returning to prior levels as Covid-19 restrictions abate. As examples of other campus practices, the Political Science honor society worked on a voter registration drive, the English honor society coordinated a book drive, while an international issues student group ran school supply drives supporting immigrants and refugees. Nearly 50 percent of SNC students engage in at least one organization, offering significant evidence about ways students impact the larger community.

The [Center for Norbertine Studies](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1680058) offers programming about Norbertine heritage for the campus community, Norbertines around the world and the public. The work highlights SNC’s Catholic, Norbertine and liberal arts traditions and other related ideas. The [Killeen Chair](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1680061) underscores the place of theology and philosophy in a Catholic liberal arts institution through [Killeen Lectures](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1680062), which keep the College abreast of contemporary scholarship on theological and philosophical issues in fields as diverse as biology, psychology, economics, the arts and literature. Programs benefit the entire SNC community, the Green Bay Diocese and northeast Wisconsin.

Another program, the [Pilgrim Forum](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1680060), offers a series “dedicated to sharing information and spurring thought … around the basic tenets of the Catholic faith and tradition.”

1.B.2 — The institution’s educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.

SNC’s educational mission is primary, with several data points demonstrating this commitment. Additional evidence is available throughout this assurance argument.

* The FY22 [Statement of Financial Position](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680065) includes information on public service expenses. For FY22, the College spent $679,619 on public service expenditures, representing 0.84 percent of its annual operating budget, in comparison to 28.2 percent for instruction and 6.3 percent for academic support.
* The [College’s Annual Dashboard](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680064) (as of October 2019) listed the overall tuition discount as 44.5 percent in FY19 and new student tuition discount as 52.4 percent in FY19 and 53 percent in FY20.

To address Covid-19 academic disruptions, the College created [Norbert’s Ninth](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680066), covering tuition for students needing a ninth semester to complete their degree, less applicable federal, state or institutional grants or scholarships. By acknowledging that the pandemic changed some students’ financial situations, SNC prioritized commitment to students over revenue.

1.B.3 - The institution engages with its external constituencies and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

In 2018, the president’s Green Bay Press-Gazette [op-ed](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1680071) highlighted SNC’s commitment to the community: “We … produce first-class outcomes because of a faithful commitment to our educational mission and the experiences our students have in the community. … I offer an open invitation to dialogue … about your business, your church, your health-care system, your educational institution, your volunteer or internship opportunity, or any other way in which we can collaborate for a better future.” Community leaders engage regularly with SNC leaders to navigate the headwinds of higher education and increase community awareness of SNC’s resources. Two community advisory groups whose membership features alumni and community leaders are the President’s Advisory Council and the business school’s Board of Advisors. In addition, the Mulva Library provides access to its facilities and materials.

Several examples of community service occurred during the [Covid-19 pandemic](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680070). One dean created an [online tutoring service](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680069), partnering pre-service teachers with children suddenly learning from home. When the campus emptied in March 2020, SNC’s Dining Services partnered with Sysco, Rich’s Bakery and Hormel to provide weekly food bags for needy families and to distribute produce and meals to area shelters.

The College regularly deploys campus members to serve the broader community. For example, the [TRIPS program](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680078) (Turning Responsibility Into Powerful Service) — a partnership of the Sturzl and Emmaus centers — engages students in direct service with community partners during semester breaks. Students prepare, engage in service, reflect on their experience and plan post-trip action.

The Schneider School of Business and Economics offers the services of its faculty directly to the community through formal partnerships. As examples, accounting students participate in the [Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680074), helping lower-income individuals complete tax returns. The [CBEA](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680072) provides information, problem-solving, networking and collaboration for local leaders through economic-impact studies, leading-indicator analysis, market research and site-selection analysis. The school also offers the [CEO Breakfast Series](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680075) for business leaders, featuring regional as well as national speakers.

Regional leaders seize numerous opportunities for engagement, described on the [Business Engagement](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680076) webpage, a one-stop portal for those seeking talent solutions, executive education, and corporate and intern summer housing, among other services.

For 25 years, the [Strategic Research Institute (SRI)](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680077) has lived out the Norbertine tradition of responding to the needs of global and local communities. As a social science resource with a growth agenda and revenue-generating capacity, the SRI turns confounding problems into answerable research questions. Recent projects include a study for the Green Bay Diocese to improve quality of life for all Catholics in northeast Wisconsin and a study with the Milwaukee Police and Fire Commission to understand citizen perceptions of police.

Much of SRI’s work aligns closely with the Catholic Social Teaching principle of “the sacred dignity of all persons,” a core belief implicit within the SNC mission. Working with community partners, the SRI conducts studies such as assessing the health of regional residents and educational outcomes of Wisconsin children and developing an action plan to meet the needs of workers with disabilities.

[Sturzl Center](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680073) leaders spearheaded SNC’s successful application for a Carnegie Foundation Elective Classification for Community Engagement, received in both 2010 and 2020. In the [selection letter](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680068), the Foundation noted “excellent alignment among campus mission, culture, leadership, resources, and practices that support dynamic and noteworthy community engagement.” The letter also noted several areas for improvement, including community engagement infrastructure, assessment, integration with academic life, faculty rewards and increasing awareness of how community engagement impacts historically underrepresented populations. The Sturzl Center addresses this need and supports initiatives that place students in the community, benefitting their learning while addressing community needs.

Well-attended summer concerts such as Knights on the Fox and the annual SNC Day are annual efforts to engage the local community. In addition, the Jumpstart program allows local high-school students to complete college courses while still in high school.

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## 1.C - Core Component 1.C

The institution provides opportunities for civic engagement in a diverse, multicultural society and globally connected world, as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

1. The institution encourages curricular or cocurricular activities that prepare students for informed citizenship and workplace success.
2. The institution’s processes and activities demonstrate inclusive and equitable treatment of diverse populations.
3. The institution fosters a climate of respect among all students, faculty, staff and administrators from a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas and perspectives.

### Argument

Local community needs are important in SNC’s planning and decision-making. Students, faculty and staff engage in a wide variety of opportunities that enhance life in Green Bay and the region. As demographics change, SNC is increasing its skill and accelerating its capability to respond appropriately. Recently, the College was recognized for engagement in student voting and is accelerating its work with local school districts and other organizations.

1.C.1 - The institution encourages curricular or co-curricular activities that prepare students for informed citizenship and workplace success.

Addressing the principles of equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging (EDIB) depends on all who work and learn at St. Norbert, led by people whose job responsibilities specifically advance this aspect of the mission.

The [dean of curriculum and senior diversity officer](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680081) provides leadership for key programs and committees, including Core Curriculum; Curriculum and Educational Policy; the CGE; First-Year Seminar; Academic Service Learning; the CVC; and the Committee for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

A 2021 [initiative](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680091) sought to attract, hire and retain faculty and staff committed to inclusivity. The goal is to hire faculty with research interest, pedagogical experience or lived experience in EDIB work, seeking to focus an inclusive lens on teaching and learning. Ten faculty members were hired as part of this initiative. An additional staff member in the [Office of Academic Success, Support and Accessibility](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680088) serves as program coordinator for Black student support and, until his departure, another Housing staff member served as LGBTQ+ support services coordinator.

[CVC](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680089) programs highlight identity-related issues on both regional and national levels. For example, the CVC partnered with The Privilege Institute to offer a [Virtual Anti-Racism Workshop](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680090) to students, faculty and staff.

Many of SNC’s curricular programs provide opportunities for workplace success through [internships](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680080) and field experiences, such as the [Sophomore Block](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680086) for Teacher Education students.

A recent [National Science Foundation grant](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680084) supports scholarships and financial assistance, including tutoring, faculty mentors, housing in a living-learning environment and summer research opportunities for STEM majors, in order to increase recruitment, retention and success of academically talented students facing economic and financial barriers.

The [Center for Global Engagement](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680085) increases student engagement with [global communities and issues](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680083), including seventy different study abroad opportunities in 28 countries, encompassing semester and shorter-term programs. The CGE also supports international students on campus in several ways, including an [ESL program](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680087) and a [Great Decisions Lecture Series](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680082) on pressing global topics. The [Norman Miller Center](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680092) cultivates awareness, compassion, and commitment to justice and the building of sustainable peace.

All the institutional efforts described above prepare students for success in the workplace and in their personal lives.

1.C.2 - The institution’s processes and activities demonstrate inclusive and equitable treatment of diverse populations***.***

Each SNC division documents its own commitment to EDIB. Such documentation is evident in specific plans, for example, [Visual and Performing Arts](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680094), [Residential Education and Housing](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680102) and [Admission](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680101). These plans complement one another and facilitate a College-wide focus on [diversity](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680095), which provides training and support for the [Committee on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680096), the [Bias Incident Response Group](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680097) and [undocumented students and DACA recipients](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680098).

The [Office of Student Inclusion and Belonging](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680103) (OSIB) “facilitates the best undergraduate experience for multicultural students through culturally relevant services that foster their successful transition, persistence, achievement and graduation.” OSIB supports about 200 students through various programs. Notably, the [STAR Program](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680104) (Student Taking Academic Responsibility) offers planning, financial aid and study assistance to increase retention and graduation rates for students of color. OSIB also offers well-attended celebrations highlighting diverse cultures throughout the year. The [Proud to Be First](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680105) initiative celebrates and supports first-generation college students.

Climate surveys provide relevant data for campus leaders. A 2016 [Campus Climate Survey](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680099) revealed many positive perceptions and noted areas for improvement, including campus inclusivity, communication and respect. This report led to establishment of a [Climate Enhancement Task Force](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680100), which examined specific equity and inclusion issues and named three key areas for attention: (1) creating an expectation for supervisors to support the SNC mission; (2) supporting diversity and equity across the institution through goal articulation and sufficient resources; and (3) supporting an active culture of respect.

1.C.3 - The institution fosters a climate of respect among all students, faculty, staff and administrators from a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas and perspectives.

Civility is a shared SNC value, reinforced in its 2012-13 selection as the College’s [annual theme](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680116). The [Civility Statement](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680118) makes clear the relationship of civility to communio and radical hospitality, while requiring the College community to “respect the sacred dignity of every person.”

The values of EDIB are reflected in SNC’s [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statement](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680113), [Non-Discrimination Policy](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680109) and [Land Acknowledgement Statement](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680110). Most recently, the College released a [Working for Racial Justice at SNC: Vision, Strategy and Commitment plan](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680112). [Respect Initiative](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680117) members created shared language and signage for use in creating a campus-wide culture of respect.

The need for increased attention to EDIB as a fundamental expression of mission is clear when noting the disappointing gap between initiatives taken to advance EDIB and the actual climate. Although change is evident, it has not occurred as quickly or as broadly as desired. According to [2021 Institute of Educational Sciences Report data](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680120), the vast majority (87 percent) of St. Norbert College undergraduate students identify as white, with 1 percent identifying as American Indian, 1 percent as Asian, 1 percent as Black or African-American, and 5 percent as Hispanic/Latino. In the aggregate, however, these numbers reflect a small yet significant [increase](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680119) in the enrollment percentage of nonwhite undergraduate students between 2009 and 2019 (4 percent to 10 percent, respectively).

Although St. Norbert’s six-year graduation rates reveal nearly equal percentages of white (75 percent) and Asian (75 percent) students, rates for American Indian, Black and Hispanic/Latino students lag at 50 percent, 51 percent and 63 percent, respectively. In addition, the [2020 National Survey of Student Engagement](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680108) revealed that St. Norbert students rated significantly lower on “discussions with diverse others” than did the comparison group. Moreover, SNC’s [2016 Campus Climate Survey](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1680099) revealed that nearly half (47 percent) of faculty and staff and 40 percent of students agree or strongly agree that “SNC needs to do more to support diversity and inclusion.”

Among SNC faculty and staff in fall 2021, 48 percent were female with a slightly higher percentage of non-instructional staff reported as such. Through intentional efforts, both racial/ethnic and gender diversity of the President’s Cabinet and Academic Deans’ Council is greater in 2022 than at any previous time in SNC history.

Finally, evidence related to EDIB assessment is in early stages of development. Existing evidence relates either to setting objectives to measure progress toward EDIB, or developing tools to measure the effectiveness of initiatives taken toward greater EDIB goal realization. Notable exceptions to this general observation include: (1) the Housing office, which [administers assessments](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680114) to its resident assistants and community assistants concerning bias training effectiveness; (2) the Library, which has [articulated several objectives](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680107) toward meeting EDIB goals more broadly; and (3) Student Affairs, which is actively assessing EDIB efforts as part of its [strategic plan](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680115). Of note, EDIB efforts and successes were added to the program review template beginning in fall 2022, so now all curricular programs will report on their work and results.

### Sources

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## 1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

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

### Summary

**Accomplishments**

1. The SNC mission is consistent with the general purpose of higher education and the founders’ purpose in establishing the College.
2. The SNC mission is consistently, publicly and broadly articulated across the SNC campus, and its central importance is evident within and across programs and activities.
3. The SNC mission is focused on the holistic development of students to prepare them for principled engagement in the world.
4. SNC offers numerous opportunities for civic engagement to students, faculty and staff.

**Work in Progress**

1. SNC is deliberately linking efforts concerning Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (EDIB) to its mission and especially to the principles of Catholic Social Teaching that undergird SNC’s mission as Catholic and Norbertine.
2. SNC is working to increase the diversity of its faculty and staff as the call to greater awareness of EDIB intensifies and local and regional demographics change with increasing acceleration.
3. Faculty and staff development opportunities are increasingly focused on preparing the SNC community for significant change in both the composition of its student body and its workforce.
4. Community-engaged and service-learning opportunities are increasing in both number and depth.

**On the Horizon**

1. Intensified focus and attention to changing needs of students and investment in SNC faculty and staff development as demographic changes in the region accelerate.
2. Increased attention to service and community-based learning as essential elements of mission.
3. Increased attention to EDIB work as an essential and critical part of mission focus.

### Sources

There are no sources.

## 2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

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

## 2.A - Core Component 2.A

The institution establishes and follows policies and processes to ensure fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty and staff.

1. The institution develops and the governing board adopts the mission.
2. The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, human resources and auxiliary functions.

### Argument

2.A.1 - The institution develops and the governing board adopts the mission.

The mission statement is central to the College’s identity and changes only infrequently, most recently in 2008, upon recommendation of the Board of Trustees and approval by the Abbot’s Council.

Although the mission statement changes infrequently, its implementation and varied expressions evolve as time and circumstance demand. As part of the [2016-21 Strategic Plan](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680125), campus groups articulated statements to elucidate the core mission values, including the [Liberal Arts](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680122) and [Catholic Identity Statements](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680124). A 2019 policy, [Hiring for Mission](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680123), requires managers and search committee chairs to complete special hiring steps and requires new hires to participate in a full day of mission orientation. Although Covid-19 interrupted implementation of this policy, it is now moving forward with new employees, and soon with search and hiring agents.

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

The College maintains a recently revised [website of college policies](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680146) for easy access by the campus community. Relevant examples follow.

**Integrity in Financial Functions**

The [Business and Finance division](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680148) oversees SNC’s financial integrity, with processes outlined in the [Financial Procedures Guide](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680149). Individual budget managers abide by this guide that explicitly requires them to “act ethically, honestly and responsibly in managing financial resources and information.”

The [Debt Policy](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680135) aims to sustain adequate financial strength to service debt, maintain leverage within an acceptable risk tolerance, ensure a competitive financial position relative to peer and aspirant colleges, and preserve capacity to invest in strategic initiatives. This policy also outlines procedures to ensure appropriate management and reporting requirements are in place.

The [Investment Policy](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680150) emphasizes long-term growth of principal to obtain the desired return on investments, consistent with SNC’s risk tolerance. Objectives call for a disciplined, consistent management philosophy to accommodate reasonable and probable occurrences. The policy details responsibilities of the administration, Finance Committee, investment consultants and managers.

The [Spending Policy](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680136) holds spendable endowment income rates reasonably stable to meet budget needs and protect the principal’s real value. SNC adheres to the rules of the Uniform Prudent Management of Institutional Funds Act.

The [Short-Term Cash Investment Policy](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680139) specifies responsibilities of management and the Finance Committee to ensure adequate liquidity in meeting anticipated cash-flow needs, as well as a reserve to meet unanticipated cash-flow needs.

Board of Trustees procedures also ensure ethical financial practices. The [College by-laws (Article XI)](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680151) outline the powers and duties of the treasurer to carry out board mandates in managing the institution’s financial resources. The treasurer oversees management of SNC’s investments, assures accuracy of its financial records and annually presents the board with an independent audit.

[Fundraising guidelines](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680142) provide policies for all College fundraising efforts.

**Integrity in Academic Functions**

The [Faculty Handbook](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680152) and [College Catalog](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680153) codify principles of academic integrity, highlighting the importance of maintaining these principles throughout the academic process. This includes policies articulating appropriate student course loads, grading systems, [academic honor code](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680145) and GPA requirements for athletic eligibility, among others.

SNC accepts the [AAUP’s statement on professional ethics](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680137) and includes it in the Faculty Handbook, along with [the statement on faculty responsibilities](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680140). These statements call the faculty to integrity, noting that they “should at all times be accurate, exercise appropriate restraint [and] show respect for the opinions of others,” “foster honest academic conduct” and “promote conditions of free inquiry and further public understanding.” Faculty engaging in hiring and/or in tenure or promotion decisions receive training in recognizing [implicit bias](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680132).

The [Institutional Review Board](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680141) assures that research involving human subjects is conducted in an ethical manner, while the [Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680144) performs a similar function for research involving animals.

The Faculty Handbook includes relevant excerpts from the [Joint Statement on the Rights and Freedoms of Students](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680127). Faculty adhere to sections of this document pertaining to student rights and records, follow prescribed guidelines and abide by relevant laws and regulations concerning the release of student information and transcripts.

Academic integrity is a cherished value and, accordingly, academic misconduct is a serious offense. SNC addresses academic misconduct with a process that is transparent, unbiased and timely in both methods and outcomes. Accountability for the consequences of one’s choices is the guiding principle of this process.

Students receive guidance on acting with integrity in the student handbook, [The Citizen](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680154).

**Integrity in Human Resources**

The SNC mission statement is rooted in [communio](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680130), and lived out through mutual esteem, trust, sincerity, faith and responsibility.

All employees abide by SNC’s published HR [policies](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680159), including the [Civility Statement](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680147) described in 1.C.3. All employees commit to honoring the spirit of communio in word and action, aspiring to:

* Respect the dignity of all persons;
* Live with integrity, acting consistently with one’s values and beliefs;
* Communicate truthfully, with openness to diverse perspectives and experiences;
* Practice radical hospitality, demonstrating concern for others and actively opposing intolerance;
* Serve the world, understanding the needs around one and sharing oneself in response.

SNC adheres to policies of non-discrimination based on age, sex, gender identity, race, color, national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, military or veteran status, marital status, disability, religion, or other characteristics protected by current federal, state and local statutes ([Non-Discrimination Policy](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680156), revised August 2021). Further, SNC prohibits discrimination based on genetic information and non-job-related arrest or conviction records for employment purposes. SNC also honors its equal employment opportunity policy. All policies regarding employment, compensation, fringe benefits and training programs are administered without discrimination. SNC expects its agents and those with whom it conducts business to support its commitment to these policies.

The [Conflict of Interest Policy](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680158) ensures employee objectivity and independence of judgment by minimizing situations that might create a conflict of interest or the appearance of one. Each salaried employee and faculty member is required to sign a disclosure statement yearly. The College has a [Whistleblower Policy](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680155) and [procedures](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680157) in place to protect employees and students who report wrongful conduct.

[Classification Guidelines](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680143) enable supervisors to understand pertinent legal classifications, criteria and rules applicable to individuals who provide services to the College (excluding individuals supplying services through a subcontract or vendor supply agreement) and legal risks associated with misclassification.

SNC expects that relationships between members of its community will occur in a mutually respectful manner, including non-marital consensual romantic and/or sexual relationships. The [Consensual Relationship Policy](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680160) protects individual dignity and rights by prohibiting relationships in which there exists a power differential, for example, between faculty/staff and students. SNC also enforces a [Nepotism Policy](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680128). Although employment of qualified relatives is permitted, the hiring process strictly follows procedures to avoid any appearance of conflict.

To ensure compliance with federal Title IX regulations (DOE, 5.20), SNC updated its [Sex and Gender Harassment/Discrimination Policy](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680161) and [procedures](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680165). This policy reflects SNC’s commitment to ensuring a healthy learning and work environment for everyone in the College community, one free of discrimination, including sex and gender-based discrimination, harassment and violence, each of which erodes the central value of communio when trust and responsibility are violated. This policy governs SNC’s response to complaints of sexual misconduct involving both employees and students. In 2019 (renewed in 2022), a program was developed to support a [federal grant under the Violence Against Women Act](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680138) that enhances prevention of, and response to, incidents of sexual misconduct.

A full-time Title IX coordinator was hired since the last HLC decennial visit, and [campus-wide town hall sessions](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680129) were held to discuss progress in helping survivors of sexual misconduct. A widely distributed [handout](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680162) provides an overview of the many SNC efforts and services in response to gender-based violence.

SNC also has a [grievance procedure](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680163) (actively under revision) to help employees who perceive unfair or disparate treatment seek just resolution. Procedures for faculty complaints regarding behavior or decisions perceived as inconsistent with the Faculty Constitution or Policy Statement are addressed by the [Faculty Mediation Committee](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680131). Faculty and staff may also consult the campus [ombudsperson](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680164), a neutral advocate who serves as a resource on a broad spectrum of issues.

**Integrity in Auxiliary Functions**

Many auxiliary services are housed within the Business and Finance division; their mission seeking to “optimize human, financial and physical resources to provide exemplary service in support of the College’s mission.” All employees abide by policies outlined in the [Financial Procedures Guide](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680149), which specifies rules for cash management, administrative systems, purchasing and cash disbursements.

Advancement division employees demonstrate a high level of integrity and ethical behavior, protecting fundamental rights to privacy and confidentiality, and ensuring ethical collection and use of information. Advancement employees adhere to the [Donor Bill of Rights](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680134), guided by fundraising, gift acceptance and [campaign counting policies](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680133).

SNC’s ability to seek and receive philanthropic gifts and grants depends on continuing recognition of its IRS tax-exempt status. The College protects this status by abiding by all relevant laws and regulations, including using its tax-exempt status solely for SNC’s benefit.

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## 2.B - Core Component 2.B

The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public.

1. The institution ensures the accuracy of any representations it makes regarding academic offerings, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, governance structure and accreditation relationships.
2. The institution ensures evidence is available to support any claims it makes regarding its contributions to the educational experience through research, community engagement, experiential learning, religious or spiritual purpose and economic development.

### Argument

2.B.1 - The institution ensures the accuracy of any representations it makes regarding academic offerings, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, governance structure and accreditation relationships.

SNC maintains clear, accurate and consistent communication with both students and the public, accomplishing this through electronic and print materials about programs, requirements, costs, control and accreditation relationships. Such methods include the College website, [The Citizen](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680199) (student handbook), [St. Norbert College Magazine](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680209), [social media](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1681955), and marketing and admissions materials. These documents are consistent with the [mission statement](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680168). In addition, the Office of Communications conducts a [review and editing process](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680169) to ensure accuracy and institutional integrity.

The [website](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680173) provides an excellent resource for both students and the public regarding [undergraduate](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680203), [graduate](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680202) and [co-curricular programs](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680170). An easily locatable [Fast Facts](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680196) page contains relevant information about student demographics, class sizes, financial aid and retention. The [Consumer Information Disclosures](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680204) page houses links to information on athletics, academics, campus safety, career and professional development, financial aid, health services, technology, privacy policies, and student outcomes. [Factbook](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680194) and [IPEDS Data Feedback Reports](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680197) also are available on the [Office for Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) website](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680195).

The website serves both internal and external constituents. The [recent redesign](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680206) enhances accessibility across platforms and improves user experience. It includes an intranet ([mySNC](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680208)) that removes internal information from external view, enabling outside constituents to more easily find the information they need, particularly important for prospective students. The mySNC intranet also helps current students and employees readily access necessary information. Additional information regarding programs, academic regulations, the Core Curriculum and specific classes appear in the [College Catalog](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680198), published annually and available in [online and hard-copy form](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680201).

The website details [requirements for undergraduate admission](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680171). Information for non-traditional students, including [transfer](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680175) and [international applicants](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680176), [veterans](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680178), [non-degree students and those seeking re-admission](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680177), is also easily accessed on the website. The [Registrar's website](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680179) provides detailed information about [advanced placement and other college credit programs](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680180), guides for [transfer credit](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680184), [requirements for graduation](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680183), [FERPA](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680182) rights and more. Matriculated students can access [KnightLine](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680200) and [DegreeWorks](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680205), online programs with real-time access to course timetables and student progress toward graduation. A “What If” feature in DegreeWorks allows students and advisors to explore the opportunities, complexities and sometimes consequences of making changes to majors or minors.

The website also provides timely information about campus news and events for the public, prospective students and the SNC community. During the pandemic, the website prominently featured a [dashboard](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680174) sharing relevant information.

SNC currently offers three graduate programs: master’s degrees in Business Administration, Liberal Studies and Theological Studies. Links to admission information for [graduate programs](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680181) appear on the website.

SNC also strives for transparency concerning the cost of higher education. Marketing and admission materials and the website outline the exact cost of a St. Norbert College education, including detailed breakdowns of tuition, fees, housing and meal-plan costs. Online calculators provide information about [merit scholarships](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680185), as well as the [net price](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680186) students will pay. This transparency extends to the [SNC Viewbook](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680187) and materials featuring SNC’s [Honors Program](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680191), [Study Abroad](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680190) opportunities, [student housing](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680189) and [Pre-Health](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680188) and [Pre-Law](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680192) advising. SNC News and regular emails also inform internal constituents.

Details about the College’s governance structure, including the [institution’s leadership](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680207) and [Board of Trustees](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680193), are communicated through the SNC website.

SNC’s Norbertine heritage is prominently featured in its communications to students and the public. The [Living Norbertine webpage](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680172) provides a glimpse into the College’s tradition and heritage, including the Norbertine tradition of engaging in common prayer, practicing communio, various service-learning programs, as well as exposing the community to SNC’s unique background and traditions.

SNC enables student development by nurturing a community of learners inspired by Norbertine traditions, as evident in SNC’s strong focus on in-person learning, supplemented by online learning opportunities when appropriate. The College’s [Core Curriculum](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680167) offers students an array of skills, knowledge and learning experiences, enabling them to function effectively in a complex and rapidly changing world. The educational philosophy of the College’s founder — “to perfect the personal, moral, and intellectual development of each student” — remains unchanged despite increasing technological modernization in all aspects of campus life.

2.B.2 - The institution ensures evidence is available to support any claims it makes regarding its contributions to the educational experience through research, community engagement, experiential learning, religious or spiritual purpose and economic development.

OIE produces and provides access to documents demonstrating evidence in the assessment of student learning and mission effectiveness, including several [student and alumni surveys](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680211) assessing student satisfaction and tracking [learning outcomes](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680240), career data and graduate study. OIE collects, analyzes and reports institutional data and houses an archive of prior research studies. Its website documents compliance with HLC [accreditation](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680216) standards. OIE manages links to all information related to the last Comprehensive Review in fall 2011, as well as more recent reports (Year 4 Assurance Review in 2015, the interim 2017 report, and an archive of all previous self-study documents and visits dating back to the 1960s).

The College offers numerous opportunities for students to engage in meaningful research. The [Collaborative Center for Undergraduate Research](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680215) offers fall, spring and summer [research grants](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680239) for student-faculty [collaborations](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680224), as well as [travel grants](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680228) for students to attend the [National Conference on Undergraduate Research (NCUR)](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680227) and other conferences and competitions. [Exit surveys](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680229) assess program success and perceived outcomes.

A Research Fellowship [program](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680233) pairs incoming students with a professor for a research project during the student’s first two years on campus. These projects address a wide range of topics. The application process requires only the student’s résumé, an essay, and an interview with the project sponsor.

 The Center for Business and Economic Analysis (CBEA) [employs student researchers](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680230), enabling them to gain practical, hands-on experience. The CBEA partners with external agencies on [projects](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680231) such as economic-impact studies and leading-indicator analyses, in addition to offering [consulting services](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680217).

SNC promotes students’ religious and spiritual development through numerous co-curricular activities. The St. Norbert College Parish offers a variety of personal and professional development opportunities, including participation in various outreach ministries and [engagement in spiritual growth activities](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680237) (pastor’s [email](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680238)). The [Emmaus Center](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680218) coordinates retreat opportunities and offers spiritual resources, programs and events on faith formation and vocational development. A [Peer Ministry](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680235) program coordinates activities in residence halls and the local community, enabling students to foster their own spiritual well-being and that of their peers. The ALIVE ministry conducts [annual assessments](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680232) of its programming, including [surveys and steps](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680226) for improvement.

The [First-Year Experience](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680236) introduces incoming students to community service early in their academic careers. With [Into the Streets](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680234), a one-day event prior to the semester’s start, students volunteer with community partners. These volunteers and partners [complete a survey](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680212) assessing the value of this experience.

In living out communio, [residential service programs](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680214) offer opportunities for students to develop a commitment to working for social justice within the local community. For instance, sophomores living in Michels Hall complete 30 hours of service and participate in two reflection seminars sponsored by the Emmaus Center.

Collaborating with the Emmaus Center, the [Sturzl Center](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680213) coordinates programs promoting the Norbertine ideal of loving service. They include [TRIPS](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680219), an alternative semester-break service program offering students opportunities for travel to rural, urban and international settings to apply their skills and values in serving others. Prior to Covid-19, TRIPS averaged 147 participants annually, and organizers expect a return to that level of involvement as the pandemic subsides.

Each January, a committee organizes the [Martin Luther King Jr. celebration](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680225), in which community members volunteer at local charities, schools and social welfare organizations. In 2023, the formerly named Day of Service expanded to a full week when students returned to campus for spring semester.

The [Cassandra Voss Center](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680222) provides innovative [programming](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680223) to create campus and community awareness of [gender, diversity and social justice](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680220). Examples are the many well-attended events in its [UNinvisible](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680221) series that featured scholars, artists and change agents whose work focuses on the identity and visibility of often silenced voices.

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## 2.C - Core Component 2.C

The governing board of the institution is autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution in compliance with board policies and to ensure the institution’s integrity.

1. The governing board is trained and knowledgeable so that it makes informed decisions with respect to the institution’s financial and academic policies and practices; the board meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.
2. The governing board’s deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.
3. The governing board reviews the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution’s internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.
4. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties.
5. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the institution’s administration and expects the institution’s faculty to oversee academic matters.

### Argument

2.C.1 - The governing board is trained and knowledgeable so that it makes informed decisions with respect to the institution’s financial and academic policies and practices; the board meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.

The Board of Trustees includes respected community and business leaders, accomplished alumni and Norbertine priests, all upholding the mission of St. Norbert College. The [by-laws](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680246) outline the policies and procedures to which the board adheres.

As stated in the board [Policy Manual](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680248), as well as in materials commonly presented during [retreats](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680245) and [orientation](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680247) sessions, the College’s Norbertine sponsors granted the Board of Trustees authority to govern the College with the following responsibilities: (1) to hold the College to its [mission](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680244) and purpose; (2) to ensure the College’s financial integrity and to protect its assets; (3) to support fundraising efforts; (4) to select, advise and evaluate the College’s president; (5) to assess and improve the board’s practices and performance; (6) to strengthen the board’s collective procedures and decision-making; and (7) to participate in the College’s strategic planning process.

New trustees participate in orientation sessions focusing on governance, mission, trustee duties and current issues and challenges. Every other year, a board retreat allows trustees to consider the College’s strategic future. As is customary in many colleges sponsored by religious orders, the Norbertines retain certain reserved powers (by-laws Section III). These powers reserve primary authority to uphold the College mission, align property and financial decisions with relevant Canon law, approve and remove trustees, change bylaws, dissolve the corporation, ensure proper management at a high level, and approve and/or remove the president.

2.C.2 - The governing board’s deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.

The [by-laws](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1680246) (General Powers, Article IV, Section 1) state that the board “shall constitute the policy-making body” of the institution and specify the board’s responsibility shall be exercised “in a manner consistent with the College's mission.”

The board meets three times annually on the campus. During and following COVID, however, some meetings were virtual or accommodated virtual participation. Recent board meeting agendas reflect significant focus on mission, enrollment and finances (e.g., discussions of [financial campaigns](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680253), mission and identity, a review of [potential budget shortfalls and policies in response to the pandemic](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680252), ongoing conversations about [first-year retention)](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680251) and approving [major partnerships with institutions](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680254) such as the Medical College of Wisconsin and the Green Bay Area K-12 Catholic Schools.

2.C.3 - The governing board reviews the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution’s internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.

The [by-laws](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1680246) (Article IV, Section 2) discuss board composition, including specific requirements for representation by Norbertine priests and alumni. A recently modified and improved committee structure ([Article XII](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1680246)) enables the board to exercise its responsibilities including through an Executive Committee and standing committees with particular functions. The committees consider both internal matters and other matters related to each committee’s purpose and goals. Committees meet regularly and include campus representatives, except for the Executive and Governance committees.

2.C.4 - The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties.

[Article XIV](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1680246) of the by-laws establishes expectations for board independence by defining conflicts of interest as potential financial, personal or other interests that impair or might reasonably appear to impair any trustee's independent judgment. Trustees disclose potential conflicts and do not vote on matters in which conflicts exist. Every trustee completes the [Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680258) and updates the board chair or president of any changes.

Trustees also receive information as to the specific powers reserved by the Norbertine order and discussions with the sponsor regarding future planning are ongoing. Additional examples of board independence include:

* The Enterprise Risk Management program evaluates potential threats to SNC. Risk information is updated for trustees regularly.
* The recent reorganization serves to better meet the board’s governance responsibilities and address emerging trends in higher education. For example, all trustees serve on either the Finance or Academic Affairs committees to more fully understand SNC’s core business operations and educational enterprise.
* Board representatives (Audit and Finance committees) meet annually in executive session with the auditors to discuss SNC’s financial performance.
* Standard executive sessions are held at board and committee meetings.

2.C.5 - The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the institution’s administration and expects the institution’s faculty to oversee academic matters.

The by-laws ([Article IV, Section 1)](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1680246) state that the board “enacts rules and regulations pertaining to the faculty, student life, curriculum, and the establishment or discontinuance of majors or academic programs.” Day-to-day management is delegated to the president and from the president to vice presidents in appropriate areas.

[Article VIII](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1680246) states that the president is the College’s chief executive officer and educational administrative leader and “shall exercise a general superintendence over all affairs of the institution and bring such matters to the attention of the board as are appropriate to keep the board fully informed in meeting its policy-making responsibilities.”

The board ([Article IV](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1680246), Section 1 (k)) selects, evaluates, continues or removes the president of the College with the Abbot’s Council’s approval.

According to the Faculty Handbook section on [faculty responsibilities](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680263), the faculty holds primary responsibility for curriculum, the matter and methods of instruction, research, faculty status, aspects of student life related to the educational process, and for setting and determining degree requirements. This responsibility is subject to the final authority of the board or as delegated to the president.

The board expects faculty to oversee Academic Affairs as noted in [Article XII](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1680246), Section 7. Following their development and review by the faculty and academic administration, the board’s Academic Committee reviews and recommends to the board academic policies and degree programs.

As a body, the faculty governs itself apart from the board. It is an assembled body led by an elected chair. At present, the faculty is not a representative body but reserves all voting to meetings of the faculty as a whole. This model is under active discussion by several faculty members and groups.

Despite the high level of care and compliance described above, during 2019, the relationship between the board and College administrative leadership (and, by extension, its faculty and staff) was severely tested — but then rebuilt.

Between 2017 and 2019, considerable concern had arisen on the campus about SNC’s handling of Title IX complaints and the alleged influence and actions, or lack thereof, of the then-vice president of Mission and Student Affairs in addressing or resolving them. Faculty, staff and students asked that the division be split (as it had been prior to 2012, with separate Student Affairs and Mission and Heritage divisions). This request was based on the belief that the conjoined structure was contributing to Title IX issues and complaints, and that the two areas would be stronger and more effective with leaders specializing in them. At the same time, intensified calls to reshape the leadership, policies and procedures for Title IX matters were growing, along with considerable and subsequently lingering concern that the underlying issues had not, in the view of many, been sufficiently addressed.

In January 2020, after a sabbatical by the vice president in question took the individual away from campus, the president split the [Mission and Student Affairs](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680262) areas again. An initial search for a permanent vice president for Student Affairs was suspended during Covid-19. In August 2020, a Norbertine priest and highly respected faculty member accepted the position of special assistant to the president for mission, a Cabinet-level post. A new vice president for Student Affairs was hired in 2021.

Amid this climate of unrest and uncertainty, President Brian Bruess announced in fall 2019 that he “would not seek renewal of his contract,” indicating he would “complete this academic year, follow through on our collective agenda to be a nationally recognized Catholic liberal arts college, and provide steady and faithful support to the Board of Trustees in the search” for his successor. The overwhelming response of the College community was surprise and sadness, and it quickly rallied in vigorous support for President Bruess to stay.

Support for the president continued over the next few weeks. During an emergency meeting, the faculty approved a motion “call[ing] upon the Board of Trustees to reopen negotiations with President Brian Bruess, with the aim of developing a mutually acceptable continuing contract.” These motions were shared with the Board of Trustees. A [letter from the faculty](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680261) to the Board, dated November 19, 2019, also expressed support for the president. The [Staff Association](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680266), [President’s Cabinet](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680268), President’s Advisory Council, Alumni Board, and various alumni and friends of the College sent letters as well.

In late November, the Board notified the College community that it had approved a multi-year contract extension for President Bruess. The trustees expressed their gratitude for the outpouring of support for the College and for the president’s leadership and committed to move forward with the president, expressing a shared vision for the future of the College grounded in its Catholic, Norbertine and liberal arts traditions. At the same time, several trustees resigned, including the board chair, and widespread confusion remained as to what was behind any sentiment against the president, or why.

In early December, the Board announced that a Norbertine priest trustee had been elected to serve as the board chair. This announcement was greeted with widespread enthusiasm, as the new chair had strong personal and professional relationships in the years he had spent leading the Center for Norbertine Studies.

The Board and the president thereafter focused on the need for intensified education regarding appropriate governance and management relationships. [Several discussions of shared governance](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680267), role clarification, and effective and appropriate communication have characterized conversations between the Board and the College’s leadership since 2019. Changes to the [by-laws](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680265), term limits, board membership, selection processes for chair and vice chair, committee assignments, presidential evaluation process, meeting protocols, and Board orientation and assessment changes reflect SNC’s evolving culture of generative governance.

To a degree, these changes helped repair the mistrust resulting from that difficult time. Although suspicion and skepticism undoubtedly remain, the relationships among the board, the Norbertine sponsor, the College’s administrative leadership, faculty, staff, students and alumni are currently viewed as improving, albeit in need of ongoing work.

### Sources

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* 230733\_PRES\_Meeting Material\_Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes\_2020-05-18
* 230734\_PRES\_Meeting Material\_Board of Trustees Minutes\_2018-05-14
* 230735\_PRES\_Meeting Material\_Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes\_2019-02-08
* 230849\_PRES\_Resource\_The By-Laws of St. Norbert College\_2021-05-01
* 230904\_PRES\_Resource\_Restated By-Laws of St. Norbert College\_2022-08-10
* 230932\_AA\_Resource\_The Faculty Handbook- Faculty Responsibilities\_2022-06-01
* 231124\_PRES\_Meeting Material\_Trustee Orientation\_2021-10-13
* 231125\_PRES\_Meeting Material\_Fall 2021 Board Retreat\_2021-10-13
* 231202\_ADV\_Data\_Support What Matters Campaign Report\_2021-02-10
* 231243\_PRES\_E-Communications\_Organizational Update\_2020-01-17
* 231245\_AA\_Resource\_Letter Supported by Faculty to Board of Trustees\_2019-11-19
* 231246\_SA\_Resource\_Staff Association Letter to Trustees\_2022-08-15
* 231247\_PRES\_Meeting Material\_Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes\_2020-02-07
* 231370\_PRES\_Resource\_Board Policy Manual\_2022-09-01
* 231374\_PRES\_Resource\_Board of Trustees Letters\_2019-10-31

## 2.D - Core Component 2.D

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

### Argument

The Faculty Handbook [Statement on Academic Freedom](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680270) articulates SNC’s commitment to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning. The faculty [ratified this statement](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680270) in 2004 with board approval following. The Faculty Handbook also includes an [Academic Freedom for Campus Speakers](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680271) Policy, holding that campus speakers or officially sponsored programs are acceptable if they support “the encouragement of free and fearless inquiry and freedom of expression.” A 2022 refinement of this [policy](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680272) provides additional clarification on processes for welcoming speakers on campus, deemed particularly important within the current climate of public, religious and social polarization.

[The Citizen](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680274) reflects a similar commitment, informing students that SNC “values lifelong learning and approaching violations of campus expectations through the lens of learning and community (Page 4)” and obligating all to “preserve an atmosphere conducive to the freedom to teach and learn (Page 9).”

Both SNC’s [Liberal Arts](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680273) and [Catholic Identity Statements](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680269) address the principle of academic freedom. The Liberal Arts Statement encourages the “search for truth through dialogue,” and the Catholic Identity Statement affirms that the Catholic tradition “values intellectual curiosity” and “welcomes all views into the conversation, appreciating the contributions of diverse backgrounds, commitments and experiences.”

As a Catholic institution, SNC is informed by the Catholic Intellectual Tradition, integrating faith and reason in the search for truth through its array of programs and lectures, often focusing on current issues where diverse and sometimes contentious spectra of opinion reign (see 1.B.1 for examples).

SNC’s commitment to freedom of expression on the campus sometimes results in conflict. Like most colleges, SNC has received complaints about certain speakers or performances. In responding, SNC emphasizes respect for multiple perspectives and divergent opinions and their important contributions to a robust learning culture. SNC also views such complaints as opportunities to live its mission to honor the dignity of every person and create communities of mutual respect. Examples of recent notable speakers include Bishop John Stowe and Father Bryan Massingale, prominent speakers on LGBTQ inclusion and racial justice, respectively, and a residency by author bell hooks. Speakers invited through various academic centers showcase SNC’s belief in dialogue as the preferred path to mature learning.

### Sources

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* 230183\_MS\_Resource\_SNC Catholic Identity Statement\_2020-12-11
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* 230907\_SA\_Resource\_The Citizen- The Code of Student Life for St. Norbert College\_2022-01-01
* 230933\_AA\_Resource\_The Faculty Handbook- Academic Freedom\_2022-06-01
* 231337\_AA\_Resource\_Campus Speaker Policy\_2022-10-27

## 2.E - Core Component 2.E

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

1. Institutions supporting basic and applied research maintain professional standards and provide oversight ensuring regulatory compliance, ethical behavior and fiscal accountability.
2. The institution provides effective support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff and students.
3. The institution provides students guidance in the ethics of research and use of information resources.
4. The institution enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

### Argument

Acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge are at the heart of higher education where faculty teach and engage in scholarship. They do so in a responsible manner, guided by the AAUP [Statement on Professional Ethics](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680275), published in the Faculty Handbook. Faculty are also guided by SNC policies on the ethical conduct of research.

Students acquire knowledge, integrate and apply it in an ethically responsible manner, both in and outside the classroom. Students receive structured and relevant guidance in the ethical use of information, as well as training, support and oversight in the conduct of research. Appropriate processes and policies ensure ethical conduct.

2.E.1 - Institutions supporting basic and applied research maintain professional standards and provide oversight ensuring regulatory compliance, ethical behavior and fiscal accountability.

SNC upholds the ethical practice of research by faculty, staff and students to maintain compliance with all federal regulations governing research integrity, including those applicable to misconduct in science and in research involving human participants or animals.

The [Institutional Review Board (IRB)](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680279) maintains ongoing registration with the Department of Health and Human Services ([renewed](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1680280) through February 2024). SNC also holds [Federalwide Assurance](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1680277) for its IRB. Both registrations are prerequisites for federally funded research eligibility. Prior IRB approval is required for any local or federally funded research involving human participants. [Annual IRB reports](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1680282) are submitted to the faculty chair.

The [Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC)](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1680281) ensures research integrity involving animal subjects, abiding by [federal regulations](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1680283) governing animal research and filing [annual reports](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1680284) documenting its work. Policies addressing research misconduct strengthen oversight of ethical research practice. See [Principles and Procedures Governing Research](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1680286) (Faculty Handbook) and those listed in the [Research Misconduct Policy](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1680285) (under revision).

Other mechanisms ensuring the integrity of research and scholarly practice include documenting, when appropriate, IRB or IACUC approval on applications seeking funds from the [Summer Grant Program](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1680287) and the [St. Norbert Collaborative](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1680278) [Center for Undergraduate Research](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1680288).

2.E.2 -The institution provides effective support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff and students.

Additional support to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly activities includes education concerning research ethics. To be eligible to submit proposals for IRB review, for example, applicants complete an [online research ethics tutorial](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1680290). Research ethics are covered in required research methods courses in several academic programs where students complete an independent empirical research project and apply for IRB review.

The [Writing Center](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1680293) assists students seeking guidance on appropriate documentation within written work, by providing [consultations](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1680292) and [writing resources](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1680291) such as the Purdue Online Writing Lab.

Finally, faculty and staff have numerous campus and other external opportunities to participate in professional development to enhance their research and scholarly practice. Limited funding supports these efforts.

2.E.3 -The institution provides students guidance in the ethics of research and use of information resources.

SNC also guides students in the ethical use of traditional and digital information resources. The Library offers extensive [research assistance resources](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1680297), including assistance from an information literacy librarian. [Workshops](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1680299) cover topics such as information literacy and use of archival or historical materials. The Library website features [subject-specific databases](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1680296) and [user guides](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1680297). Students visiting the [Research Center](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1680295) receive individual assistance or may visit the [Writing Center](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1680300) for peer-to-peer guidance. Ethical use of information resources appears in the Academic Honor Code published in [The Citizen](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1680298) (Page 11).

2.E.4 -The institution enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

To assist faculty in addressing academic misconduct and to ensure consistency in policy application, SNC recently revamped its Academic Honor Code ([2021 flow chart](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1680307)), Faculty Handbook ([Section III: 10.1](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1680303) ) and [Registrar’s website](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1680306).

[The Citizen](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1680298) includes the Academic Honor Code and a definition of academic misconduct. Students sign a [pledge](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1680305) each semester, and syllabi describe how the Honor Code applies to each course.

The [Academic Honor Board](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1680304) enforces the Honor Code. Elected students and faculty serve as an Honor Board pool for an academic year, and published procedures are scrupulously followed. If a student is suspected of academic misconduct, the Honor Code calls for a conference between the student and professor. A facilitator helps guide them toward a satisfactory resolution. If a resolution is not attained, or the student has had a previous case of proven academic misconduct, the case is referred to an Academic Honor Board. All decisions are conveyed to the appropriate administrator, who publicly reports anonymous [complaints and sanctions](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1680302) each semester.

### Sources

* 230149\_AA\_Website\_The Collaborative Mission\_2021-01-25
* 230188\_AA\_Resource\_Faculty Handbook AAUP Statement on Professional Ethics\_2020-12-11
* 230829\_AA\_Website\_Registrar- St. Norbert College Academic Honor Code\_2020-11-21
* 230830\_AA\_Website\_Registrar- St. Norbert College Academic Honor Code Pledge\_2020-11-21
* 230831\_AA\_Website\_Registrar- The Academic Honor Board\_2020-11-21
* 230907\_SA\_Resource\_The Citizen- The Code of Student Life for St. Norbert College\_2022-01-01
* 230934\_AA\_Website\_Institutional Review Board\_2022-08-11
* 230936\_AA\_Resource\_U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Registration of an Institutional Review Board\_2022-02-28
* 230937\_AA\_Resource\_U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Institutional Review Board Information\_2021-02-09
* 230938\_AA\_Meeting Material\_Faculty Meeting Agenda\_2022-04-26
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* 230942\_AA\_Resource\_The Faculty Handbook- Additional Principles and Procedures Governing Research at St. Norbert College\_2022-06-01
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* 230944\_AA\_E-Communications\_2022 Faculty Development Summer Grants Program\_2022-08-11
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* 230952\_AA\_Website\_Writing Center- Writing Resources\_2022-06-13
* 230954\_AA\_Website\_Writing Center- What Happens During a Consultation\_2022-06-13
* 230961\_AA\_Resource\_Faculty Handbook- Academic Honor Code\_2022-06-01
* 230963\_AA\_Data\_Honor Code Statistics History\_2022-08-11
* 231219\_AA\_Resource\_St. Norbert College Academic Honor Code\_2022-08-14
* 231253\_AA\_Website\_Guides for Users\_2022-12-15
* 231255\_AA\_Website\_Research Center\_2022-12-15
* 231256\_AA\_Website\_Subject Specific Database\_2022-12-15
* 231257\_AA\_Website\_Workshops\_2022-12-15
* 231258\_AA\_Website\_Writing Center\_2022-12-15

## 2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

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

### Summary

**Accomplishments**

1. SNC’s policies and practices concerning institutional integrity are consistent with its mission.
2. Explicitly articulated and rigorously followed, SNC policies on financial, debt, investment, spending, cash and fundraising ensure integrity.
3. Explicitly articulated and rigorously followed, SNC policies guide academic functions and practices.
4. There are explicitly articulated and rigorously followed Human Resources policies regarding employment, anti-discrimination and the management of conflict or disputes.
5. SNC’s auxiliary enterprises adhere to financial best-practice policies.
6. SNC communicates effectively and transparently through its website and through other communication modes to students, prospective students, faculty and staff, and to all relevant constituent groups concerning matters that affect them.
7. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness collects, stores, analyzes and reports accurate and transparent data concerning key matters affecting students, faculty, staff and the public.
8. SNC follows best-practice recommendations and regulations regarding ethics and integrity in research by its faculty, staff and students.
9. SNC embraces, supports and defends the generally accepted principles of academic freedom.

**Work in Progress**

1. SNC is working to clarify expectations and continually deepen and improve the relationships among the interconnected segments of its governance structure, including the sponsoring Norbertine order, the Board of Trustees, and the College’s president, administration and faculty.
2. SNC is working to clarify and improve its internal policies and practices concerning conflict and dispute resolution.
3. A significant number of faculty are working to revise the current system of faculty governance to enable faculty to better participate in SNC’s shared governance.
4. There is ongoing work with the Abbey and the Green Bay Diocese to expand and deepen understanding and expressions of governance and mission and to build relationships.

**On the Horizon**

1. Intensified focus on clarifying expectations regarding required Board of Trustees autonomy within a legal and canonical structure where the sponsoring religious order retains certain reserved powers.
2. Improving the understanding and commitment of lay trustees to the future governance of SNC, including formation around emerging sponsorship models.
3. Development of clearer and simpler modes of addressing conflict and disputes at every level, while holding firmly to SNC’s belief in the principles concerning respectful interaction as a primary institutional expression of its identity as a Catholic college.

### Sources

There are no sources.

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

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

## 3.A - Core Component 3.A

The rigor of the institution’s academic offerings is appropriate to higher education.

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

### Argument

3.A.1 - Courses and programs are current and require levels of student performance appropriate to the credential awarded.

SNC ensures that its programs and courses are current and that they require appropriate levels of student performance. All degree programs require courses ranging from introductory to upper-level, many culminating with [capstone projects](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681763). Course enrollment often requires prerequisites, published in [course-planning paradigms](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681762) on the Advisement webpage and in the [catalog](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681793) (e.g., [Accounting paradigm](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681761) and [accompanying course descriptions](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681769)). The [online registration system](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681764) prevents enrollment in courses for which prerequisites are not met. Appropriate performance [requires](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681760) a minimum cumulative grade-point average of 2.0 overall and similar cumulative GPA requirements in the major field(s).

Additionally, every degree program files an [assessment plan](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681791) noting expected learning outcomes, when they will be assessed, and what performance indicators and methodology will be employed (e.g., [Accounting](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681785)).

To earn a bachelor’s degree, students complete both [Core Curriculum](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681780) and the [major](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681760) requirements. Lower-level Core Curriculum courses develop writing, research and oral communication skills; improve creative and critical thinking; and emphasize the value of a liberal arts education. Upper-level Core courses advance skills in the synthesis and integration of different methods, perspectives or ideas; the ability to summon existing knowledge to create new connections, approaches or intellectual expressions; engagement in critical reflection on various information sources; communication of learning using various modes of substantive response; and the evaluation of concepts, principles and techniques outside of the classroom, and their use to predict results or propose solutions.

Further evidence that programs are current and appropriate is apparent through student performance in internship or field settings, external and nationally normed examinations, and public exhibitions and performances.

Required field experiences enhance several programs, including [Education and Geology](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681768) majors who engage in intensive fieldwork. Internships are also required for [Women’s and Gender Studies and Theatre](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681766). In all programs, students apply knowledge and skills in real-world settings, with performance mirroring that required for entry-level postgraduate employment. SNC has established [internship protocols](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681765) for employer collaboration to ensure standards are met or exceeded. For example, student members of the [Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681787) have received national recognition for their efforts.

Several degree programs require summative assessments. As examples, [Education](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681771) and [Mathematics](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681770) students take an externally developed, nationally normed or internally developed end-of-program assessment. Summative assessments are also employed in [Biology, Geology, Political Science and Psychology](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681767), among others.

External assessments are noteworthy because SNC assesses performance against normative student data from other institutions. Internally developed assessments align well with the SNC curriculum and often result in curricular changes to improve student learning.

Other programs, including [Art](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681773), [Music](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681774) and [Theatre](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681772), support students in [public exhibitions](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681788) of their work. In [Education](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681782), [Nursing](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681775) and [Military Studies](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681776), external standards help establish degree requirements. In [Accounting](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681779), students leverage external standards to position themselves for immediate professional success. The Schneider School of Business and Economics is actively seeking [accreditation by AACSB](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681781) for its undergraduate and MBA programs. Where external processes do not exist, other assessment modalities help evaluate and enhance program quality (e.g., in [History](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681778) and the [Honors Program](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681777)). Other disciplines rely primarily on internal program review and guidance by the [Curriculum and Educational Policy Committee (CEPC)](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681786).

[Postgraduate employment](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681789) and [graduate school admission data](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681790) offer evidence that courses and programs are current and program outcomes are appropriate. [Evidence](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681792) suggests that alumni who pursue graduate and professional school education at well-regarded institutions are successful and find appropriate employment. The College’s exceedingly low loan default rate (1.6 percent) also suggests that postgraduate success in employment is largely unhampered by debt.

3.A.2 - The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for its undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate and certificate programs.

Academic programs are evaluated on a rolling [five-year cycle](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681813) (see 4.A.4) to ensure learning outcomes vary in depth, align with requirements and meet appropriate curricular benchmarks. Guidelines encourage academic disciplines to compare themselves to peer and aspirant programs. The review process examines assessment findings, ensuring that evidence of learning is monitored. Further, this process is collaborative and public, involving discussion among faculty and critique and feedback by CEPC members.

The College has intensified its focus on establishing program review consistency and enhancing effectiveness. In 2020, the [faculty endorsed](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681816) new [College-Wide Learning Outcomes](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681815) ([Pages 2-3 Faculty Meeting minutes](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681816)) and created [specific learning outcomes and assessment plans](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681809) for degree programs. A significant catalyst for these efforts was SNC’s participation in HLC’s Assessment Academy (2016-2020) (see 4.B).

Undergraduates must earn at least 128 credits, with a minimum of 40 credits in the major and a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or higher. Students may pursue a [minor](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681760) requiring at least 24 credits and a 2.0 GPA. Student learning outcomes and accompanying assessment plans for each program are developed by faculty and based on best practices and relevant external standards before being posted on the [Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) website](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681809).

When a new major or change to an existing major is proposed, a [Faculty Handbook](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681795) process is followed (i.e., approval by the appropriate discipline(s) or interdisciplinary committee and the appropriate dean). New academic majors or minors, indeed any transcriptable curricula, are also approved by CEPC, the vice president for Academic Affairs, the faculty and the Board of Trustees.

To complement and enhance its academic program offerings, SNC offers several interdisciplinary majors and minors. For example, [Data Analytics](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681818) engages faculty from Business, Computer Science, Economics and Mathematics. International Studies majors study political science, economics, environmental science, geography, theology, history and modern languages to complete the [major](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681819). A recent Curriculum [(re)Design Grant](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681817) allowed International Studies faculty to integrate the curriculum with SNC’s diversity efforts. An external panel reviewed their work and offered both useful feedback and high praise.

Interdisciplinary minors in [Classical, Medieval and Renaissance Studies](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681802); [Leadership](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681803); [Peace and Justice](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681804); and [Women’s and Gender Studies](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681805) almost always require learning in varied disciplines. To think effectively about gender, for example, a student must look historically, analyze philosophically and employ the resources of sociology. To understand the medieval world, students must study theology, literature, history, philosophy and languages. These programs employ a variety of assessment approaches, including cross-disciplinary faculty review and approval from the appropriate deans.

Academic certificates establish appropriate goals, including content competency and/or preparation for state or national requirements. SNC offers certificates in [Modern Languages](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681808) for students demonstrating intermediate-level proficiency and a [Pre-Law Certificate](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681811) for students considering a law degree. The [Teacher Education program](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681820) fulfills external requirements for Wisconsin licensure in a variety of K-12 specialties, and the [Social Work Training Certificate](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681812) meets Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services requirements.

The College offers three graduate programs: [master’s degrees in Liberal Studies (MLS)](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681799), [Business Administration (MBA)](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681801) and [Theological Studies (MTS)](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1681797). Learning outcomes are both distinct from undergraduate learning outcomes and appropriately informed by relevant professional organizations. For example, MTS learning outcomes are discipline specific, and [degree](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681807) requirements are distinct from [undergraduate](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681810) requirements. MLS membership in the [Association for Graduate Liberal Arts Studies Programs](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681814) provides benchmarks for program quality and rigor. Graduate-student learning outcomes are available on the [OIE website](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681809).

SNC also offers an intensive accredited, multi-level and noncredit [English as a Second Language](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681821) program. A [partnership with Bellin College](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681775) allows students to complete foundational courses in a liberal arts environment before they transfer to complete a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing. The [Military Science/ROTC Program](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681776) adheres to national standards set by the U.S. Army.

3.A.3 -The institution’s program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements, or any other modality).

SNC engages primarily in face-to-face learning, [enhanced by technology](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681823), while offering a few fully online courses (mainly during summer and winter J-term and breaks). During the pandemic-affected 2020-21 academic year, SNC offered face-to-face, hybrid and fully online classes. To date, most [faculty](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681824) and students prefer face-to-face learning as embodying the richest form of learning and [relationship-building](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681826).

Students in the [Nursing Partnership Program](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681775) complete Core Curriculum requirements on the SNC campus. [Graduate students in Theological Studies](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681825) who take classes at the Norbertine abbey in New Mexico adhere to the same criteria as those attending on the main campus. [College Jumpstart Program](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681828) courses, where high-school students complete college classes at their schools, follow the same syllabus, complete parallel assignments and meet the same learning outcomes as their undergraduate counterparts.

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## 3.B - Core Component 3.B

The institution offers programs that engage students in collecting, analyzing and communicating information; in mastering modes of intellectual inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings and degree levels of the institution. The institution articulates the purposes, content and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements.
2. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.
3. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity and provides students with growth opportunities and lifelong skills to live and work in a multicultural world.
4. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their offerings and the institution’s mission.

### Argument

3.B.1 - The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings and degree levels of the institution. The institution articulates the purposes, content and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements.

SNC embodies the [Catholic, Norbertine and liberal arts traditions](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681833), and the [Core Curriculum](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681831) is an essential component of this mission-centric foundation. The College-Wide Learning Outcomes (CWLO, now the [Goals of the Core Curriculum Program](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681830)) provide a range of learning opportunities that develop interpersonal and professional skills, knowledge and application opportunities so students can flourish in a complex, rapidly changing world.

Addressed in both [lower-level and advanced](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681832) courses, these CWLO goals embrace seven themes: Beyond Borders, Catholic Imagination, Difference and Diversity, Expression and Interpretation, Individual and Society, Physical and Natural World, and Western Tradition. Collectively, they seek to create coherent links across the curriculum.

Within the context of the Catholic Intellectual Tradition, the Core Curriculum urges critical examination of the ultimate questions concerning human existence and the dialogue between faith and reason, especially through foundational courses in theology and philosophy. Consistent with the [liberal arts tradition](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681833), the Core develops students' intellectual skills while increasing understanding of the diversity and commonality of human experience. An emphasis on service and personal character development springs from the key Norbertine value of [communio](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681833).

A carefully reasoned rationale supports each Core component, with approval by the [Core Curriculum Committee (CCC)](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681839). [Syllabi](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681840) must align with the [philosophy and goals of the Core Curriculum](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681830) and with state-planned learning outcomes, and must identify specific assignments used to assess progress.

SNC continues to refine and improve its [First-Year Experience](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681834). Beginning with a pilot in fall 2021, the faculty have offered incoming students courses with a [First-Year Seminar](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681836) designation. These entry-level courses introduce students to college-level study, with some satisfying existing Core requirements in an environment that embraces SNC’s values of hospitality and dialogue. Interest in refining and improving this approach is high among faculty and relevant staff, and continues to date.

Every Core course must align with one of the Core’s themes and be [approved](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681838) (e.g., [MUSI 150](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681841)) by the CCC. [Syllabi](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681840) state which program goals the course addresses and identify the [College-Wide Learning Outcomes](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681835) as well as assignments used to assess progress.

3.B.2 - The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students, and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.

The Core Curriculum embraces two broad components: [Foundations and General Core Requirements](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681832). Foundations includes introductory philosophy and theology courses, as well as courses that enhance writing, quantitative reasoning and second-language competency. Strengthened after a 2015-16 program review, the [Writing Across the Curriculum program](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681845) coaches faculty to use writing as an effective strategy for deeper learning, self-critique and consideration of alternate perspectives, while acknowledging these skills are best practiced in courses taken as part of the major. In addition, all Core courses emphasize a writing dimension, more extensively so in 300- and 400-level courses.

Core courses develop knowledge and intellectual sophistication by engaging students in critical thinking, an ability directly aligned with SNC’s [liberal arts tradition](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681833). These requirements (see 3.B.1) are more than distribution requirements. A common thread reveals an emphasis on critical examination of diverse perspectives, values and modes of inquiry. Another common strand emphasizes using knowledge to better understand oneself and others, and to serve one’s local and global communities, consistent with the Norbertine values of communio and stabilitas loci.

3.B.3 - The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity and provides students with growth opportunities and lifelong skills to live and work in a multicultural world.

SNC intentionally [educates students](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681893) about human and cultural diversity. This commitment is most evident in two Core areas: [Beyond Borders](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681899) and [Difference and Diversity](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681897), through which students explore U.S. and global diversity. Diversity’s importance, including the ability to see the world through more than one lens and communicate with others globally, is also evident in the Core’s [second-language competency requirement](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681898). Additionally, one semester of study abroad is required for [Modern Languages](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681847) and [International Studies](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1682090) majors, and a [six-week study abroad experience](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681848) is required for foreign language teaching minors.

Recognizing that individual courses are likely insufficient in providing students with the skills needed to thrive in a multicultural world, SNC initiated a grant program in 2020-21 to encourage [curriculum (re)design](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681900). The program funded faculty stipends for four projects: [English](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681904), [Teacher Education](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681902), [International Studies](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681868) and social justice. In addition, a trustee-funded endowment enables deeper faculty understanding of SNC’s mission, including how it relates to equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging.

SNC’s diversity focus is also evident in other curricular and co-curricular programming. The Center for Global Engagement (CGE) houses study abroad programs, offering 70 different opportunities in 28 countries. Prior to the pandemic, approximately 155 students annually studied abroad, [about 30 percent of each class](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681867). During the most recent [pre-pandemic year](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681903), approximately 2 percent of undergraduate students enrolled at SNC came from 18 countries other than the United States, with higher numbers possible post-pandemic. The CGE also sponsors the [Great Decisions Lecture Series](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681905) on topics of international political, economic and social significance and offers local translation and interpretation services.

In 2021 the College [joined the American Council on Education's (ACE) Internationalization Laboratory cohort](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681916). This experience brings together selected colleges nationwide to enhance international educational opportunities. Over 18 months, the SNC group worked to assess current programs and consider areas to explore, meeting with expert advisors and engaging with the entire cohort. A U.S. State Department [grant](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681915) allowed business students to participate in an international case competition in Mexico. The Increase and Diversify Education Abroad for U.S. Students (IDEAS) Program funded the global-seminar pilot for launch in 2024, with SNC business professors leading the new seminar. This immersive experience will center on economic development and business issues related to U.S.-Mexico relations and include classes, instructional readings, local business briefings and site visits.

The [Cassandra Voss Center](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681908) sponsors numerous [programs and events](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681906) on gender, sexuality, identity and [race](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681907) for the campus and broader community. Similar events are offered through the [Office of Student Inclusion and Belonging](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681919). In addition, 10 student organizations are classified as [diversity, ethnic and cultural organizations](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681912). Additional examples appear in 1.C.

Developing skills to thrive in a multicultural world is an ongoing process requiring positive change and offering opportunities for student growth. Acknowledging the importance of accelerated work in this area, SNC moved toward better meeting its goals of diversity and equity by creating a [Working for Racial Justice](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681864) platform. This platform outlines a vision, strategy and commitment to antiracism. The [dean of curriculum and senior diversity officer](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681849) serves as an [institutional leader](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681913) for curricular integration and for College-wide diversity, equity and [inclusion initiatives](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681920).

Recent and notable EDIB work aligned with mission includes faculty workshops focused on incorporating equity, diversity and inclusion components into all courses, campus participation in the [annual Coming Out Week](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681911), and faculty and staff participation in [anti-racism workshops](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681865) and [SafeColleges](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681866). For example, in 2021 and 2022 numerous faculty and staff shared [letters of care and support](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681917) for student members of the LGBTQIA+ community during Coming Out Week and through LGBTQ Becoming an Ally workshops. SNC also responded institutionally to the Black Lives Matter movement in multiple ways through classroom and other methods, including dialogue, prayer services, listening sessions and rallies.

SNC’s athletic program teaches valuable “whole person development” skills outside the classroom, engaging approximately one-third of all undergraduates (600 students) as student-athletes, and featuring programming and partnerships that strongly support whole-person development (see [recent athletic director report](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681918)).

3.B.4 -The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their offerings and the institution’s mission.

Faculty and student research, scholarship and creative output are highly valued at SNC, with sustained interaction between teaching and scholarship at the heart of the Catholic intellectual and liberal arts traditions ([examples](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681935)). Meaningful scholarly activity is essential for faculty [tenure and promotion](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681949), with faculty also describing scholarly accomplishments during regular pre-tenure [evaluations](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681949). Scholarship evaluation, especially for promotion and tenure, is informed by scholarship statements in each discipline. These [discipline-specific statements](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681954) vary appropriately across academic disciplines and align faculty scholarly work with the mission.

SNC supports the creation and dissemination of faculty scholarship and creative work through [multiple avenues](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681948) including [sabbaticals](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681938), funding for faculty conference travel and faculty development [Summer Grants](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681931).

Faculty also access [Digital Fellows and mini-grants](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681942) for technology-related research, [mini-grants](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681939) for social justice projects, and [Collaborative Research Grants](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681936) for faculty and undergraduate research. [Additional programs](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681947) include the [Writing Across the Curriculum Fellows](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681950), the [Intergroup Dialogue and Equity Faculty Cohort](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681951), [Faculty Fellows for Community Engagement](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681952), Honors Program Faculty Fellows and Global Fellows programs.

These opportunities enhance faculty capacity to create, research, publish and attend conferences and professional development programs. SNC also [recognizes](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681933) a select number of deserving faculty each year.

SNC also supports student-faculty collaborative scholarship and creative activity, and students have numerous opportunities to participate in [high-impact practices](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681937) through research and [capstone courses](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681932). As examples, several students ([1](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681943), [2](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681940), [3](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681944)) were interviewed about their experiences with undergraduate research. Student creative work is also presented to both the College and community via [exhibitions](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681934) and [recitals](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683351).

SNC’s Institutional Repository ([Digital Commons](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681945)) and social media platforms provide evidence of faculty and student scholarship and creative work. In addition, [professional accomplishments](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681955) regularly appear in [St. Norbert College Magazine](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681956). Collaborative research receives recognition at local, regional and national academic conferences, [as does individual student work](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681935). During [board Academic Committee](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681953) meetings, faculty accomplishments are often reported to the trustees.

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## 3.C - Core Component 3.C

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

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

### Argument

3.C.1 - The institution strives to ensure that the overall composition of its faculty and staff reflects human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

[Since its last accreditation](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681958), the College has sought to [increase diversity in faculty and staff hires](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681964), honoring mission imperatives regarding the dignity of all persons and the call to dialogue about diverse cultures, perspectives and beliefs. Traditionally, [employee racial/ethnic demographics](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681961) have mirrored those of the predominantly white [student population](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681960). Although gender data for [student](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681962) and [faculty/staff populations](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681961) indicate higher female representation in both sectors, in prior years SNC’s senior leaders have historically been male. Over the past five years, however, significant and successful efforts have diversified the College’s leadership, including the recent hire of SNC’s first female president. The President’s Cabinet has moved from an entirely male entity to one evenly split between men and women. Higher-level administrators and staff include an increasing percentage of people of color and those with marginalized gender identities.

Historically, SNC has struggled with creating a diversified workforce. Recent steps towards this goal include advancing diversity in talent management; encouraging a diverse applicant pool ([human resources website](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681963)); and using the [Hiring for Mission Guide](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681959) during the interview process. The 2016-2021 [Strategic Plan](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681958) and the current plan note that SNC’s ability to attract and retain women and people of color among college leaders and faculty would serve as an important indicator of human diversity success. Although a [small percentage increase](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681965) has occurred in the number of women and faculty of color tenured, the College has much more work to do in this area.

3.C.2 - The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance, assessment of student learning and establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff.

SNC fosters students’ intellectual, personal and spiritual development, primarily through substantive interactions between students and faculty. Recent [data](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681965) report a student-to-faculty ratio of 12.7:1 and an [average class size](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681967) of 19. This ratio exceeds the 2010 Strategic Plan target goal of 13:1. Even with budget concerns, 12 tenure-track and one non-tenure-track faculty were hired in 2020, and six tenure-track and four non-tenure-track faculty in 2021.

SNC maintains a history of robust faculty governance, a tradition still readily evident. Every academic program, including programs related to [service learning](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681971), [faculty-student collaboration](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681969) and the [Jumpstart](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681970) Program, is administered by appropriately credentialed teaching staff. Assessment of student learning is a faculty-driven endeavor. Individual major, minor and certificate programs articulate learning goals and implement clear assessment plans, with OIE staff and the Assessment Committee playing appropriate roles. Two important committees, the [Core Curriculum Committee and the Curriculum and Educational Policy Committee](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681968), include a significant percentage of full-time faculty. Membership is widely regarded as offering opportunities for significant contributions to SNC.

3.C.3 - All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual-credit, contractual and consortial offerings.

At present, [96 percent of full-time faculty](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681975) hold a doctorate, professional or other terminal degree. Those without a completed terminal degree at the time of appointment have [two years to finish.](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681974) The appropriate dean, and sometimes other faculty, review adjunct faculty credentials. Faculty credentials in the Master of Theological Studies program in Albuquerque, N.M., are reviewed by full-time faculty at SNC’s main campus. High-school teachers in the [Jumpstart Program](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681970) must hold a master’s degree in the relevant subject or a related master’s degree that includes 18 graduate credits in the content area taught. Their credentials, including vitae, transcripts and syllabi, are reviewed by the appropriate discipline liaisons. All Jumpstart Program instructors meet the qualifications. Faculty credentials and qualifications are discussed in 4.A.4.

3.C.4 - Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.

SNC instructor evaluation includes qualitative and quantitative reviews conducted by administrators, faculty peers and students as the Faculty Handbook outlines. Significant [structural and language revisions to the handbook’s Tenure and Promotion section were implemented in 2015](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681981), and again in [2020](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681980), all of which are monitored and adjusted as appropriate (April 2021 Faculty Meeting [agenda](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681985) and [minutes](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681984)). Structural changes merged evaluation criteria (e.g., incorporating Advisement of Students into Teaching Effectiveness). These changes provide clearer processes for faculty evaluation and outline best practices for faculty development and retention (see 3.C.5).

[The tenure and promotion process](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681982) includes a robust pre-tenure review and, consistent with best practice, now combines tenure with promotion to associate professor. Tenure criteria include teaching effectiveness, scholarship and service to SNC and the wider community.

Deans, faculty peers and students assess pre-tenure and part-time faculty annually. This [process](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681982) includes classroom observations and formal review of scholarship and service. This annual evaluation enhances professional growth by highlighting strengths as well as areas for improvement.

Tenured faculty are evaluated on a [rolling five-year schedule](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681982). Components include a self-assessment essay and updated curriculum vitae, followed by a conference with the dean to discuss achievements, growth, areas for improvement and priorities for the future. The dean writes a formal report for the faculty member, who confirms reading the report and may choose to write a single-page response. The dean forwards the self-evaluation, report and any response to the vice president for Academic Affairs.

At every semester’s conclusion, students assess faculty teaching effectiveness using an [online instrument](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681983) that rates instructor clarity, preparation, availability and evaluation methodology. These evaluations, and faculty review of them, are required components of the tenure and promotion process. The switch to remote learning due to Covid-19 affected these processes; alternatives were implemented, with [faculty](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681978) adopting the alternative method or pausing their tenure and promotion clock.

Deans assess performance of [non-tenure-track and part-time faculty](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681979) at least biannually, depending upon the employment contract length.

3.C.5 - The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.

SNC provides adequate resources to support faculty development. In 2020 and 2022, the faculty revised the [tenure and promotion process](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681982) to enhance faculty development support, stipulating regular observations by tenured faculty resulting in formative and summative feedback to encourage pedagogical growth ([Faculty Development Report 2021-22](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1682002)).

[Professional development days](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681998) begin the academic year, including designated time for new faculty. A mini-conference features numerous sessions for both faculty and staff. Faculty Development leaders also provide regular [new faculty orientations](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681988) and [mentorship](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681989). SNC also supports faculty development through operating budget allocations and special endowment funds. Separate from funding allocated by Faculty Development leaders, each divisional budget provides modest support for conference attendance. SNC offers [sabbaticals](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681992) and other professional development opportunities as well.

[Faculty Development](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1682002) leaders provide several programs throughout the year on topics such as [advising, peer-observation, implicit bias and productive communication workshops](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681990). The [Sturzl Center](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681991) helps faculty incorporate service learning into their pedagogy and scholarship. The [Cassandra Voss Center](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681994) offers diversity, equity and inclusion programs to further help faculty advance their pedagogical skills.

Faculty Development also offers funding for faculty. Annual reports ([2020-21](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1682001), [2021-22](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1682002)) describe the work and impact of these opportunities. The Collaborative for Undergraduate Research supports faculty in working with students ([spring 2022 application](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681997)). Faculty Development leaders also offer [summer and curriculum grants](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681993), and SNC supports faculty applying for external grants. The Norman Miller Center offers [mini-grant opportunities](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1681995) to support faculty’s social-justice curriculum efforts, including speaker stipends.

Academic Technology provides [training](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1682000), [resources](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1682006) and [funding](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1682007) through workshops and mini-courses to support technology integration in the classroom. During summer 2020, a [Teaching Workshop](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1682008) for faculty supported the return to on-campus learning employing Covid-19 protocols. Regular workshops include #DigPINS, Teaching with Technology and Online Teaching Strategies.

Faculty participants may apply to the [Digital Fellows program](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1682007), through which instructors receive support for initiating syllabus changes that incorporate technology or explore digital teaching and learning applications. Academic Technology also offers [mini-grants](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1682004) supporting software, hardware or training. The [Tech Bar](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1682005), an online and in-person resource available to the entire campus, supports digital skill development. Faculty often include this resource in their syllabi to support students in completing assignments.

3.C.6 - Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.

Sustained faculty-student interaction is at the heart of SNC’s mission. Accordingly, SNC requires faculty to maintain at least two regular office hours per week ([Syllabus Support](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1682013), [Faculty Handbook](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1682012)).

Opportunities for faculty-student interaction are evident in almost every program. For example, Honors students may take two brief [small-group tutorials](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1682010) featuring a specific topic in a faculty member’s area of expertise. [Natural Sciences](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1682014) faculty offer lab research opportunities for students. Independent studies and directed research are encouraged, and students from every discipline may participate.

Of significance, graduates consistently report meaningful and [substantive interaction](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1682011) with faculty during their time at SNC.

3.C.7 - Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial-aid advising, academic advising and cocurricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained and supported in their professional development.

Professional staff providing direct support to students, especially in [Academic Affairs](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683532), [Student Affairs](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683538) and [Enrollment Management](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1682017), hold academic credentials relevant and appropriate to their work. Training and professional development begins with orientation, continues throughout employment, and is facilitated by in-house and off-campus experts.

The Human Resources (HR) department coordinates many professional development opportunities ([Working at St. Norbert College](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1682022)). Examples include an orientation that includes mission and institutional traditions ([New Faculty/Staff Retreat](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1682023), [Mission Onboarding Evaluation](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1682024)), access to mentors ([Mentoring Program](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1682025), [Checklist](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1682026)) and staff [sabbaticals](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683566) . The mentoring program for new staff helps newcomers feel welcome and is designed to increase retention. Sabbaticals provide eligible staff with a single paid leave to enhance skills, complete special projects and stay current with evolving workplace needs.

SNC also provides professional development and employee recognition through its [performance review process](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683568) (recently revised) and [exceptional service awards](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683572). The HR website features additional [resources](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1682021) addressing various topics, and highlighting required sessions and workshop links. One series to include well-being, EDIB, interpersonal skills and performance management is under active development.

Individual areas provide professional development opportunities for staff. Modalities include webinars, on-campus sessions, workshops, reading groups and listening sessions to strengthen skills or maintain continuing education requirements. Examples include opportunities in [Campus Safety](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1682019), [Student Affairs](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1682020), and [Financial Aid](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1682016).

The Title IX office coordinates an array of [professional development opportunities](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683570), including online Title IX and sexual harassment prevention [training](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683571) and support resources.

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## 3.D - Core Component 3.D

The institution provides support for student learning and resources for effective teaching.

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

### Argument

3.D.1 - The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.

Identification of student academic needs begins early, including prior to arrival on campus, to ensure enrollment in appropriate programs and courses. Robust support is available for students struggling academically, and an early-alert system ([Pharos](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683845)) enables rapid intervention when academic or personal struggle is apparent.

When high-school teachers or counselors or SNC staff believe a student would benefit from additional support, assignment to the [Academic Enhancement Program](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683839) (AEP) is often recommended. This one-semester program assists students to learn, practice and incorporate successful academic habits. Students register for a credit-bearing course that develops study habits, academic focus, and improved reading and writing skills, and they attend a weekly session to increase peer connections and build community.

SNC provides learning support for students through academic, technological, career and various culture-based services, tailored to meet specific needs. The Office of Academic Success, Support and Accessibility (OASSA) assists with study skills, time management, reading skill development, individual and group tutoring, academic coaching, advising and counseling. It also coordinates services for [students with disabilities](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683817) to ensure [ADA compliance](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683813). These include testing accommodations, note-taking, interpreters, tutors, nonprint textbooks, housing and dietary accommodations. OASSA and Student Inclusion and Belonging also support [first-generation students](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683830) ([about 25 percent](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683818) of the total student population) in managing academic and career planning, campus life, financial concerns, diversity and inclusion challenges, and emotional and spiritual needs. All [syllabi](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683843) include OASSA contact information.

Although academic tutoring is coordinated by [professional staff](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683841) in [OASSA](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683847), undergraduate peer tutors and teaching assistants provide much of it. Student peer tutors are certified by the [International Tutor Training Program Certification](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683824) (ITTPC).

The [Mulva Library](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683840) helps students locate and access information, research guides and tutorials, and secure online and in-person consultation. Housed in the Library and open to all students are the [Writing Center](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683816) and the Research Center. Writing Center peers aid in planning, drafting and revising written assignments. [Research Center](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683844) librarians teach and help students develop critical research skills. During the pandemic, the Writing Center and Library leveraged online resources and technology to support virtual teaching and learning, adapting [various changes to ensure health and safety](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683836).

Technology is an integral part of student success. SNC offers a one-time reasonable allowance for [laptop purchases](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683820). [Information Technology Services (ITS)](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683821) fosters student success by offering daily support including desktop computing, software, computer labs, classroom technology, network, printing and the Tech Bar. ITS also helps students with [cybersecurity, antivirus and malware prevention, email security, social media, and technology accounts](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683823).

Almost all academic disciplines offer service-learning courses, and the [Sturzl Center](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683828) supports them. In 2021-22, 494 students participated in curricular and co-curricular service-learning programs, reflecting 14,437 service hours with 29 community partners. SNC also encourages students to maintain healthy work-life balance and to use both on-campus ([counseling services](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683819)) and online resources.

[Career and Professional Development](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683827) assists students in choosing a major, finding an internship, preparing for interviews, and planning for employment, service or graduate school. Students work with staff via [Handshake](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683834), a leading career development site. Biannual [SNC Career and Internship Fairs](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683831) with regional organizations allow students to discuss career paths and learn about current workforce trends. During the pandemic, this office offered virtual appointments. At present, a revisioning and reimagination effort is expected to lead to a renewed and expanded career development function, integrated with advising and housed in a more hospitable and well-trafficked location on campus.

The [Office of Student Inclusion and Belonging](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683846) supports an optimal student experience through culturally relevant services fostering successful transition to college, persistence and graduation. Although this office supports all students, it is particularly attentive to students of color and those identifying as LGBTQ. This includes offering the [Students Taking Academic Responsibility](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683829) (STAR) Program for first-year students. [International Student and Scholar Services](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683815) (ISSS) serves students and professors from other countries, serving as an information resource and touchstone for integration into SNC and local communities. Students can also access the [ESL Institute](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683814), where English-language learners study and practice in a welcoming environment.

The [Men of Distinction Program](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683842) supports SNC men of color. Toward a more diversity-enriched and supportive community, a [diversity, equity and inclusion](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683849) initiative has created an educational environment that fosters respect for individual and group differences across cultures, perspectives and beliefs, thus fostering intellectual, spiritual and personal development. Housed within this initiative are [Support for Undocumented/DACA Students](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683837) and [LGBTQ+ Student Services](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683832).

In fall 2020, SNC launched [Working for Racial Justice](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683848) strategies, outlining its commitment “to becoming a leader in the work of racial justice by actively pursuing integrated and systemic change on campus and in the local community.” Culturally diverse events and programs such as [MLK Day](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683838) (expanded to a full week for 2023) and the [anti-racism workshop](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683850) support this work. [Student clubs and organizations](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683822) must demonstrate 80 percent participation in at least one campus anti-racist program. SNC further [expresses commitment](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683826) to cultivating an inclusive and safe environment for all, especially its students, by subscribing to [SafeColleges](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683835) and [Diversity Edu](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683833), two online training programs.

3.D.2 - The institution provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. It has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared.

Incoming students complete [placement exams](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683858) prior to advising and registration, with results used to ensure appropriate course enrollment. [Placement into writing classes](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683857) is based on a directed self-placement model. Students submit a writing sample that is evaluated prior to summer orientation. When results indicate the need for preparatory instruction, students complete the interdivisional College Writing course (IDIS 100) before enrolling in a [writing-intensive course](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683853). A brief, online language exam and review of prior foreign-language study determine placement in language courses. All students are encouraged to take the [math placement test](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683852), with those considering a major in mathematics, chemistry, geology, physics, natural or computer science required to do so.

The [Academic Peer Mentoring Program](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683855) supports students struggling in lower-level undergraduate courses recognized as challenging gatekeepers to an academic major. The program includes scheduled mentoring sessions led by a peer who has achieved high success in the course. Peer mentors offer free weekly sessions to any enrolled student.

Students who meet all requirements except for English language proficiency may enroll in the English as a Second Language Institute (ESLI). Students successfully completing ESLI are eligible for direct admission. Students who meet probationary admissions status enroll in the [Success Program](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683854), a noncredit-bearing program assisting students to set goals, improve time management and develop greater self-accountability.

High-school students may earn course credit through the [Early College Credit Program](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683856). These courses become part of the student’s SNC transcript, and the transfer process is discussed during orientation.

3.D.3 - The institution provides academic advising suited to its offerings and the needs of its students.

Academic advisors help students translate goals into a chronologically appropriate sequence of courses and related experiences. Ordinarily, all advising meetings occur in person and on campus.

Advising is led by the director of Academic Advisement, who also coordinates many orientation events. The director assigns each student an appropriate advisor, [prepares new and continuing](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683859) advisors for their advising responsibilities, creates and updates resources, and assists with coordination of new and transfer-student orientations. Advising effectiveness is valued and assessed ([survey](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683869)) with results [shared with advisors](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683860). Collective [student survey responses](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683865) demonstrate satisfaction and help improve program effectiveness.

Sustained student-faculty relationships are key for student growth and success. Advising relationships begin as part of [orientation](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683867). Advisors review transcripts, admissions and placement test information to guide students into appropriate courses. Advisors also prepare students for the transition to college by reviewing academic standards and expectations. During orientation, incoming students meet with staff and student leaders in First-Year Experience (FYE) groups that gather throughout the fall semester.

Advising addresses varying student needs and the idiosyncrasies of various programs of study. In addition to individual appointments, group advisement meetings are offered for students majoring in large programs, such as Pre-Med/Biology and Education, and for those admitted to specialized programs, such as [Honors](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683862).

Students visit with advisors before classes start and again before the add/drop deadline to ensure their schedule is working. Advisors provide ongoing help regarding academic goals, career options, and programs of study and requirements. Students may meet with advisors during available hours and, at present, [for two days each semester](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683861) regular classes are set aside so advisors may meet individually with advisees. Advisors and [Career and Professional Development](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683863) also assist students who are undecided about a major.

At present, faculty offer most academic advising. New faculty do not serve as advisors in their first year, enabling them to devote sufficient time to new-course preparation and learning the curriculum. During their second year, faculty participate in training, including individual meetings with the director of Academic Advising prior to meeting with advisees. All advisors receive regular [professional development](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683859), and students are encouraged to access available [advising resources](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683866).

The critical function of advising is evolving at SNC, likely moving toward a model featuring deeper integration with Career and Professional Development and the hiring of full-time professional staff advisors for first-year and pre-major-declaration students, with faculty advising students once they declare a major. While this evolution moves forward, the pre-registration process has become more flexible and is offered earlier. Also noteworthy is the independent course the director created for advisors, making key advising components easily accessible in Moodle, SNC’s learning management system. An Advisory Council taps talent and interest from across campus; Faculty Development leaders offer supportive programs as funding allows.

Transfer students often have different needs from those of traditional first-year students: SNC offers a [focused orientation](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683864) and schedule to meet those needs. Students meet with either the director of Academic Advisement or a dean to ensure their SNC journey begins and continues on a positive note.

3.D.4 - The institution provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning (technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites and museum collections, as appropriate to the institution’s offerings).

[Information Technology Services](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683892) (ITS) manages both academic and administrative technology. SNC provides a strong, robust technology ecosystem to support current and diverse teaching and learning needs. Ensuring appropriate, up-to-date classroom technologies that support active learning is a priority of ITS, a challenge that intensified and was admirably met during Covid-19.

ITS provides software to support teaching and learning, including a learning management system, [lecture capture](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683894), [virtual classroom and meeting software](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683895), [productivity software](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683912) including Google Apps and Microsoft Office, and specialized software including SPSS, ArcGIS and Mathematica. To enable “anywhere, anytime teaching and learning,” ITS uses [Paperspace](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683916) to provide direct access to computing resources that faculty and students may not have on their personal computers. An institutional [Zoom](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683895) license makes possible instructional delivery options and collaboration.

In 2021, ITS installed a next-generation wireless infrastructure, Wi-Fi 6 (increasing access points by 30 percent to 1,100) as well as the speed and bandwidth to connected devices. It maintains fast connections to each device on a busy network, allowing campus members to connect many personal devices to the network, thereby increasing teaching/learning effectiveness and extending battery life.

ITS supports 116 technology-enabled learning spaces including four labs, 18 study spaces and 94 classrooms. Rooms are [refreshed](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683914) on a regular cycle to ensure optimally functioning and well-supported equipment. Learning spaces include [general](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683896), [lecture and active-learning classrooms](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683899); [computer labs](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683891); study spaces; and [bring-your-own-device (BYOD)](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683901) labs. The Classroom Technology Working Group refreshes [projectors, screens, Apple TV capability and video conferencing](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683898). As faculty adopt new instructional techniques, classrooms are appropriately updated.

[Three active-learning classrooms](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683900) are specifically equipped to allow lecture-based and collaboration-based teaching, with seamless shifts between modalities. With BYOD access, students collaborate and share within groups, present their work and view instructors’ presentations while working together.

The [computer-refresh program](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683897) enables SNC to enjoy appropriate computing resources. Computers assigned to faculty and staff, as well as accessible library computers, are refreshed on a four-year cycle. The [Tech Bar](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683893), operated by full-time ITS staff and students, supports Knight Domains, GIS mapping and video production, as well as making digital graphical media accessible. Additionally, it provides video tutorials for asynchronous training and hosts a biannual conference to present technology processes and tools for use in and outside the classroom.

The Gehl-Mulva Science Center [was awarded LEED® Gold certification](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683903), a distinctive achievement in sustainable construction. An interdisciplinary scientific research facility, the building houses the Chemistry, Biology, Physics, Psychology, Geology, Computer Science, Environmental Science and Math disciplines. The state-of-the-art, 160,000-square-foot [facility](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683906) includes 45 teaching and research labs, 10 classrooms, one large lecture hall, small group workrooms and informal collaborative spaces, a greenhouse, and a gallery honoring Norbertine contributions to science. Active-learning classrooms optimize learning and allow faculty to transition seamlessly from presentation to collaboration mode, leveraging technology in facilitating large- and small-group interaction. In 2019, SNC faculty received [two grants](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683890) from the National Science Foundation totaling $1.5 million. The science center’s laboratories and facilities support much of the in-person student and faculty research these grants have enabled.

In a unique partnership, the Gehl-Mulva Science Center also houses the Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW) Green Bay Campus, providing students with [contemporary classrooms and labs with a first-class clinical education](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683905). This partnership between SNC and MCW not only has put more SNC graduates into medical school, but has provided such attractive opportunities as [early admittance into MCW’s School of Pharmacy](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683888) and [Master of Public Health](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683889) programs. Among other successful partnerships, SNC students are eligible for priority admission in [Concordia University’s Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy and Physician Assistant programs](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683886) and may participate in a [2+2 Nursing program with Bellin College of Nursing](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683875).

As the intellectual heart of the campus, the Mulva Library features a wide variety of individual and collaborative [workspaces and gathering places](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683902). This thoughtfully designed building contains advanced technological capabilities, including media-editing facilities, hybrid-meeting technology, and workstations with various hardware and software to support the curriculum.

In addition to its 10-member staff, the Library holds more than 200,000 physical books, 250,000 e-books and a [digital collection](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683907) including 12,520 e-journals. It has 77 subject- and discipline-specific databases and digital primary resources (site licenses, for example, to the [Wall Street Journal](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683909)), and numerous platforms for accessing streaming films and audiobooks.

Staff encourage faculty and student participation in building and maintaining the library collection ([Library policies](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683907)), to ensure that materials support research, curriculum, assignment scope and faculty scholarship. A [free InterLibrary Loan service](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683910) retrieves materials from libraries worldwide and delivers them to the College.

The Library houses the [Writing Center](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683904), a peer-assisted lab offering consultation on content, organization, grammar and style. The staff includes a faculty director and 15 trained student consultants. The Library is also home to the [Honors Program](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683911) and, in 2021, the Library repurposed a third-floor staff lounge into a commuter-student lounge. Additional renovation, aligned with the College’s academic and student success strategy, is planned for summer 2023 and 2024.

The Library’s [Digital Commons](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683887) houses faculty and student research, open educational resources, official campus documents, SNC publications, and archival material drawn from SNC’s history and Norbertine heritage.

The Library’s lower level houses the inventive [Mulva Studio](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683876) with spaces that support different learning styles which include traditional single- and group-study spaces and technologies that support mastering modes of intellectual inquiry or creative work, including a recording studio and audio-recording booth.

The global [Center for Norbertine Studies](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683881), a collaboration between the College and the Norbertine order, is a unique repository of books, art, archival materials, and other cultural and religious patrimony from around the world representing the order’s 900-year history. The center also provides scholars access to its unique collection of [early Norbertine documents, digitized books and related resources](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683879).

The College provides students, faculty, staff and alumni with access to several performance spaces. Two prominent spaces are located within the Abbot Pennings Hall of Fine Arts: [Walter Theatre](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683877) and [Webb Memorial Theatre](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683882). Each hosts numerous events throughout the year, including plays, musicals, concerts and public lectures. [Dudley Birder Hall](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683878), SNC’s newest performance space, is a [repurposed decommissioned church building](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683908) hosting choral performances, chamber concerts, recitals and public lectures. SNC’s performance spaces are used by students, faculty and staff. They also represent important and popular cultural resources for residents throughout northeast Wisconsin.

SNC supports student learning and creativity by curating, maintaining and exhibiting resources from its archives, the Center for Norbertine Studies collection and SNC’s art galleries. The [Archives and Special Collections](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683915) features rare and important materials that explore local, campus and Norbertine history and culture. Staff regularly assist faculty in incorporating archival resources into the classroom and in instructing students in research methods. More recently, the archives have grown its digital collection by making collections and documents available via the [Digital Commons @ SNC](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683887) and [Recollection Wisconsin](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683880). [ArchivesSpace](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683913) makes finding aids and classification schedules searchable online.

Students gain experience and skill in curatorial practice and arts management through work study and fellowships. The [Bush Art Center](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683883) includes three gallery spaces featuring contemporary art, design and art-history exhibits. [Students and faculty exhibit art](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683874) through juried and student art exhibits. Student art also is exhibited in the student-curated Clubhouse Gallery.

To become a licensed teacher, Teacher Education students complete multiple in-service or clinical experiences. Faculty review [student-teaching applications covering a number of criteria](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683873). Pre-service teachers are placed in clinical settings according to certification area(s) and major and minor, and they complete two nine-week placements. Placements are secured and overseen by the director of field experiences. Student-teachers complete all required teaching functions and participate in conferences, training and other meetings as recommended by the mentor teacher. These include weekly seminars.

SNC’s [Human Services Program](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683885) is approved by the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services. It requires two semesters of internship, field supervision and reflection on seminar content to develop competencies for generalist social-work practice. Students may pursue a [Social-Work Training Certificate (SWTC)](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1683884) requiring successful completion of five social-work courses, 400 hours (or one year) of social-work employment, and the state and national examination. The Human Services Program also provides opportunities for collaborative research with faculty. The experience gained during this program is recognized by graduate schools.

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* 230598\_ITS\_Website\_Tech Bar- Welcome to the Tech Bar\_2020-12-08
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## 3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

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

### Summary

**Accomplishments**

1. SNC has a long tradition of high-quality academic programs, student services, and excellent faculty and staff.
2. Learning goals are clearly articulated in all academic programs.
3. The Core Curriculum program is intentionally and significantly influenced by the SNC mission.
4. SNC has a strong commitment to supporting student learning and development.
5. Technological investments have significantly enhanced the teaching and learning environment.
6. Instructional, technological and other campus facilities have been dramatically improved over the decade.

**Work in Progress**

1. SNC is actively enhancing its cyclical five-year program-review process.
2. SNC is working toward steady and documented improvement in learning outcome assessment.
3. SNC is taking progressive steps toward more evident equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging.
4. SNC is expanding mental, emotional and EDIB resources and programs.

**On the Horizon**

1. Improving and expanding professional development to ensure focus on equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging, and to develop institutional skill among faculty and staff in serving a changing student population.
2. Engaging faculty and staff in more robust and ongoing discussions of future curricular and co-curricular needs as part of strategic planning.

### Sources

There are no sources.

## 4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

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

## 4.A - Core Component 4.A

The institution ensures the quality of its educational offerings.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews and acts upon the findings.
2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.
3. The institution has policies that ensure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.
4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It ensures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.
5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.
6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution ensures that the credentials it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission.

### Argument

4.A.1 - The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews and acts upon the findings.

Program review occurs on a five-year cycle, with results submitted to the Curriculum and Educational Policy Committee (CEPC) ([2021-22 CEPC meetings](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683928)). The Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) publishes [cycles](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683932), [schedules](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683924), [reports](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683925) and [feedback](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683934), allowing SNC to evaluate and consider its work and to identify priorities and areas for improvement. The process encourages faculty and staff to develop, refine and improve their [programs](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683933) and [curricula](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683935) and encourages collaboration for ongoing improvement.

During program review, faculty collect materials and report using a standard [template](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683930) and r[ubric](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683929). Reports include program vision and mission statements; Strategic Plan alignment; work toward equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging; enrollment; graduation rates; program satisfaction; curriculum design; Core Curriculum involvement; learning outcomes assessment; the scholarship statement; outlining the discipline’s guidelines for tenure and promotion; human resource needs; instructional needs (budget, technology, equipment, facilities, accessibility); and opportunities, challenges and goals for the upcoming five years.

Reports are submitted in January, and a meeting with CEPC takes place in spring, attended by one or two discipline members and the divisional dean. Reports are available via the [OIE website](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683927) ([Music](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683931) and [MTS](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683926) examples). Although the reports are useful in guiding faculty, additional work remains to ensure that creation and review of the reports actually leads to change and improvement.

4.A.2 -The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.

All transcripted credits are evaluated, including domestic transfer, military, youth options/college program and study abroad credits, as well as [Advanced Placement](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683936) (AP), [International Baccalaureate](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683937) (IB) and College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) scores. The Registrar awards credits based on AP/IB/CLEP completion. Posted in the course catalog, the [Registrar’s Transfer Guides](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683938) and [Transfer Credit Policies](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683941) describe policies and procedures guiding this evaluation. As one example, the registrar utilizes the AP Transfer Equivalency Table, and passing scores merit four credits.

Credit for work-related training programs may be granted pending transcript receipt from the Registry of Credit Recommendations of the ACE. The College may award six credits for basic military training with a Defense-Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES) certificate and grant additional credit for service if experience is documented in programs SNC offers.

Beyond credits for completing SNC’s own courses and what is described above, no credit is awarded for prior learning or experiential learning.

4.A.3 -The institution has policies that ensure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.

Transfer credit evaluation considers the sending institution’s accreditation status. If not accredited, the registrar and others review the institution type, contact hours, course descriptions, curricula and syllabi. Courses submitted for major or minor program requirements are evaluated by the relevant discipline, and general education credits are evaluated by the Core Curriculum Committee (CCC). Transfer credit requires a C or better grade, determined via an official transcript. Pass/fail or satisfactory/unsatisfactory courses are not accepted.

Incoming students may transfer up to 72 semester credits. Current SNC students may transfer three pre-approved courses (9-12 credits) after matriculation. Previously [approved](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683943) [courses](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683940) are available and guaranteed, as long as the three-course rule is not exceeded.

Through vetting of program partners, the Study Abroad Office assures course quality. A grade of C or better earns credit, with grade and credit conversions posted on the registrar’s website (e.g., [Bond University](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683939) and corresponding [Grade Transfer Information](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683942)).

4.A.4 -The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual-credit programs. It ensures that its dual-credit courses or programs for high-school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.

**Course Prerequisites**

Faculty establish prerequisites for major and minor courses and the CCC approves course requests for the Core Curriculum. Other than advanced courses requiring junior standing, most Core courses have no prerequisites. Prerequisites appear in the [Course Catalog](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683972) and online by [discipline](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683961), and are also [embedded](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683965) in the registration system ([KnightLine](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683952)).

**Academic Course Rigor**

To ensure academic rigor, when courses are added to the curriculum, the [process](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683966) requires approval by the relevant discipline, its dean and the academic vice president. [Core Curriculum courses](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683958) require approval by the discipline, CCC, dean and vice president.

Rigor is communicated, assessed and maintained as follows: Each four-credit course assumes three 60-minutes periods per week of in-class learning and nine hours of independent work. Expectations deepen by level (100/200/300/400/graduate), as detailed in the catalog and syllabi. Feedback regarding academic rigor is collected through the Student Opinion of Teaching ([SOOT](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683962)) assessment of course challenge and workload. Faculty discussion of learning goals and course syllabi regulate and articulate content and skills expectations. Although individual faculty members may design courses reflecting their expertise, the discipline maintains overall goals and standards, and deans review courses and syllabi each semester. Finally, formal and informal feedback concerning rigor are part of the [faculty evaluation processes](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683948).

**Expectations for Student Learning**

Institutional, Core Curricular, program and course learning outcomes are intentionally interconnected (see 4.B). Examples include learning outcome alignment with the [mission](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683970), [college-wide/Core Curriculum Learning Outcomes](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683968), program learning outcomes (e.g., [Geology](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683960) and [Philosophy](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683963)), and course learning outcomes (expected component of all [syllabi](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683956)).

**Access to Learning Resources**

SNC provides access to various learning resources described previously: [the Mulva Library](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683945) and [Research Center](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683953); [Information Technology Services](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683964); [Office of Academic Success, Support & Accessibility](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683946) (OASSA); [Academic Service Learning](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683969); [Office of Student Inclusion and Belonging](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683957); [Honors Program](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683949); [Academic Advising](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683973); [the Collaborative: Center for Undergraduate Research](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683950); [the Writing Center](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683947); learning management systems (Moodle, Google Classroom); Zoom or Google Meet; Google Apps for education; and [Bookstore services](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683951). An example of commitment to students is SNC’s Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) work ([SNC ASD Support Program](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683967); [SNC Among Best Small Colleges for Students on Autism Spectrum](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683959)).

**Faculty Qualifications**

Faculty demonstrate subject-matter expertise through official academic credentials. Following [HLC guidelines](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683971), undergraduate faculty must hold a degree at least one level above that of the program in which they teach. Faculty also demonstrate a record of research, scholarship or achievement commensurate with doctoral expectations.

Faculty teaching a Core course typically hold a doctoral or a master’s degree and completion of substantial graduate coursework in their discipline. Graduate faculty hold the terminal degree required by the discipline and demonstrate a record of research, scholarship or achievement appropriate for the program.

SNC upholds the integrity of its [Jumpstart](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683954) classes, offering high-school students a course with the same rigor offered as part of a baccalaureate program. HLC standards are the minimum for the College, and teaching eligibility is restricted to instructors who could be hired as adjuncts at SNC. Instructors must hold a master’s degree or 18 graduate credits in the course field. A [handbook](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683955) and access to SNC faculty liaisons support instructors in this endeavor. A dean oversees the program, and SNC faculty review the curriculum vitae and transcripts of prospective instructors prior to approval. All Jumpstart instructors are qualified to teach their courses.

4.A.5 -The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.

At SNC, Teacher Education maintains specialized accreditation. The SNC program reflects its unique mission and goals and provides evidence to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) that candidates meet state standards. A continuous review process by [DPI](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683974) examines program results annually. Substantive changes or program redesign initiates a separate DPI review (e.g., the recent approval of SNC’s redesigned K-/4-12 curricula). The SNC programs align with state requirements to provide evidence that students possess the necessary knowledge, skills and dispositions.

In addition, the Schneider School of Business and Economics is actively seeking AACSB accreditation.

4.A.6 -The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution ensures that the credentials it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission.

SNC administers a first-destination survey to graduates a month prior to graduation, with follow-ups three, six and 12 months after graduation. This survey collects information about employment, enrollment in education programs, and participation in voluntary or military service, as well as graduates’ industry, job function and income. The survey permits data disaggregation by gender, race/ethnicity, degree, major(s) and GPA. By combining survey responses with data from college records, LinkedIn, National Student Clearinghouse, etc., an 82 percent return rate for the July/August 2020-May 2021 cohort was obtained, significantly exceeding the National Association of Career Educators’ 65 percent standard. Data revealed that 73.9 percent were employed, 2.9 percent seeking employment, 20.1 percent enrolled in graduate education, and 2 percent engaged in voluntary or military service programs. Findings are comparable to those of recent cohorts.

Information about graduates for each program (e.g., [Business Administration](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683975), [Biology](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683976) and [Teacher Education](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683981)) is posted and updated annually on the Career and Professional Development website. Each program uses relevant data in review and improvement.

The Higher Education Data Sharing (HEDS) Alumni Survey (offered annually since 2017 to alumni five and 10 years out) provides data concerning employment status, postgraduate education and satisfaction with the respondent’s major. The survey also provides data on whether respondents achieve College-wide and Core Curriculum learning outcomes.

In the [2021 survey](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683977), alumni note the College helped them to think critically, solve problems, synthesize information, communicate effectively, grow spiritually, and test and strengthen moral convictions. A high degree of satisfaction is reported for all measures. These data suggest that an SNC education prepares students for successful entry into the workforce and/or postgraduate education. Students [highly value](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683978) SNC faculty, educational opportunities, friendships and community.

Items on the most recent [Current Student Survey](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683979) and [Graduating Senior Survey](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683980) measure satisfaction with various aspects students' academic careers. Although students are generally very satisfied, SNC is committed to continuous program and student experience improvement. Of particular interest and focus is aligning assessment of graduate education outcomes with assessment of undergraduate outcomes and with AACSB expectations.

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## 4.B - Core Component 4.B

The institution engages in ongoing assessment of student learning as part of its commitment to the educational outcomes of its students.

1. The institution has effective processes for assessment of student learning and for achievement of learning goals in academic and cocurricular offerings.
2. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
3. The institution’s processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty, instructional and other relevant staff members.

### Argument

In response to HLC’s comprehensive visit in 2011, and follow-up visits in 2015 and 2017, SNC undertook significant work to improve its processes and practice of assessing learning outcomes as well as course and program effectiveness. As a result, SNC is currently in its best position in two decades in weaving assessment of student learning into the institution’s fabric.

The [HLC Team report (2015)](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683992) following SNC’s mid-cycle review gave Criterion 4.B a “met with concern” rating, noting a decentralized assessment structure, limited documentation, and little information regarding how or whether programs utilize data to inform curricular change.

SNC enacted several significant changes to address these issues. The first was participation in HLC’s Assessment Academy (2016-2020). In its application and final report, SNC openly addressed challenges in making assessment a signature component of its teaching and learning experience: In “[Aligning Our Processes and Outcomes to Improve Student Learning](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683990),” SNC “sought to make assessment of student learning more meaningful, manageable and sustainable … streamlining program review and assessment, revising and aligning college-wide and Core Curriculum outcomes, and building up an assessment infrastructure.” A Core Curriculum Task Force recommended changes to the Core based on assessment data ([April 2019 report](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684005)).

Aside from [recently launched first-year seminar courses](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683988), a 2019 change in academic leadership led to some items not being fully implemented. Nonetheless, notable progress is evident in the revision and alignment of College-wide and Core Curriculum learning outcomes. Specifically, the College-Wide Learning Outcomes (CWLOs) were reviewed for alignment with SNC’s Catholic, Norbertine and liberal arts traditions. The faculty both [endorsed](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683993) and [adopted](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683991) the Core Curriculum outcomes. Importantly, further evidence of progress is demonstrated on the OIE website, where assessment resources, student learning outcome statements, indirect measures gleaned from survey data and other relevant plans and reports are readily available.

In late 2020, just as the Assessment Academy work was ending, SNC’s assessment leader and ALO died unexpectedly. On the horizon were several initiatives, including updating the assessment handbook, training, plans for “assessment days,” and re-establishment of the assessment committee, all occurring in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic.

To guide next steps in addressing these challenges, SNC hired a consultant. She conducted an [audit](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683999) of fall 2020 Core courses, which revealed that instructors had used an array of tools to measure learning outcomes, and that multiple sections of the same course sometimes did not measure the same outcome and/or use the same assessment tool. Students at about 90 percent or greater either “met” or “exceeded” expectations and, while this may be construed positively, generalization is limited when instructors reported percentages. Where action or change occurred, it typically meant modifying instruction and assignments. However, even when the percentage of students “meeting expectations” was high, instructors planned modifications, reflecting positive responses to the goal of continuous improvement. These audit results were instructive for several reasons, notably in understanding key aspects of student learning within Core courses.

The audit findings were the focus of a January 2021 [retreat](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683998) for CCC members. Chaired by the academic vice president, the retreat allowed dedicated time for “professional development in assessment, fall 2020 data collection review, and development of a Core Curriculum assessment plan.” Participants reviewed learning outcomes, performance indicators, direct versus indirect measures, curriculum maps, rubrics, assessment frameworks and cycles, and sample assessment plans. Retreat [agendas](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683985) and [presentations](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683987) detail the content.

Along with substantial work to build processes for assessing student learning, SNC has significantly enhanced its [capacity for assessment](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683995) improvement:

* An [Ad Hoc Assessment Task Force](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683996) recommended a long-term structure and processes. The task force included seven faculty, a Student Affairs member with assessment experience, an executive assistant from Academic Affairs, the OIE director, and individuals leading assessment for academic programs and the Core.
* Each academic discipline identified an assessment coordinator.
* Student Affairs staff engaged in [training](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684007) aligned with its [strategic plan](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683994).
* The Assessment Coordinator position was created and housed in OIE. This person coordinates assessing, planning and administrative activities to ensure effectiveness and continuous improvement, advises CCC and CEPC, and serves on the College-wide Assessment Committee.
* A January 2022 [Assessment Conference](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684001) enrolled 120 staff and faculty. Conference feedback indicated increased knowledge about assessment (91 percent); according to 60 percent of participants, the most useful session was a keynote addressing the “why” behind assessment. Following the 2022 conference focus on assessment processes and procedures, the [2023 conference](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683989) expanded the breadth and depth of topics and included both curricular and co-curricular tracks, resulting in wide participation and conversation among academic and student affairs faculty and staff.
* In February 2022, faculty [approved](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684002) the establishment of a college-wide Assessment Committee. The Assessment Committee replaced the task force and guides the development, support and implementation of the SNC curricular and co-curricular assessment system to improve course and program content, delivery and pedagogy. The committee has completed a [draft of a College-wide Assessment Handbook](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683986). The committee will submit an annual report summarizing how SNC “closes the loop” for all programs and how it uses student learning data to enhance curricula.
* The most recent [VPAA position description](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684000) (2019) notes a responsibility to “steward accreditation and assessment efforts, ensure compliance with accrediting bodies, and actively support the retention and completion agenda.” Likewise, the [VPSA profile](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684003) required the incumbent to “strengthen the commitment to the assessment of student learning, and lead, build and maintain the framework and systems for the assessment for all student affairs programming.” In Academic Affairs, [deans](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684004) provide leadership for assessment, and the [associate VPAA](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684006) provides oversight along with other responsibilities.

Following is a more detailed description of actions to build meaningful, manageable and sustainable assessment systems and practices, and to support and require data-driven decision-making using learning assessment to inform SNC’s planning and advance its mission.

4.B.1 - The institution has effective processes for assessment of student learning and for achievement of learning goals in academic and cocurricular offerings.

SNC has developed and implemented effective processes for assessment of student learning in the Core, and in its academic programs, courses and other programs.

**Student Learning Goals at the College Level**

Prior to 2020, SNC relied primarily on indirect evidence to assess learning in the Core Curriculum, using five [goals](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684022). Indirect evidence — gathered, analyzed, organized and reported by OIE — included student survey results (e.g., [acquisition of intellectual and cognitive skills](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684026), [understanding the world and one’s place in it](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684018)), and results of the [HERI College Senior Survey for SNC seniors, May 2018](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684016) (Goals 1 and 2). Likewise, the [HEDS Alumni Survey](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684037) (2018) assessed the Core Curriculum (with reference to Goal 1) five and 10 years post graduation. CCC meeting minutes illustrate use of this evidence to inform deliberations, determine appropriate learning outcomes and highlight recommended changes.

Created in spring 2018, the CWLO Working Group revised, developed and linked College-wide and Core Curriculum goals (per the HLC Assessment Academy project). [Minutes](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684023) document close collaboration with the CCC. The proposed [CWLOs](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684017), based on prior [outcomes](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684009), were vetted by faculty, staff and students before formal [endorsement](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684050) and [adoption](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683991) by the faculty.

The CCC reconvened in fall 2020 and surveyed instructors teaching a Core course to determine which outcomes could be assessed to create a Core Curriculum map to guide future assessment. All faculty responded, representing 111 sections of courses. [Results](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684025) revealed the two outcomes most likely to be assessed were “think critically” (94.6 percent of courses) and “communicate effectively” (87.4 percent). Notably, several outcomes, while part of a given course, were not necessarily assessed in these same courses (e.g., 65 percent noted “interact respectfully” was part of their course, but only 67 percent (44 percent of the total) indicated they assessed it). Moreover, not all sections of the same courses assessed the same learning outcomes. The CCC discussed these and other findings and constructed a [preliminary plan](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684028) for Core [assessment](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684024) featuring a rolling three-year cycle of data collection, analysis and action.

After [considering several options](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684024), the CCC initiated a formal assessment of these two [most](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684043) [cited](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684044) outcomes within several courses. Faculty members representing 80 sections identified and developed independent measures and reported the results to CCC. The outside consultant reviewed the results and [offered feedback](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683999).

The immediate results of the 2021 Core Curriculum assessment workshop included refinement of these [two learning outcomes](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684049) (incorporated in this [draft Assessment Planning Matrix](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684046)). Next steps included the [creation of preliminary curriculum maps](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684047) and identification of the level and courses through which skills and/or knowledge are introduced, reinforced and mastered; refinement of the five remaining outcomes; and an assessment [timeline](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684040).

The CCC created a [rubric](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684039) for each CWLO and [curriculum maps](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684045) indicating CLWO pathways from introduction through proficiency. Data were collected from courses that “achieve proficiency” for each CWLO as follows: spring 2021 (Think Critically and Communicate Effectively); fall 2021 (Think Critically, Communicate Effectively, Serve Responsibly and Live Purposefully); spring 2022 (Think Critically, Communicate Effectively, Serve Responsibly, Live Purposefully, Problem-Solve Creatively, Behave Ethically and Interact Respectfully). In [fall 2022](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684013), SNC collected data in every Core course regardless of level of CWLO coverage. Faculty entered data using an OIE-developed [form](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684010). Data are shared with the Assessment Committee and CCC, as well as with academic disciplines to facilitate program improvement.

**Student Learning Goals at the Program Level**

Student learning outcome evidence has been collected by most academic programs for many years, with curricular adjustments considered and made following data analysis (e.g., [Business Administration](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684038), [Economics](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684011) and [Theatre Studies](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684014)).

[Academic](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684042) [disciplines](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684041) and [programs](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684027) articulate learning outcomes for graduates, and evidence of attainment is gathered via specific plans and methodologies outlining expectations and measures.

Each program assessment plan is developed by appropriate faculty, but all include common elements: mission statement, intended learning outcomes, links to CWLOs, measures used, level of students assessed, expected (target) level of performance and how learning outcomes are communicated. Faculty document how findings are used to modify the program and improve student learning. Until recently, disciplines and programs provided updated assessment plans to the CEPC.

Following the consultant’s primary recommendations to compile current learning outcomes from all programs in one document, standardize program assessment plans, and develop a method to capture and compile program assessment data, a [program assessment audit](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684027) occurred in 2021 using current program assessment plans and reports (2019-2020 data). The audit provided a baseline for strengthening assessment processes and evaluating subsequent efforts.

Given variability among some plans, and challenges faced by some programs in determining how to “close the assessment loop,” several workshops offered faculty assistance in refining knowledge of the “how to” of quality assessment. Eleven [workshops](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684021) offered between March and May focused on learning outcomes and performance indicators, assessment measures and data collection, and analyzing and reporting data. Two program/discipline faculty within each academic division attended the first two workshops; discipline assessment coordinators attended the third.

Important outcomes of this workshop series were 28 undergraduate and three graduate revised and improved plans. Each program also assessed one or more student learning outcomes during spring 2021, analyzed data, met with discipline colleagues to discuss results, and formed recommended actions.

The ad hoc Assessment Task Force reviewed the academic program plans and reports and provided feedback via a standard form, receiving the final reports in January 2022 following the first Assessment Conference. This cycle continues using data collected by programs from each semester, with the Assessment Committee now reviewing and providing feedback.

Currently, every program reviews and revises its assessment plan, assessing at least one learning outcome per year and completing the assessment cycle for all learning outcomes every four years. This timing leaves a year before the cyclical five-year program review to contemplate and outline action plans and potential changes.

**Student Learning Goals at the Course Level**

Faculty assess course-level learning outcomes using a variety of performance measures (e.g., essays, exams, presentations) and discipline-specific rubrics. Professional development is also offered [throughout the year](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684036).

Student learning outcomes are required in each course syllabus. Deans ensure compliance with elements on the [syllabus template](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684035), assuring that learning outcomes are similar across different sections of the same course and connect to articulated student learning outcomes.

**Student Learning Goals at the Cocurricular Level**

Learning outcomes associated with co-curricular learning activities, programs and experiences reinforce SNC’s mission and both complement and enhance the formal curriculum. SNC also assesses co-curricular programs, including service-learning experiences, OASSA programming (including [Academic Peer Mentoring](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684012)), and Student Affairs programs and services.

* The [Honors Program](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684048) continuously revises its curriculum to support its goals and [assess](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684008) appropriately. Its learning objectives are to understand the world, think freely and act for the common good. Assessment indicators are shared with the CCC and, where applicable, Core assessment data support the program’s reports. All indicators are assessed each semester by the Program Committee. The program is completing its first cycle for the new curriculum.
* The Academic Service-Learning committee formed an assessment working group and completed two data collection, analysis and improvement cycles for the service-learning courses offered, sharing learning outcomes and rubrics with the CCC in assessing the “serve responsibly” outcome. Each signature program ([TRIPS](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684029), [Residence Halls Service Programs](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684034), [Village Project](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684030)) has moved through multiple assessment and improvement cycles.
* OASSA’s Academic Enhancement Program (AEP) offers opportunities for at-risk first-year students to develop successful academic habits, such as study skills, time management and understanding expectations. This guides students in discovering roadblocks to success, identifying personal goals and developing a strategy to achieve them. The Success Program, which employs contracts, goal-setting, time-management and self-accountability development, is a mandatory noncredit-bearing program for students on probation. First-year students placed on academic probation must enroll in IDIS 110: Academic Survival Skills (two credits).
* Student Affairs recently completed an assessment and program improvement cycle and mapped new learning outcomes to the CWLOs. Staff assess these outcomes, as well as unit-specific programs and services, in part by using the most recent [HEDS](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684031) [Returning Student Survey](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684032) and the [Current Student Survey](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684653).  Anticipated outcomes [include](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684033) students demonstrating clarity concerning their goals and how SNC experiences have helped them achieve these; reasons for degree completion; and clarity around what students hope to achieve, as well as their most impactful experiences and primary worries, concerns and barriers.
* Student Affairs staff collaborated with OIE to develop measurable outcomes and data collection methods for [Building Bridges](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684015), a weeklong program of workshops and networking events for low-income students, first-generation students and students of color. Student participants create résumés, apply for scholarships, develop deeper connections with faculty and staff, and gain a better understanding of personal finances.

4.B.2 -The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.

SNC can demonstrate substantial strides in including meaningful assessment directed toward improved student learning at the course, program and institutional levels. The program review process requires observations relative to assessment data, along with implementation and evaluation of changes necessary to improve student learning. Disciplines complete an [annual assessment report](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684056) for review by the [Assessment Committee](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684059). These reviews yield a rich, motivational database effectively illustrating what “closing the assessment loop” looks like.

**Changes Made in Response to Assessment Data**

**Core Curriculum Changes**

With SNC’s current Core Curriculum assessment processes only a couple years old, anomalies and “bumps” in this curriculum are and will be continually addressed. As an example, [initial survey data](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1683999) revealed that different sections of the same course, taught by different instructors, often led to different learning outcomes, a problem now [remedied](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684062). After mapping the CWLOs, more courses will address the Behave Ethically, Interact Respectfully and Serve Responsibly outcomes. The levels at which CWLO skills are addressed — that is, “introduced,” “reinforced” or “proficiency achieved” — do not necessarily align with traditional course numbers (100/200/300), a reality currently under discussion by the CCC. The Assessment Committee will work to [map the integration](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684013) of both Core Curriculum and program-level assessments to ensure that CWLOs are met across the curriculum, beginning with updating curriculum maps for each discipline.

Several examples follow of [specific Core courses](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684053) measuring Think Critically and Communicate Effectively skills that have recently modified course content and structure using assessment data:

* **AMER 184/MUSI 184** History of American Popular Music (Western Tradition). CWLO: Think Critically. **Outcome**: Apply knowledge from previous styles of popular music to understand/predict similar examples in popular music of the future. Ninety percent of students met expectations. As the rubric graded responses based on subjective terms like “thoughtful” and “thorough,” the assignment and assessment instrument were modified toward synthesis of information from class and personal experience to forge a quality argument.
* **ENGL 221** The American Short Story (Difference and Diversity). CWLO: Think Critically. **Outcome**: Critically analyze diverse contexts and voices of the American short story tradition. Seventy percent of students met expectations. Changes are being made to instruction and assignment types and structure to emphasize the need to critically engage students in questions of diversity.
* **PSYC 100** General Psychology (Individual and Society). CWLO: Communicate Effectively. **Outcome**: Students will describe and explain a chosen psychological phenomenon, including applying that phenomenon to real-world examples, in a paper geared toward a non-expert audience. Forty-two percent of students met expectations. Changes to the assignment and more targeted in-class instruction time will support student growth on this outcome.

**Discipline-Specific Changes**

Historically, discussion regarding instructional and curricular changes was driven by catalysts tangential to student learning including program development, deadlines (program review, assessment reports), and faculty turnover. These triggered faculty to consider information gathered from various sources, including assessment data from selected courses and Major Field Tests (MFTs); indirect evidence from student and alumni surveys; knowledge derived from student advising and mentoring; knowledge borne of scholarship, especially that of teaching and learning; and alumni success in employment and graduate school.

The schedule of embedded assessment and other data collection, with reports due in fall, will generate ongoing discussions among faculty. Where assessment reports were previously gathered every few years, annual reporting now promotes shared language and timely action, a particularly important outcome given faculty turnover and rapidly evolving student needs.

Examples below include how disciplines have used assessment data and evidence-based approaches to modify courses and curriculum:

* **Business Administration**: MFT data revealed that students were not proficient in business ethics and supply chain management. Faculty modified the major to accommodate new coursework in both topics. A four-credit management course was eliminated and replaced with four two-credit courses in Business Ethics, Introduction to Organizational Behavior, and Introduction to Human Resource Management and Supply Change Management. Three additional faculty were hired, and an internally developed tool now reveals measurable improvements in student proficiency.
* **English**: Senior portfolio [data](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684065) highlighted an ENGL 150 learning outcome: “Develop student skills in writing, research and oral communication.” Scores for most assignments did not meet expectations. Although the learning outcome addresses three skills, students might not address all three. Recognizing that 55 percent of English majors enter with ENGL 150 credit, faculty concluded that many did not have the background in research needed to demonstrate proficiency. Accordingly, the faculty are revising the major’s foundational class to a required first-year, 200-level writing and research class.
* **Biology**: Data revealed the need for more practice with essential lab skills such as microscope use and micro-pipetting. Pipetting is introduced in introductory biology as an essential part of genetics (year 2) and used near-ubiquitously in upper-level courses. To address skill deficiencies, a tiered skill approach was implemented.
* **Education**: Analyses, based on SOOT data and responding to licensure regulations, indicated the program was not providing adequate opportunities for students to meaningfully engage with their communities. Community-engaged service (the [Village Project](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684030)) is now an integral part of a yearlong program (EDUC 101/102). With the Sturzl Center, Education added and diversified community partners and expanded connections with partners to enhance leadership opportunities. Noting a decline in pass rates for the Foundations of Reading Test (FORT), a competency required for elementary education majors, Education used ETS data and expanded the literacy sequence from three courses to a six-course language arts minor and developed online tools to aid test preparation. After implementation, pass rates increased from 40.91 percent to 73.53 percent.
* [**Music**](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684057): In the final MUSI 271 exam, students employ analytical techniques appropriate to music of the 20th century. Students must analyze pitch-class sets, modes, diatonic collections, octatonic collections and 12-tone rows. The weakest performance was in Roman numeral analysis of an excerpt from a string quartet. Findings concluded that the string quartet on the final exam may be too difficult, and a less complex example may be chosen for the next assessment cycle. While Music has clearly defined assessments for this outcome, faculty have yet to devise consistent means of assessing within the contexts of aural and keyboard skills labs, which have the potential to add perspective on how students analyze music.

**Co-curricular-Specific Changes**

Student Affairs continues to build and modify systems to use and report assessment outcomes as a basis for improvement. The division worked with OIE to train leaders, implement planning and reporting cycles, and to align its work with Academic Affairs ([2019-22 committee report summary](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684068)). Recent assessment reports included planned or completed improvements. The most recent [executive summary](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684055) presents an overview of activities and programs along with the evidence-based decisions made using assessment data. Other examples of multi-year assessment improvement cycles include [Wellness by Design](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684058).

A 2019 [P.R.A.C.T.I.C.E.S.](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684066) review identified areas for improvement across Student Affairs ([summary](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684067)). Many problems identified as critical were addressed including hazing, food insecurity and student employment.

The [More than Numbers](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684064) initiative (see 4.C.1) relied on assessment information to identify core components, specify problems to be addressed, and recommend and implement solutions. Results include a revised first-year experience to include a first-year seminar course, development of an Academic Advising Advisory Committee and changes to student employment practices.

4.B.3 -The institution’s processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty, instructional and other relevant staff members.

SNC’s assessment practices, first described in a 2003 [institutional plan](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684069), are modeled after the AAHE’s “[Nine Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684073).” “[Principles for Effective Assessment of Student Achievement](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684070)” offers another framework outlining processes, procedures and examples. SNC also improved its processes and methodologies using its [Assessment Academy](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684075) participation and the expertise of the team mentor and [consultant](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684074).

A summary of recently implemented good practices:

* The assessment infrastructure is broader and stronger and includes faculty in key leadership roles, as well as academic discipline assessment coordinators. The Assessment Committee includes administrative leaders, elected faculty from each academic division and staff. OIE continues to provide support through comprehensive data gathering, analysis and reporting work, including the Assessment Coordinator who participates on the three committees with assessment responsibilities (the Assessment Committee, CCC, CEPC).
* Faculty and staff receive training in assessment, from learning outcome articulation through data-based decision-making.
* Key stakeholders developed and endorsed the College-wide Learning Outcomes (CWLOs).
* The Core Curriculum adopted the CWLOs as its student learning outcomes, eliminating a previously large and somewhat duplicative set of learning goals.
* The CWLOs are also the foundation for assessment within Student Affairs, creating a critical bridge with Academic Affairs.
* Academic disciplines have articulated student learning outcomes and assess them on a regular schedule.
* Curriculum mapping relative to CWLOs continues to evolve for the Core Curriculum and disciplines.
* Course-level assessment focuses on student learning outcomes and objectives in the syllabus. [Syllabi](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684035) list learning outcomes and objectives, with faculty maintaining autonomy over specific assessment means.
* Key co-curricular programs have articulated desired student outcomes and assess them regularly.
* OIE routinely gathers, analyzes and shares indirect evidence on student learning outcome achievement and satisfaction with the student experience.
* Survey results suggest high levels of [current student](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684072) and [graduating senior](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684078) satisfaction with key aspects of the SNC experience. [Recent efforts](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684076) to deepen connections between Academic and Student Affairs continue to strengthen the living-learning experience and enrich the culture of assessment on campus.
* [Alumni surveys](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684071) suggest high levels of satisfaction with SNC and the student experience. Post-graduation outcomes suggest high levels of success in post-college employment and graduate school.

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## 4.C - Core Component 4.C

The institution pursues educational improvement through goals and strategies that improve retention, persistence and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

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

### Argument

4.C.1 - The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence and completion that are ambitious, attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations and educational offerings.

The SNC mission enables an educational environment that fosters intellectual, spiritual and personal development. The College regularly examines its progress on key metrics and invests strategically in improving student success.

**Student Retention**

Retention is an institutional priority, as articulated in the [College-wide Strategic Plan](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684106) and the [Student Affairs Strategic Plan](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684104). Goals include achieving an 88 percent fall-to-fall retention rate, which is both ambitious and consistent with [SNC’s vision](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684106).

Strategic discussions in 2019 and 2020 shifted focus to first-generation students and “those … not fully engaged in a positive way” ([2021 Board Report](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684103)). The retention rate for these 70 students was 81.4 percent, slightly below the College’s overall retention rate of [82 percent](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684094).

The College’s full-time first-year retention percentage [remains unchanged](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684105) over the last five years. While that rate is commendable by many standards, it can also be increased with a robust plan and effective execution — an appropriate goal for an institution that was recently ranked [Number 6](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684087) in the top 10 Catholic liberal arts institutions and was featured in the [“Colleges of Distinction”](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684086) [guide](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684085). As SNC works to increase retention, a coordinated, comprehensive and strategic approach is necessary and well underway. Twenty-two faculty and staff from each campus division (Academic Affairs, Business and Finance, Enrollment Management, Information Technology and Student Affairs) began work in August 2022 on a [new strategic enrollment management plan](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684088) to be submitted to the President’s Cabinet in early 2023.

**Student Persistence**

Retention data suggest ways to prioritize student persistence by identifying predictive risk factors. One factor, [belonging](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684107), is currently a topic of high focus. Realizing that students who feel engaged in the campus community are more likely to persist has led to several activities described below.

**Student Completion**

The College’s [four-year graduation rate](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684093) (aggregated over 10 years) ranks among the best in the Great Lakes Region, and four- and six-year rates place it among the top private colleges and universities in Wisconsin, including institutions with stronger academic profiles for entering students. SNC’s confidence in its four-year graduation record led to implementation of SNC’s [four-year graduation guarantee](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684091).

**Undergraduate Student Experience**

Creating a learning environment that challenges and supports students as they discover their potential was a key initiative of the [2016-21 Strategic Plan](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684092). Major activities to pursue this initiative include the development of a First-Year Seminar (FYS) course, establishment of an Academic Peer Mentoring (APM) program and the [More Than Numbers](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684102) (MTN) initiative.

Traditionally across higher education, particularly in small liberal arts colleges, first-year seminar courses have contributed to student success and retention. The FYS at SNC creates a community of learners, bringing small groups together with faculty with an emphasis on individual attention and collaborative learning. An FYS coordinator was named in 2020 and aided in developing 32 potential courses in spring 2021. FYS pilots were offered in fall 2021, comprising 15 sections of courses in English, Philosophy, and Theology and Religious Studies. The [program](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684101) [officially launched](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684108) in fall 2022, with 36 sections of courses in many disciplines. The seminars largely vary in content with, as examples, the FYS section in Geology covering entirely different content than the FYS section in Theatre Studies. Discussions are ongoing to refine and improve the FYS concept and to assess its outcomes.

Led by OASSA, the APM program began in fall 2017 “to help students succeed academically and socially” ([Strategic Plan](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684099)). APM pairs teaching assistants with peer mentors to offer guided review and peer instruction in a group setting using the instructor’s content as an alternative to traditional tutoring. The program has served first-year students in introductory biology, chemistry, accounting and genetics. Data collected and analyzed by OIE include mid- and end-of-semester program evaluations, participation and grade distributions and session observations of peer mentors. Students attending APM sessions have higher [retention rates](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684095) (first to second year) and grades than students who did not. Current APM [learning outcomes](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684096) also reveal benefits for mentors.

The [MTN](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684109) initiative sought to provide an enriching experience inside and outside the classroom to foster a meaningful living and learning experience. The MTN modules, each co-chaired by a faculty and staff member were: Module 1: Planting Seeds (First-Year Experience) to actively welcome and support admitted students; Module 2: Putting Down Roots (Residential Experience) to address the living experience; Module 3: Guiding the Branches (Advising) to enhance advising via training and creation of an Academic Advisement Advisory Committee; and Module 4: Cultivating the Vine (Career, Vocation and Calling) to emphasize meaningful and targeted employment opportunities for incoming and continuing students.

**Bridging the Work of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs**

Enhancing student retention, persistence and completion has increased collaboration between Academic and Student Affairs, ensuring implementation of the most [effective responses](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684088), another example of the SNC mission in action. Examples include a more structured [early alert process](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684089) and implementation of the Pharos software platform, [community-engaged/service learning](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684097), opportunities to [explore vocational calling](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684098), [Honors/REH](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684100), and [grants](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684090) for scholarships that provide cross-divisional interventions for student success.

4.C.2 - The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence and completion of its programs.

OIE provides program [retention, persistence and completion data](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684118), including the above mentioned [HERI College Senior Survey and Current Student surveys](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684113) to identify at-risk students and inform retention strategies. The HERI College Senior Survey is distributed annually to determine self-reported learning outcomes, campus satisfaction, student-faculty interactions, engagement and postgraduation plans. SNC also annually administers a first-destination survey to graduates. Faculty review these data as part of program review, and the [rubric](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684117) used by CEPC encourages programs to consider trends, challenges and opportunities. The data also are intentionally included in various campus and board presentations. Additionally, postgraduation and first-destination survey data are available to prospective and current students and parents. These data are also used extensively by Career and Professional Development, Enrollment and Admissions staff as well as faculty advisors.

OIE continues to analyze retention, persistence and completion data to enhance students’ success. Recent efforts include a risk-factor analysis, which enhances SNC’s ability to assist troubled students early. A dashboard, informally known as the Retention Pull Dashboard, informs Early Alert Team members about students needing outreach.

Institutional-level data appear on the [website](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684114) in compliance with the federal Student Right-to-Know Act. Degrees awarded, current majors and minors, course enrollment trends, graduation and retention rates, and undergraduate outcomes data are also publicly available. Degree completions are compiled and reported to [IPEDS](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684115) and are [publicly available](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684116).

4.C.3 - The institution uses information on student retention, persistence and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.

Retention is lower for [first-generation students](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684119) (78 percent) compared with non-first-generation populations (85 percent). As 20-25 percent of first-years at SNC are first-generation students, this group was identified as presenting an opportunity to enhance overall student persistence. Intervention activities include pursuing [grant funding](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684122) and a variety of activities and programs to generate engagement and a sense of belonging. Most visible — and an example of retention data being used in developing programs for at-risk populations — is the [Proud to Be First](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684123) program, celebrating the values, perspectives and accomplishments of current and former faculty and staff who were or are first-generation students. A commuter lounge provides a designated space for commuter students. Another program, [STAR](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684120) (Students Taking Academic Responsibility), promotes community prior to the start of classes for students of color.

Of particular concern is removing barriers that lead to Black student retention and graduation rates lagging significantly behind those of white, Hispanic and Asian students, a reality in many sectors of higher education across the nation. Recent hires and program initiatives seek to narrow that gap and address the social, economic and cultural barriers that lead to lower persistence and graduation rates.

SNC has a robust referral system, the Early Alert Program, that connects students with campus resources that will be most beneficial to them. Students may be referred by faculty or staff (via [Pharos](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684121) software) for any student success issue. Depending on its nature, an academic, health or welfare concern; misconduct or sexual harassment; and/or behavioral concern are appropriately directed and suitable and effective interventions then employed.

4.C.4 - The institution’s processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence and completion of programs reflect good practice. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)

SNC collects, analyzes and reports retention, persistence and degree completion using IPEDS criteria in defining variables. Statistics are found via OIE [dashboards](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684124) and the [Factbook](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684127).

[Retention profile](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684129) and [exit survey results](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684126) are shared with the vice president for Student Affairs and the Retention Committee to identify themes impacting persistence. Data fall into one of seven construct categories contributing to student retention: advising, social connectedness, involvement and engagement, faculty and staff approachability, business procedures, learning experiences, and support services.

Student success at SNC is enabled by outstanding teaching, strong student engagement, deep learning, and value-added programming and student interactions. Exit survey data document the results of continuous quality improvement efforts and SNC’s ability to create an educational environment that fosters intellectual, spiritual and personal development.

Taken together, all the above work has led to the development of a [comprehensive report](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684128) prepared by a College-wide [retention working group](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684125). The report includes data analysis, a study of current efforts, and a framework for a plan to ensure and enhance future success.

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## 4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

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

### Summary

**Accomplishments**

1. Development of a comprehensive institutional assessment plan.
2. Appropriate structural changes to address assessment practice improvement.
3. College-wide and cross-divisional engagement in assessment improvement.
4. Appropriate professional development for staff and faculty engaged in assessment improvement.
5. Evidence of effective assessment at the college, program and course level.
6. Evidence of Student Affairs assessment to improve retention and degree completion.
7. Improved alignment of Academic and Student Affairs efforts toward student success.

**Work in Progress**

1. Aligning SNC’s cyclical five-year program review process with improved assessment practices.
2. Steady improvement in learning outcome assessment.
3. Improving campus attention to success of first-generation and other non-traditional students.
4. Sustaining energy for a culture of “continuous improvement.”

**On the Horizon**

1. Further integration of curricular and co-curricular assessment practices.
2. Development of modules for ongoing training on assessment best-practices.
3. Assessment of “hard to measure” values such as belonging, ethical practice and spiritual development.
4. Further improvement on eliminating barriers to success for non-traditional students and other students from underrepresented groups.

### Sources

There are no sources.

## 5 - Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning

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

## 5.A - Core Component 5.A

Through its administrative structures and collaborative processes, the institution’s leadership demonstrates that it is effective and enables the institution to fulfill its mission.

1. Shared governance at the institution engages its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff and students—through planning, policies and procedures.
2. The institution’s administration uses data to reach informed decisions in the best interests of the institution and its constituents.
3. The institution’s administration ensures that faculty and, when appropriate, staff and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy and processes through effective collaborative structures.

### Argument

5.A.1 - Shared governance at the institution engages its internal constituencies — including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff and students — through planning, policies and procedures.

The SNC governance ecosystem is an interlocking and interdependent set of roles and responsibilities held by the corporate members (Norbertines), the Board of Trustees, the president, senior administration, faculty, staff and students.

SNC corporate members, trustees, president, senior administration, faculty and staff are experienced, competent, and committed professionals who have brought the College to new tiers of strength while steering through difficult waters, notably both during the Covid-19 pandemic and through recent governance challenges.

As detailed in the [by-laws](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684517), the Board of Trustees comprises up to 45 members ([currently 41](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684138)). Norbertines constitute not less than 20 percent and not more than 30 percent of the membership (currently 27 percent). The balance of trustee membership includes primarily lay leaders and alumni, whose professional expertise and personal commitment bring the deep and diverse perspectives necessary to operate effectively in a rapidly changing educational environment.

All new board members participate in an [orientation](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684140) program covering topics including governance structure, board roles and responsibilities, key aspects of College operations, and SNC’s current opportunities and challenges. College staff also meet virtually with new trustees to introduce the BoardEffect portal, which houses a comprehensive and evolving array of materials providing links to information on SNC and relevant websites. Biannual [retreats](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684149) immerse trustees in important and timely topics: as examples, 1) aligning the liberal arts academic experience with marketable skills; 2) considering current perspectives on private higher education; 3) understanding Catholic institutions and the evolving roles of religious and lay members; and 4) exploring Catholic and Norbertine values and contemporary understandings of sponsorship.

The board often engages directly with faculty, staff and students. For example, [faculty and staff](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684514) serve as non-voting, elected members of most board committees, excluding the Governance and Executive Committees where conflicts of interest would likely arise. Students also serve on some committees, and activities around meetings often include significant interaction with students. Trustees often attend Commencement and other campus activities, including athletic competitions, music and theater events. Trustees are typically donors and also encounter students at events hosted by the president or Advancement leaders.

Sponsored by SNC and available to trustees and campus community members, [European Norbertine Heritage Tours](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684515) offer participants a deeper understanding of SNC’s founding, mission, traditions and values, as well as the history of the 900-year-old Norbertine order, the College’s founder and sponsor. Suspended during Covid-19, these tours will resume in 2024, although a small group of student researchers will visit the United Kingdom in 2023.

Full board meetings occur three times annually at which trustees [exercise oversight](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684146): as examples, over the budget; the president’s selection of vice presidents; changes in tuition; and creation or discontinuance of institutional initiatives, including academic degrees, majors or programs, once appropriately vetted by the faculty and academic administration.

Through assignments to various board [committees](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684145), trustees lend their individual expertise and interests to the College’s agenda, especially in addressing its challenges and opportunities. Committees allow trustees to engage with their vice-presidential liaison and with faculty, staff and student members around College operations, performance and planning for the future. For example, the Finance Committee works collaboratively with the vice president of business and finance to address SNC’s financial policies and practices and monitor its financial performance. At the [February meeting](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684147), current-year budget outlook, proposed budget, investment updates, financing issues and endowment are typically reviewed and discussed. In addition, SNC provides the committee with [financial](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684148) updates and other information on a scheduled basis, including investment, debt management, financing and other strategic financial matters. Other board committees hold specific responsibilities as described in the [by-laws](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684517).

In summer 2022, both SNC’s president and the vice president for Academic Affairs left for new presidencies. So, this year College administration has been in the hands of interim leaders, and professionally led searches for permanent leaders are completed or underway. With combined service of more than 50 years in Catholic higher education leadership, SNC’s interim administrators, one of which is a former SNC president, are highly seasoned leaders. The President’s Cabinet, including the chief of staff and vice presidents, meets weekly to address major issues and act collectively on matters that affect the entire College or, at minimum, have implications across multiple divisions.

Following the public announcement on February 10, 2023 of Dr. Laurie Joyner as president-elect, concerns arose among a significant number of SNC faculty and staff about both the search process itself and the president-elect’s two prior presidencies characterized by contentious relationships with faculty, a mid-academic year departure, and a vote of no confidence. Following a closed faculty meeting where these issues were raised, the president-elect came to campus for two and a half days to address concerns, meeting with more than two dozen faculty in small groups and individually, as well as with several members of the President’s Cabinet. The president-elect plans to return to campus several times over the next months and is talking regularly with the interim president to ensure a smooth transition.

The board engages in both oversight and collaboration with SNC administrative leaders as appropriate. Over the years, the relationship between the board and SNC leaders has been characterized by mutual respect and shared commitment to the College’s vision, mission, purpose and strategic direction. That mutual respect continues unabated. That said, and as alluded to in Criterion 1 and 2 narratives, for a time during the last decade, the relationship among some members of the board, the sponsoring religious order and the president was significantly strained. This was largely due to conflict around the handling of a complex personnel matter on campus, known and publicly opined upon by faculty, staff and the local media. To a degree, external professional assessments and mutually productive dialogue restored the relationships to healthy function; that is, the president’s contract was extended, however several trustees chose to end their service on the Board. Nonetheless, throughout this conflict, the commitment to St. Norbert College of the president, the sponsor, the college community and the Board of Trustees never wavered, and it continues unabated. In fact, in the eyes of some, a stronger commitment to shared governance emerged as a result, though, as with most human organizations, significant work remains.

The College’s administrative leaders have clearly defined roles and responsibilities within the SNC governance structure. These include managing the College’s educational and business affairs and providing systematic and ongoing communication to the College community and beyond it. The [president’s role](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684150) and scope of responsibilities are detailed in the by-laws. The vice presidents’ roles are also mentioned, with fuller descriptions available in their respective position descriptions (e.g., [VPAA](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684141), [VPSA](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684142)). The SNC [organizational chart](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684134) outlines clear lines of responsibility and accountability. Currently, changes to structure within divisions, including reporting lines, are often discussed and shared with relevant constituent groups (e.g., [Academic Affairs assessment and scholarship infrastructure](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684143)).

Administrative leaders communicate important information appropriately. As an illustration, after each board meeting, the president provides a [written proceedings summary](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684151) to the campus community, as well as information about important decisions affecting it. In addition, the president and other senior leaders address the entire community, and/or appropriate segments of it, concerning institutional priorities at the beginning of both the academic year and spring semester. In October 2022 and again in January and February 2023, for example, the president and several vice presidents addressed the college community on budget and enrollment assessments and plans. Additional examples include email announcements about [board membership changes](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684513); the response to Covid-19 ([May 2020](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684516), [updated protocol 2022](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684135)); an [end-of-year update](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684152); and the [final note in 2022 from outgoing President Brian Bruess](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684153) to the College community, as well as the [news story](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684154) about his departure.

The vice president for Academic Affairs also communicates effectively with faculty and staff. Throughout the pandemic, the VPAA sent weekly updates (2020 samples: [September](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684510), [October](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684512) and [November](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684511)). That practice has continued, with the interim vice president writing a weekly message to faculty, academic staff and other interested campus members, addressing a variety of timely topics and issues (e.g., examples [1](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684546), [2](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684547)). In recent months, the vice president for Academic Affairs and the academic deans collaborated to articulate and share an [academic meta-vision](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684136) to lend direction and forward momentum to Strategic Plan implementation and to lay solid groundwork for new leadership. In December 2022, six open meetings were held with any interested faculty and academic staff members, and the deans also discussed the meta-vision with the President’s Cabinet and the Board in February 2023. As prelude to that work, a [document created in March 2022](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684548) outlined academic strategic priorities.

All divisions share information within their own areas, as well as with the broader College community, through meetings (both in person and virtual), via [presentation](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684137) materials, and electronically (via email, videos and webpages). As examples, [Business and Finance](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684549) regularly updates its members on division-specific and College-wide initiatives; Information Technology maintains communication around [IT security](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684550) and [training opportunities](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684551); Advancement shares progress on [fundraising campaigns](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684552); and Enrollment Management and Communications provides campus-wide updates on [historical enrollment data](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684139) and shares [enrollment, marketing and financial aid strategies](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684144) used to recruit future SNC students.

Faculty actively engage in institutional governance in several ways. [Section II of the Faculty Handbook](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684520) articulates the faculty’s governance role, affirming primary faculty responsibility in areas such as “curriculum, the matter and methods of instruction, research, faculty status, those aspects of student life which relate to the educational process (including athletics), requirements for degrees offered by the College, determination of when requirements have been met, and recommending to the President and Board of Trustees the granting of degrees” (§II. 3.1). Faculty responsibility in this and other areas is subject only to the authority of the Board of Trustees or to the president or senior administrators to which the board delegates responsibility. The faculty is recognized as an important player in the governance of the College, and their engagement is evident in membership rosters for various committees, high attendance at the six faculty meetings held during the academic year, and the faculty’s role in both consultative and deliberative matters. Even faculty attendance at Zoom meetings held during 2020-2022 typically averaged 80 percent or higher.

As previously discussed, SNC’s administrative structures are evolving to foster greater collaboration and a stronger sense of shared commitment to institutional goals. Trustee committees include administrators, faculty, staff and often students. Distinct governance groups have their own organizational structures that foster inclusive collaboration within and across groups.

Especially important is ongoing collaboration regarding academic offerings, policies and processes. For example, the Board Academic Committee includes faculty, staff and student representatives. Both the [Core Curriculum and Curriculum and Educational Policy Committees](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684514) advise the vice president for Academic Affairs and oversee changes in academic offerings, requirements, policies and procedures, with substantive changes often requiring approval of the faculty as a whole. Additional faculty committees focus on specific academic areas, such as service learning, student research, faculty development and faculty personnel decisions.

SNC has [25 academic working committees](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684519) that provide ongoing input or direction on academic, curricular and/or faculty matters such as nominations and elections, sabbaticals, and faculty development. Although composed primarily of full-time faculty, membership can also include staff and students. In addition, at least 14 College-wide committees provide ongoing input on broader issues, such as employee benefits, diversity, assessment and master planning. The list of Combined College Committees reflects the depth of engagement that the board and SNC community regularly demonstrate. In addition to these committees, the faculty chair may create other short-term committees to address issues, such as updates to internal faculty governance structure, the Faculty Handbook, and [tenure and promotion](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684518) changes.

Staff also actively engage in institutional governance through the Staff Association, open to all employees. Through regular meetings, employees experience meaningful vehicles for interaction and collaboration. Sample [meeting minutes](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684553) and [presentations](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684554) demonstrate staff commitment to SNC. Staff also engage in governance through membership on College-wide and board committees.

Students as well are appropriately involved in institutional governance. Its [constitution](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684555) notes that the Student Government Association (SGA) “serves as the relevant, representative voice of the student body before the wider community within and outside of St. Norbert College,” providing a vehicle through which students participate in policy formulation and evolution. Students also serve as engaged members of board committees related to student life, technology, academic affairs, mission and heritage, and enrollment. Students are also represented on most or all standing committees, underscoring SNC’s commitment to inclusiveness and shared governance.

5.A.2 - The institution’s administration uses data to reach informed decisions in the best interests of the institution and its constituents.

Decision-making processes at SNC connect with shared governance structures in ways that reflect appropriate consideration of data relevant to the changing environment of higher education in general, and of SNC in particular. Relevant examples follow.

* Pandemic-related challenges led Business and Finance staff to develop a new, more transparent process for budgeting. This [process](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684162), which continues to evolve, allows budget “realignment” within a fiscal year based on available revenues and changing circumstances, thus enabling a more accurate outlook on fiscal year outcomes.
* At both macro and micro levels, data inform the admissions operation, a central variable in developing and monitoring the institutional budget. At the macro level, enrollment leaders and the President’s Cabinet review data and other data-driven reports from both external and internal sources to determine a preferred and feasible enrollment strategy. College leaders and an [appointed task force](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684157) are currently seeking to determine an “optimal SNC enrollment” by reviewing external trends revealed through data, recent patterns among likely SNC students revealed through more micro-data analysis, as well as data concerning prospective student preferences on likely academic majors and other factors affecting a student’s decision to enroll.
* [Persistence to degree completion](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684164) is a critical area of analysis. Overseen by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE), [data collection is robust](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684159), professionally managed, and gleaned from internal and external sources to aid SNC in determining strategy and changing behaviors, and even direction, as warranted. Data collection, analysis and use range from broad review and application of national and regional trends about employment and College decisions, to [microscopic disaggregation](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684158) of data about specific academic classes or groups of classes that may affect student retention and about levels of student tuition balance and other financial factors that may affect the same, as well as more focused analysis about student engagement in athletics and other co-curricular activities, including housing, advising and wellness concerns that may affect a student’s decision to remain enrolled.
* Market trend data, especially concerning local and regional workforce trends, guide decisions about new program development as well as decisions to realign, repackage or close programs, and to align such decisions with faculty strengths and SNC’s identity as a college of the liberal arts. Recent examples emerging from multi-constituent discussions include Data Analytics and an Actuarial Science concentration in Mathematics.
* Large capital projects require careful planning and analysis of data about current and projected needs; current institutional capacity and space usage; and various financial factors, including debt considerations and potential fundraising targets and timing. The director of facilities, CFO and President’s Cabinet undertake this [master plan](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684163) work. The Registrar manages classroom data usage.
* Faculty efforts to [improve the tenure and promotion process](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684160) created a new, more structured and transparent system. These changes responded to data collected from extensive interviews conducted by external legal advisers. Gathering faculty input included multiple emails, discussions at division meetings and multiple full faculty meetings. The faculty continues to refine SNC’s tenure and promotion processes, including approving additional changes to the [promotion process](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684161) in 2021.
* Comparative salary data for faculty are routinely gleaned and reviewed from the College and University Personnel Association (CUPA). Local market data are used to review staff salaries. The current compensation system is under active review and changes are planned, including assessing the results of the current system and reviewing adjunct faculty salaries.

Additional information about the use of data in SNC’s Strategic Plan design, implementation and assessment can be found later in Criterion 5.

5.A.3 - The institution’s administration ensures that faculty and, when appropriate, staff and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy and processes through effective collaborative structures.

As previously demonstrated, SNC administrative structures foster collaboration and shared commitment around institutional goals. Various divisions have their own administrative sub-structures that also foster collaboration within each constituent group. [Faculty and College-wide committees](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684175) focus on other specific aspects of academic affairs, such as service learning, student research and faculty development. Especially important is ongoing collaboration regarding academic offerings, policies and processes, and their vital connection to enrollment.

The student experience and students’ reactions to that experience are seriously considered, and student feedback and observations are particularly valuable in assessing teaching effectiveness. By completing [Student Opinion of Teaching (SOOT) evaluations](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684170), students provide feedback on course content, resources, instructor behaviors and effectiveness, and evaluation methods, offering important information for tenure and promotion evaluations, as well as in its aggregate form (by discipline, division, etc.) for program reviews (e.g., [Business Administration](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684165), [Visual and Performing Arts](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684173)).

[Regular surveys](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684176) (e.g., [Current Student Survey](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684166) and [Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) Senior Survey](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684168)) provide valuable student input into policy and decision-making. As mentioned in Criteria 3 and 4, these instruments inform ([Student Survey infographic](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684167)) assessment of and satisfaction with instructional and extracurricular programs and initiatives. They also provide indirect assessment concerning the extent to which students meet College-wide and Core Curriculum program learning goals.

OIE provides online dashboards ([Learning Outcomes](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684172), [Program Satisfaction](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684174), [Student Engagement](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684171)) that incorporate findings along with [guidelines](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684177) for using such information in program review and evaluation ([template](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684169)).

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## 5.B - Core Component 5.B

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

1. The institution has qualified and trained operational staff and infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.
2. The goals incorporated into the mission and any related statements are realistic in light of the institution’s organization, resources and opportunities.
3. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring its finances.
4. The institution’s fiscal allocations ensure that its educational purposes are achieved.

### Argument

St. Norbert College has adequate [financial strength](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684186) and a well-qualified workforce. A particularly significant measure of financial health is the Composite Financial Index. The benchmark for a healthy college is 3.0. For St. Norbert College, the index for the prior four years is [4.61 (FY22), 8.78 (FY21), 3.46 (FY20) and 4.08 (FY19)](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684183).

The College’s physical and technological infrastructures are modernizing and growing. These positive attributes allow SNC to fulfill its mission and improve educational quality. The College’s [Strategic Plan](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684182), [Campus Master Plan](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684185) and [Strategic Enrollment Plan](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684184) are integrated and closely monitored to position SNC to respond effectively to future challenges and opportunities.

5.B.1 - The institution has qualified and trained operational staff and infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.

**Sufficient Human Resources**

The College has more than [650 employees, with an FTE of 572](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684202). In [fall 2014](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684206), the College had 133 full-time instructional faculty (2,112 undergraduate enrollment) and 130 full-time instructional faculty in [fall 2021](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684202) (1,941 undergraduate enrollment). Despite a decrease in full-time faculty, the student-faculty ratio decreased from 13.6:1 in fall 2014 to 12.7:1 in fall 2021. [More than 96 percent](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684203) of full-time faculty are terminally qualified in their field, up from [89 percent in fall 2014](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684191). Of 130 full-time instructional faculty in 2021, 79 (61 percent) were tenured and 41 (32 percent) on the tenure track.

Of tenured faculty, 25 (32 percent) are full professors, 38 (48 percent) are associate professors and 16 (20 percent) are tenured assistant professors ([IPEDS](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684202)).

Comparing tenured and tenure-track faculty with respect to gender and race/ethnicity reveals increasing numbers and percentages of female faculty members (47 percent tenured versus 54 percent tenure-track) and faculty members of color (10 percent tenured versus 22 percent tenure-track). In brief, the College faculty is intentionally becoming more diverse.

Given turnover in higher education in general, candidate pools for staff openings are adequate, with prospective employees receiving offers typically within eight weeks of position announcements. The time to fill faculty positions varies by discipline, with recruiting generally starting six to 15 months before the anticipated start date.

Many institutions outsource support functions like janitorial or dining services; however, to date, these functions remain internally managed at SNC because they contribute significantly to the student experience. As an example, SNC’s in-house [food service is ranked](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684204) “best in Wisconsin” and among the best in the nation for both quality and cost. Also, in the competitive labor market, managing both dining and housekeeping services internally has meant consistency in service and fewer interruptions.

The College invests substantial resources in the development and success of employees, as described in 3.C.7. Key examples:

* Formerly, new SNC supervisors participated in the [WAICU Leadership Development Series training program](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684193) featuring six sessions on a variety of topics. At present, SNC Human Resources partners with the SNC Center for Exceptional Leadership to offer the [Green Knights Leadership Academy](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684198) for campus supervisors, which allows incorporation of SNC’s core values and mission into the curriculum.
* A formal [staff mentoring program](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684197) ensures that new staff receive the support they need.
* Faculty development is supported through the [Office of Faculty Development](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684196), currently led by two senior members of the faculty.
* A [professional development fund](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684195) allows employees to apply for institutional funds when departmental budgets are not sufficient to pay for approved opportunities.

**Sufficient Physical Infrastructure**

The College’s campus includes 46 well-managed buildings on 114 acres. Recognizing that many campus buildings are older with maintenance needs likely to increase, SNC grew its annual corrective maintenance budget by 20 percent between 2015 and 2021, and additional increases will be necessary.

Guided by the [Campus Master Plan](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684207), the President’s Cabinet reviews recommendations and plans for renovation or construction, which are then presented to the Finance Committee of the Board of Trustees for approval. Over the past decade, SNC has experienced unprecedented growth and modernization in achieving master plan goals. Following a $40 million building renovation in 2015, the College renovated and expanded the new [Mulva Family Fitness & Sports Center](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684192) with an additional $26 million upgrade. These and other [physical infrastructure projects](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684201) represent significant progress in strengthening educational and campus life programs, and offer documented evidence that SNC’s physical resources are sufficient to meet needs. In summer 2022, the College invested $6 million in renovations for residential housing and is scheduling further renovations and construction that align with strategic priorities.

Funding for major facility projects comes from fundraising and gifts, reserves, and through debt financing. Another source, the College’s capital fund, provides resources for debt service, future projects and maintenance. Its sources include gifts, operations reserves and investment income.

**Sufficient Technological Infrastructure**

As technology advancements and demands increased SNC invested, evident in the long list of new and enhanced technological infrastructure expenditures ([November 2020 report](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684194); [July 2022 report](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684199)). Taken together, these investments allow SNC to address emerging needs effectively. The College’s rolling five-year investment plan for technology infrastructure includes system modernization and digital transformation; refreshing and expanding classroom technology; modernizing legacy systems; upgrading network and system infrastructure (i.e., wired and wireless network, servers and storage capacity); and investing in information security, wireless infrastructure and enterprise content management.

For example, SNC’s digital transformation investment in [Workday](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684205) seeks to modernize HR, finance and planning enterprise systems, thus enabling SNC to deliver a best-in-class user experience; increase strategic, financial and operational agility by harnessing data and analytics for insightful decision-making; create process integration and real-time collaboration across departments; and create operational efficiencies. Importantly, the Workday rollout has featured numerous [training](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684200) opportunities; however, skepticism and frustration among faculty members and some staff remain.

5.B.2 - The goals incorporated into the mission and any related statements are realistic in light of the institution’s organization, resources and opportunities.

Guided by SNC’s strategic priorities, resource allocation is managed through the annual [budget process](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684213). This process establishes guidelines and invites each division to submit prioritized requests linked to strategic priorities. Resource decisions seek to fulfill SNC’s educational purpose which, as the mission statement articulates, provides an environment fostering the intellectual, spiritual and personal development of students. Requests are vetted by the appropriate vice president, then forwarded to the President’s Cabinet for evaluation and funding recommendations. The cabinet considers projected available revenues and prioritizes requests before recommending an annual budget to the president, who then brings it to the Finance Committee and Board of Trustees. Final approval rests with the corporate Norbertine members.

Evidence of positive budget outcomes at SNC in most years over the past decade demonstrates that revenue goals and spending controls are realistic and prudent. As with most institutions, Covid-19 presented serious [budgetary and other challenges](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684219). The board gave the administration the financial latitude it needed to navigate the pandemic’s impact, and the campus was aided by its early return to predominantly in-person instruction. Nonetheless, the pandemic and regional demographic changes led to disappointing enrollment outcomes in both 2020 and 2022, and the College responded with strategic budget cutting and use of operating reserves that it had built over several years. Although SNC’s [optimal enrollment exercise](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684209) continues at this writing, with outcomes not expected until late spring 2023, at present the campus sees some encouraging signs of a return to pre-pandemic performance by 2025.

Core financial strength and careful management are critical in allowing SNC to manage higher education’s enrollment and inflationary headwinds while maintaining unwavering focus on mission.

Efforts to expand opportunities for students beyond the SNC campus include several current partnerships focused on maintaining or expanding enrollment. They include partnerships with:

* [Marquette Law School](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684212)
* [UW Oshkosh](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684211) for special education
* [Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW) School of Pharmacy](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684214)
* [MCW Schools of Biomedical Science and Public Health](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684218)
* [Concordia School of Health Professions](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684371)

Other recent academic program developments with revenue potential include:

* A new [Data Analytics major](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684217) approved in 2020.
* Two new Teacher Education majors approved in 2021 ([agenda](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684208), [minutes](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684210)).
* Launch of the [Center for Exceptional Leadership](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684216) in 2016.

5.B.3 - The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring its finances.

Led by its financial staff, SNC has a well-developed and [manageable budget timeline and process](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684231) centered on mission alignment, collaborative planning, financial agility, communication, accountability and transparency. To illustrate, the FY23 budget development process began with a [budget planning and development presentation](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684232) to budget managers and those who routinely review actuals to budget/forecasts. SNC analyzes key budget drivers including enrollment, tuition, tuition discount rate, room and board, endowment spending, compensation, benefits, corrective maintenance, and contingency. Department budgets have in the past, and perhaps unwisely, been “rolled forward” from the prior year. However, the CFO is undertaking a much more analytical look at budget assumptions through a rolling departmental review process. These reviews analyze and reset department budgets to reflect current realities and strategic priorities.

SNC’s [organizational chart](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684221) depicts lines of responsibility and accountability. Budget managers can obtain relevant [financial information](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684223) in various formats and levels of detail through self-service financial reports from SNC’s resource planning system, [Adaptive Planning](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684222). In response to changing environments, [fall and spring budget adjustments](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684229) realign budgets based on current revenue and expense actuals as well as updated enrollment information prior to locking it for the upcoming fall forecast.

Budget managers ensure appropriate financial oversight in areas for which they are responsible, with [responsibilities](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684231) clearly defined and [training](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684226) provided; Financial Planning and Analysis ensures [appropriate oversight](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684227). The [Contracts for Goods or Services Policy](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684220) also requires divisional vice president approval for expenditures more than $5,000 and CFO approval for more than $10,000. The accounts payable review function and the online [purchase order approval process](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684224) ensure policy adherence.

Financial Planning and Analysis provides monthly [trend reports](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684228) to the vice presidents, showing results compared to budget and projections based on trends. Through [various mechanisms](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684225), the Accounting department monitors problematic conditions and takes corrective action where appropriate.

The Board of Trustees Finance Committee receives [regular financial reports](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684186) and meets three times annually to discuss SNC’s financial outlook. Financial statements are [audited annually](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684230) by an external accounting firm.

5.B.4 - The institution’s fiscal allocations ensure that its educational purposes are achieved.

Like most enrollment-driven institutions, SNC is working hard to solidify its current enrollment and grow future enrollment where it can. Led by experienced leaders, this is accomplished through a combination of market analysis, strategic investment and an aggressive approach to retention. For instance, the College’s Strategic Plan highlights several academic programs with potential for enrollment growth for intentional design, expansion or reimagination. Next steps here include translating program strategy to enrollment and financial projections for upcoming years.

Although budgetary requests frequently exceed available funds, SNC works to align resource allocation to strategy and to ensure equity while adhering to key priorities. Budget allocations for specific divisions depend on the area’s function and its specific array of priorities.

On the revenue side, College leaders assess the competitive market as well as affordability and other factors in making recommendations for tuition and fee increases, noting both the tuition level and its implications for financial aid. The College also is carefully exploring diversification of its revenue sources, including analysis of growth areas, such as graduate, summer, micro-credentials, executive education and online offerings.

The endowment [spending policy](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684235) seeks to ensure long-term stability from this revenue source. Recent [endowment earnings and withdrawals](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684241) reflect a reasonable, sustainable and standard level of endowment spending.

**Sufficient Fiscal Resources**

A documented history of financial stability allows SNC to successfully operate in pursuit of its mission, as evident in [2022 Audited Financial Statements](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684242) and [statements from prior years](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684238). Net assets grew from about $226 million in May 2014 to $357 million in May 2022.

Each year, SNC strives to develop a balanced budget for submission to the president and Board of Trustees. Careful resource monitoring enables flexibility and priority realignment to ensure that major operational and educational program objectives can be met.

The College also engages in strong philanthropic resource development. In 2015, SNC completed its [Full Ahead](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684370) campaign with $105 million in commitments. This campaign focused primarily on facility development and construction, with the Gehl-Mulva Science Center, Michels Commons, Schneider Stadium and [Mulva Family Fitness and Sports Center](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684234) among the main projects funded.

In 2019, the College launched the [Support What Matters](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684237) campaign, a major philanthropic effort focused on endowment growth. Of its $125 million goal, [$90 million](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684236) had been secured by December 2022. A [$30 million](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684239) unrestricted endowment gift initiated the current campaign, and nine additional commitments of $1 million or more, as well as nearly 100 commitments in excess of $100,000, are secured or pledged. Given conversations with more than 300 major-gift prospects over the past year, SNC anticipates that Support What Matters will conclude above its goal during 2024.

St. Norbert Annual Fund gifts exceeded $2 million in both fiscal years 2020 and 2022, the first two times SNC reached this milestone. The annual A Day to uKnight fundraising effort set another in a string of annual records, raising nearly [$700,000](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684240) in 2022 from numerous, mostly smaller gifts. The College also has nearly 200 documented estate gifts anticipated to yield more than $33.5 million in upcoming years.

Including both endowment and capital components, SNC’s investment fund has grown from $106 million in 2014 to approximately [$186 million in May 2022](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684242). The fund surpassed its performance objective (consumer price index plus 5 percent) over both three- and five-year terms. Over time, solid investment returns positively impact endowment allocations, which are governed by the Board of Trustees [spending policy](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684235).

When the pandemic surfaced in early 2020, College leaders quickly responded by adjusting spending down and recalibrating the next several years’ goals. After a stronger-than-expected class in fall 2021, the fall 2022 class fell short of projections. SNC again adjusted expenses accordingly, and it has accelerated academic program renewal and expansion to better align market demands with faculty strengths.

Like many colleges post-Covid-19, SNC faced a significant gap between anticipated revenues and operating expenses in FY23. Board leaders approved a plan to erase the $6.3MM gap over three years and, as of March 10, 2023, at least sixty percent ($3.8MM) of the gap has been erased through careful examination of ongoing expenses, several permanent structural reductions and prudent management of reductions enabled by attrition. Fewer than eight currently filled positions were eliminated. Positive enrollment signs for fall 23 and a plan to address the remaining gap are in place and confidence about eliminating the gap entirely is high. The President’s Cabinet continues to closely monitor both the “close the gap” plan and its impact, including through aggressive pursuit of new program development and revenue diversification efforts.

Current work and revised projections have increased confidence that fall 2025 data will reflect evidence of attainment of, or substantial progress toward, enrollment recovery and a balanced budget. Program review and assessment of currently budgeted and open positions will provide greater budget flexibility and alignment of spending with available resources. In addition, work is progressing on accelerating net income development in the College’s revenue-generating centers and other non-tuition areas.

In summary, St. Norbert College has adequate [financial strength](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3Ffileid%3D1684186), a well-qualified workforce, and adequate systems, infrastructure and facilities to meet its educational objectives now and into the future. SNC’s physical and technological infrastructures are modern and growing. These positive attributes lead to optimism — tinged with prudent caution — about SNC’s ability to fulfill its mission and improve educational quality in the future.

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## 5.C - Core Component 5.C

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning and improvement.

1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities, including, as applicable, its comprehensive research enterprise, associated institutes and affiliated centers.
2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning and budgeting.
3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.
4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity, including fluctuations in the institution’s sources of revenue and enrollment.
5. Institutional planning anticipates evolving external factors, such as technology advancements, demographic shifts, globalization, the economy and state support.
6. The institution implements its plans to systematically improve its operations and student outcomes.

### Argument

5.C.1 - The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities, including, as applicable, its comprehensive research enterprise, associated institutes and affiliated centers.

SNC’s mission and strategic priorities guide resource allocation, with a significant percentage of the budget directly addressing SNC’s mission to educate students and prepare them for leadership. As examples, in [2021](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684253) educational and general expenses ($71 million), including faculty salaries and instructional support, represented 87 percent of total operating expenses ($81 million). Specific allocations to instruction ($32 million), academic support ($5.1 million), student services ($12.1 million) and direct aid to students (including $2.1 million of HEERF support), represented 52.2 percent of total operating expenses. The College’s discount rate stood at 49.7 percent in fall 2022, along with nearly $40 million in institutionally financed need- and merit-based aid and additional endowment-funded scholarship aid.

[Strategic priorities](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684250) guide new budget allocations and adjustments. Unless addressing an unavoidable increased cost, new requests must link to strategic priorities or address a compelling safety or legal requirement. As a current example, a high priority to improve and align advising and career center functions has led to planned resource realignment and budget additions in both areas. These resources will facilitate hiring professional and support staff and enable substantial facilities upgrades and the physical integration of these important functions. Significant space improvements and relocation of both offices to an area with more student traffic is part of the plan to improve these operations and provide the resources necessary to do so.

Several centers and institutes at SNC are connected to the academic enterprise or to major institutional priorities, such as equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging. The centers are staffed by professional staff and faculty, with funding from a variety of endowment, operating budget and grant sources. Several centers are revenue generating, and the College is assessing the future of some based on congruence with institutional mission and priorities and capacity to generate net revenue.

For a college of St. Norbert’s size, financial support for faculty research is substantial, with assistance coming from [several endowed funds](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684251) and other work of the Advancement office.

Finally, the College’s [Strategic Plan](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684250), [Campus Master Plan](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684254), and [Strategic Enrollment Plan](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684252) are integrated and closely monitored to assist SNC in responding effectively to the future challenges and opportunities already emerging.

5.C.2 - The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning and budgeting.

SNC employs regular and systematic [academic program review](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684256) on a rolling five-year cycle. This review includes data collection and assessment regarding student learning outcomes in order to evaluate programs and drive necessary change, including resource allocation. [Program review elements](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684255) require the following:

* Updated mission and vision statements;
* Description and assessment of changes since the previous reporting period regarding curriculum and students, faculty, staff and program resources;
* Description of EDIB efforts;
* Data regarding student learning outcomes;
* Evidence of meeting goals from the reporting period; and
* New goals and action steps for the upcoming cycle.

In addition to data collected and analyzed about individual programs, student feedback is obtained through surveys and other data provided by OIE to help faculty review program content and operations. This process led to dissolving at least one program, and to conversations among faculty and staff about “priorities among priorities.” In addition to supporting an integrated and improved Center for Academic Advising and Career Services, other developmental conversations are underway, including those surrounding a proposed Center for Teaching and Learning and an intensified priority on interdisciplinary initiatives.

5.C.3 - The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.

SNC’s [Strategic Plan](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684258) was thoughtfully developed upon three pillars: Mission Radiance, Educational Quality, and Financial Strength and Operational Excellence. Divisional leadership, specifically within Academic Affairs and Student Affairs, have developed their own strategic plans that reflect the College-wide plan. Plans were developed with ample opportunity for [input from constituent groups](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684267), especially with the faculty during the fall 2022 semester, when the [academic meta-vision](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684265) was created. The Student Affairs [strategic plan](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684262) clearly describes its work in serving students, which also serves as a framework for articulating how the division will assess its effectiveness. Taken together, these plans build upon St. Norbert’s long tradition of academic excellence in its efforts to intensify mission focus, increase enrollment, prioritize student success, expand and diversify financial resources, and improve and renovate existing facilities and build new ones, positioning the College for a strong future. Strategic Plan implementation also leads to improved internal systems and operations, especially those directly affecting [student success](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684260). Key examples include [Workday](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684264) and [Adaptive Planning](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684266), digital transformations, the College’s evolving [Campus Master Plan](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684268), as well as the [academic meta-vision](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684265) and [strategic retention and high-impact practice work](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684263).

Although perhaps not adequately implemented in prior planning efforts, finding effective ways to engage faculty and staff more fully in strategic planning, along with students and other external constituents, is part of SNC’s planning for its future and currently in heightened stages of development.

Following visits over the past decade, [HLC team recommendations](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684259) for institutional development primarily focused on the need for greater attention to [assessment processes](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684261) and related evidence-based processes. Along with ongoing efforts to enhance the College’s many strengths, HLC recommendations have decidedly influenced [institutional planning](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684257).

Planning involves iterative efforts to strengthen and focus institutional energy and resources and to galvanize campus commitment around its educational mission. Through planning, SNC has strengthened and improved its academic programs, addressed enrollment challenges (even maintaining enviable enrollment during the pandemic), realigned institutional structures, and improved both its physical facilities and fiscal analysis and management. The results have strengthened SNC’s conviction that strategic planning is the clearest path toward a preferred future. The College’s planning regimen builds on strengths, addresses challenges directly, and ensures that SNC remains faithful to its enduring purpose and values through its consistent and permeating focus on mission.

The Board of Trustees formally adopted SNC’s [Strategic Plan](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684250) in 2021. Additional work, initiated by SNC’s interim leaders during 2022-23, includes campus-wide and trustee discussions about clarifying its academic vision, especially as that relates to enrollment stability and student success. Leaders are assessing the plan’s key components by responding to questions such as:

* Is this a desirable direction? Does it reflect the best response we can make to the opportunities and challenges we face (academic and program aspects)?
* Is it feasible to implement this plan (financial and management aspects)?
* What are the implications of adopting this plan in terms of mission, resources, College image and visibility, and other important considerations?

Organizational responsibility for strategic planning rests with the president, who leads administrators, faculty and staff in analyzing present realities, envisioning a desired future and adopting strategy to attain it. The president, President’s Cabinet and OIE oversee the plan’s implementation and assessment of its outcomes. The board approves the plan and oversees ongoing review of it.

SNC’s planning work includes all community members who choose to participate. Vice presidents and their staff develop derivative action plans for their respective areas, correlating them with the institutional plan, discussing them with colleagues and further refining them as warranted. The vice president for Academic Affairs plans for curriculum renewal, faculty development, assessment and program initiation, while the vice president for Enrollment Management develops management and communication plans for recruitment and enrollment of students, as well as for SNC’s brand messaging. The vice president for Student Affairs plans co-curricular programs and services for students, and the vice president for Advancement oversees planning for external relationships, including fundraising and alumni programs. The vice presidents for Finance and Information Services plan for administrative services, technology, operational and business affairs.

SNC regularly monitors external variables to gauge their potential impact. Trustees with extensive business experience assist administrators in assessing the external environment, including economic and demographic realities and their potential effects. Annual reviews of the financial forecast permits adjustments to assumptions when considering new data and realities. Linking evaluation and monitoring procedures with the budget process helps SNC make appropriate shifts in resource allocation. Because regular review is part of St. Norbert’s planning process, the College can easily incorporate goals suggested by self-study outcomes and recommendations.

SNC leaders meet frequently to review progress, integrate plans across functional areas, agree upon strategic priorities and assess their financial implications. The President’s Cabinet develops the critical links connecting planning priorities, resource needs and revenue opportunities, while open sessions with the campus community inform cabinet deliberations and provide a forum for sharing suggestions, challenges and decisions. Meetings focus on the content and potential of proposed priorities and critical questions about their desirability.

The dynamic nature of the planning process as well as the Strategic Plan itself help ensure a vital future for St. Norbert College.

5.C.4 - The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity, including fluctuations in the institution’s sources of revenue and enrollment.

Current realities affecting colleges and universities everywhere — including SNC — have led its leaders to intensify efforts to understand the many variables impacting the College and to plan based on that careful analysis. The variables are complex and include shifting student demand, market evolution and regional demographics, faculty tenure, affordability, competition, and public perceptions of higher education in general.

In 2011, the president commissioned a thorough analysis of SNC’s current and future enrollment capacity, and a task force explored the topic of [optimal enrollment](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684273). Because the campus and the external higher education environment have changed significantly over the decade, a new iteration of this work began in [summer 2022](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684270). The principal optimal strategy in 2011 focused on enrollment growth through increased retention, and that is likely to remain a significant focus of the current work. The 2011 analysis and findings helped to identify the desired size and makeup of the undergraduate student body that, in turn, helped shape longer-range strategy. As an example, optimal enrollment planning informed [Campus Master Plan](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684274) development, including consideration of such items as physical facilities, technology improvements, course delivery systems and student expectations. Jointly led by the College’s vice presidents for Enrollment Management and Student Affairs, the current process is expected to conclude in spring 2023 — prior to the anticipated arrival of the College’s ninth president.

SNC is blessed with a beautiful campus and facilities more than adequate to meet its needs. Ongoing discussions consider the highest and best uses of current and planned spaces. As an example, the science building renovation and SNC’s important partnership with the [Medical College of Wisconsin](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684269), including hosting its new Northeast Wisconsin regional campus at SNC, contributed to a significant rise in science majors starting in 2014.

Like many small private colleges, St. Norbert College relies on [tuition and fees](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684271) as its major revenue source, with annual projections based on conservative enrollment estimates. If higher enrollments materialize, contingency plans direct the use of additional net income, often to the College’s operating reserves or to pressing unmet needs. Economic conditions like inflation and employment levels, as well as increasing pressure to make higher education affordable, seriously affect SNC’s enrollment and revenue projections and their resulting financial impact.

After the fall and spring census dates each semester, the budget is reviewed to determine projected results and realign as warranted. As stated above, unanticipated revenue may be directed toward spending priorities or to the operating reserve. Alternatively, if a shortfall is projected, the President’s Cabinet limits or delays expenditures as possible.

Developing non-tuition revenue streams is critical to balancing tuition dependency and buffering against enrollment fluctuations. In 2013, the president charged an innovation task force with generating transformative revenue-generating ideas with the capacity to fortify the institution in coming years. It was disbanded after the [2016-2021 Strategic Plan](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684272) was developed and implemented.

5.C.5 - Institutional planning anticipates evolving external factors, such as technology advancements, demographic shifts, globalization, the economy and state support.

In its institutional planning, St. Norbert College considers an array of external factors, especially those experiencing high fluctuation or change.

[Demographic shifts](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684275) will be particularly pronounced in the upper Midwest, and SNC leaders regularly discuss their impact on enrollment and on the College’s ability to attract and retain a diverse workforce. A recent example includes the hire of several [faculty members from diverse backgrounds](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684277), along with efforts to expand applicable professional development opportunities, to assist faculty and staff in meeting emerging needs of a changing student body.

A generation ago, St. Norbert College was widely recognized as a leader among U.S. small colleges in recruiting international students. In the 21st century, however, as institutions of all sizes began to rely more heavily on overseas recruitment (and then watched it buffeted by political differences, visa challenges and Covid-19), St. Norbert has seen its international enrollment steadily decline. Nonetheless, for its small size, SNC employs an impressive number of [faculty members from other countries](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684280). Faculty and College leaders are currently exploring whether SNC should try to rebuild student enrollment from around the globe or instead focus [international recruitment](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684276) within this hemisphere, as an expression of the Norbertine value stabilitas loci. Proponents of the latter approach believe the narrower focus could take advantage of the hemisphere’s dominant Spanish language and Catholic heritage, as well as the dramatically increasing Hispanic population within the College’s current recruitment sphere. Furthermore, SNC has joined the [American Council on Education’s (ACE) Internationalization Laboratory cohort,](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684278) which will allow SNC to be more globally oriented and internationally connected. Whatever the outcome of those discussions, SNC’s Center for Global Engagement exerts commendable effort to recruit internationally, serve diverse students well and provide excellent opportunities for students to [study abroad](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684279).

SNC employs an experienced CIO who is moving the College toward greater sophistication in the management of multiple services and functions. IT staff also enable the faculty to think more creatively about [technology enhancements](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684281) in both instructional and student support applications, and to do so in ways consistent with SNC’s focus on and the Norbertine value of communio, expressed best as sustained personal interaction among members of the learning community.

Finally, the local and regional economies as well as the national economic picture affect St. Norbert College in the same ways they do institutions across the nation. Inflation, cost-consciousness, employment opportunities and public perceptions about the value of higher education have an increasingly strong impact on the enrollment market and on student decisions to enroll and remain in college. Healthcare is a growing industry in this region and therefore a focus of analysis and discussion about potential new programs, as well as the lifelong educational needs of healthcare workers.

Current political infighting at all levels of government results in lingering pessimism about major changes in federal or state support, despite recent modest increases in Pell allotments. In addition, both the University of Wisconsin-Madison and UW System’s regional campuses remain formidable competitors.

5.C.6 - The institution implements its plans to systematically improve its operations and student outcomes.

The foregoing examples illustrate how SNC learns from its operational experience and applies that knowledge to make improvements that benefit specific operational and educational areas and the institution as a whole.

A number of examples in the Student Affairs division follow, including several chronicled in the [ALIVE Program’s](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684289) annual report documenting program assessment and the use of data to improve its effectiveness: ALIVE Program ([2016-2017](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684285)), ([2017-2018](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684284)), ([2019-2020](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684290)); [LSE Leadership Conference Assessment](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684282); [Residential Service Programs](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684283); [Gateway Seminar](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684288); [Sturzl Center Village Project](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684287) and [TRIPS Catholic Social Teaching Tips](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684286).

A primary example of the use of data and subsequent planning to improve academic performance and related operations is evident in the reimagination of Academic Advising and Career Services, including locating them together physically in high visibility space, and changing the advising model, particularly for first-year students.

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## 5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

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

### Summary

What leads St. Norbert College to conclude with confidence that it can continue to accomplish its purpose, strengthen its effectiveness and thrive in the future? Ongoing consultation and analysis of present realities and future plans throughout this self-study revealed a baker’s dozen of reasons, beginning and ending with mission. These conclusions demonstrate SNC’s capacity to shape its future and continue to accomplish its mission. They are:

1. St. Norbert College is mission-driven and mission-focused.
2. SNC has competent and committed trustees, faculty, administrators and staff, who are fully centered on students and their learning, development and well-being, and committed to improving governance structures and processes.
3. SNC employs a collaborative and steadily improving planning process, resulting in goals and objectives that are dynamic, flexible, built on strengths and responsive to emerging needs — that is, strategic.
4. SNC offers strong curricular and co-curricular programs that are regularly reviewed in light of desired outcomes and improved and changed as warranted.
5. SNC generates significant interest from prospective students and parents, enrolls its share of the current market, and implements strategies likely to successfully address declining demographics.
6. SNC has sought and attained increased diversity in both its student body and faculty.
7. SNC regularly considers external changes and responds to opportunities, especially through partnerships.
8. SNC has responded to HLC recommendations to place central emphasis on assessment, including development and implementation of a well-designed assessment plan that is centrally managed but adaptable to varying divisional and departmental needs.
9. SNC has effective systems and structures that enable careful collection, analysis and use of data in planning and decision-making.
10. SNC has developed and is implementing a comprehensive campus master plan.
11. SNC has improved its philanthropic and communications functions and successfully launched a $125 million campaign, with nearly 75 percent of its goal already pledged or received.
12. SNC enjoys enviable financial strength and has a cautiously stable financial outlook.
13. SNC is mission-driven and mission-focused!

Summary arguments follow.

**1 and 13: SNC is mission-driven and mission-focused.**

The SNC mission drives daily activity as well as longer-range institutional planning. Leaders focus the College’s attention and energy on its core mission elements and explore the relationship of those elements to opportunities, challenges and initiatives. That the mission forms both the foundation and goal of all major SNC endeavors is the strongest, most compelling reason SNC can move into the future with confidence and high expectations of success.

The statement of mission itself is clear, concise and compelling, evolving gently over time while remaining consistent with the founders’ vision. The mission establishes a foundation that enables a critical link connecting SNC’s purpose with the needs of students and the expectations of the world outside its walls. In addition, every new initiative is examined under the mission’s bright light and assessed for consistency and congruence. Mission focus at SNC is deliberate, sustained and central to its work. This focus leads to strength, and strength implies endurance. That the mission is itself strong and compelling enhances St. Norbert’s ability to thrive in the future.

**2: SNC has competent and committed trustees, faculty, administrators and staff.**

The SNC faculty is passionate about engaging students and actively pursuing meaningful scholarship. Faculty and staff are skilled and collaborative. They innovate with high-impact practices and enjoy engaging with each other, with students, and with the broader community. Administrators are experienced and committed and trustees are engaged, generous and committed. The entire community sees value in asking big questions and exploring the enduring meaning of the Norbertine value of communio, with its embedded assumptions around radical hospitality, and stabilitas loci, with its central call to act locally — that is, to serve the students who come to the College.

SNC community members pursue truth, act with integrity, and build community wherever and whenever possible. The College is alive, thriving and certainly proud of increasing diversity among its faculty, staff and student body working together daily to “prepare students for every good work.” The College continues its unwavering focus on the liberal arts, ever aware that interdisciplinary thinking and innovation will be central to creating the future students deserve and the world demands.

The SNC community knows there is challenging and collaborative work ahead. Some important efforts in the immediate future include:

* Encouraging the faculty in ongoing curriculum review, especially the Core Curriculum.
* Building, leveraging and reimagining programs to enhance growth, while preserving the centrality of the liberal arts.
* Actively supporting faculty and staff hiring and professional development for the future.
* Developing, delivering and monitoring high-impact curricular and co-curricular experiences.
* Reimagining advising and career office design and function to support student success.
* Strengthening faculty confidence in administrative and governance leadership.
* Engaging with key constituent groups to renew and strengthen governance roles and relationships.
* Aligning resources with strategy.
* Embracing change linked to the core elements of the SNC mission: Catholic, Norbertine and liberal arts.

Finally, students stand — and will always stand — at the absolute center of SNC’s focus and work. Whether in the classroom, engaging in transformational research or supporting students, SNC faculty, staff, administrators and trustees are all in.

**3: SNC has developed a strong Strategic Plan and a dynamic, participative planning process.**

SNC’s Strategic Plan positions the College for a strong future. Thoughtfully developed with growing opportunity for key constituent input, the plan builds upon SNC’s tradition of academic excellence and seeks to increase enrollment, prioritize student success, expand and diversify financial resources, maintain and enhance existing facilities, and build new ones as needed. Implementation includes improving operations, especially those directly affecting student success and institutional efficiency and effectiveness.

Responsibility for planning rests with the president, who encourages faculty and staff to analyze current realities, envision a desired future and plan to attain it. The president, the President’s Cabinet and OIE oversee the plan’s implementation and outcomes assessment.

This work focuses campus energy and resources and galvanizes commitment toward SNC’s mission and priorities. As a result, SNC has strengthened academic programs, managed enrollment headwinds, realigned institutional structures, enhanced facilities and built new ones, and improved fiscal management. Importantly, improved assessment planning and implementation have strengthened SNC’s ability to measure progress and effect desirable change, reinforcing its conviction that metric-based strategic planning is the clearest path toward attaining a preferred future, one that builds upon strengths, addresses challenges directly, and makes two adjectives — responsive and flexible — watchwords for all initiatives. Current work focuses on discerning “priorities among priorities.”

With multiple and complex variables to consider, planning alone cannot control the future. Planning does, however, decidedly impact what futures are possible. Campus engagement processes inform cabinet deliberations and provide a forum for sharing opportunities, challenges and decisions. The dynamic nature of the process and the plan itself help ensure a vital future for St. Norbert College.

**4: SNC offers excellent curricular and co-curricular programs.**

SNC can document its long history of offering relevant academic programs that reflect excellence in design, content and delivery. This assertion’s reliability is evident in indicators such as graduate school acceptance, alumni career success, and employer and student satisfaction.

SNC came to a more data-driven and systematic assessment of its curricular excellence more recently, influenced both by HLC recommendations and evolving higher education developments. For evidence documenting that institutional growth, see Criterion 4 and its many links to evidence.

SNC’s curricular success is attributable most centrally to the quality and commitment of its faculty.

Currently, SNC is assessing academic programs more rigorously, considering new ones tied directly to workforce trends and its faculty and curricular strength as well as reimagining and repackaging existing programs with strong intent to build interdisciplinary strength.

With excellent staff leadership, the co-curriculum both complements the classroom experience and integrates well with it to develop students’ soft skills as well as their personal, intellectual and spiritual resilience. Criterion 4 presents related data and its impact on retention and student satisfaction.

**5: SNC is diligently addressing enrollment challenges.**

The College’s [enrollment over the past decade](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684296), especially compared with many institutions its size, has been enviably stable. Undoubtedly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, however, recent enrollment shortfalls have caused the College not only to prune expenditures but, more importantly, redouble its efforts to analyze the market, rethink strategy and direct its experienced admission staff to [recruit students](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684297) most likely to succeed at SNC and to graduate in reasonable time.

Efforts to prevent further enrollment erosion are focused on several areas: increasing athletic enrollment (now fully one-third of the student body); exploring new program development in such high-demand fields as public health, entrepreneurship, special education and social work; determining the right array of graduate, certificate and micro-credential programs and effectively marketing them; carefully analyzing the reasons students leave the college; focusing on programs that encourage belonging, support and persistence to graduation; rethinking advising and career office functions and their relationship to enrollment; and focusing a significant portion of fundraising efforts to support faculty and staff development as they prepare to address rapidly evolving student needs. The work of the optimal enrollment task force and several related committees continues, with expected planning outcomes in spring 2023.

**6: SNC has placed a significant priority on diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging.**

SNC efforts to address several opportunities and challenges under the broad umbrella of diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging are nascent, enthusiastic and in various stages of development. A recent senior hire to oversee this work, efforts to engage faculty significantly in these important efforts, and formal establishment of various committees and projects show promise of increasing and necessary success.

As examples, faculty/staff [workshops](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684294) held at the beginning of the academic year featured numerous options for both new and experienced faculty and, with SNC’s new faculty hires, evidence of increasing diversity is clear. The College-wide committee on equity, diversity and inclusion (CEDI), led by the dean of curriculum and senior diversity officer, has charged several working subcommittees to focus on programming, master EDIB planning and increase campus engagement.

Current efforts to create a more welcoming community include broadening the [array of speakers](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684299) invited to campus, extending LGBTQ Coming Out Day in October to a full Pride Month and expanding the Martin Luther King celebration in January to a full and robust week of activities when students and faculty have returned to campus for the spring semester.

Efforts to infuse more diverse content into curricula remain in early stages of exploration and implementation, although interest is accelerating to launch a new Center for Teaching and Learning and explore the inclusion of Norbertine pedagogy within its sphere of action and practice. The Center also offers significant promise of more intentional focus on EDIB learning and practice in the classroom. Student Affairs leaders are both experienced in and eager to continue development of the same within the co-curriculum.

Though SNC’s enrollment remains [predominantly white](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684314), the percentage of non-white domestic students has risen over the last decade and is likely to increase. Further diversification remains a priority, and regional demographic shifts are providing a unique opportunity on that front, if the College responds rapidly and thoughtfully. Affordability concerns for students and the strong labor market are two significant factors that must be addressed. Beyond that, fully one-third of students in Green Bay public schools come from homes in which English is not the first language. Preparing faculty and staff to work effectively with a changing student population is a central priority.

During the past decade and following significant internal concern, the College directed substantial attention toward improving its management of [Title IX](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684306) matters, including hiring a full-time director who reports to the president. Several lingering issues concerning gender equity and intra-faculty conflict have required substantial time and resources, but they show some signs of resolution even as they, no doubt, merit ongoing attention.

Finally, [religious diversity](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684314) on the campus is growing, and SNC continues the challenging work of honoring and celebrating its Catholic, Norbertine identity while welcoming students, staff and faculty of all (or no) faith traditions to engage in its mission.

**7: SNC views meaningful external partnerships as an important part of its future.**

Crucial partnerships connect SNC in positive and financially lucrative ways to the local and regional business communities. The [Sturzl Center](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684298) provides an excellent example of activity built on meaningful partnerships, as documented in Criterion 3.

The [Strategic Research Institute](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684309) (see 1.B.3) responds to external needs as a social science research resource consulting for private, nonprofit, government and community organizations in northeast Wisconsin. Working with community partners and local governments for the past 25 years, the institute improves regional social outcomes; in turn, research results enable greater sophistication in SNC’s planning and decision-making.

Partnerships with the [Medical College of Wisconsin](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684300), [Bellin College of Nursing](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684291) and [GRACE Catholic Schools](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684292) in the Green Bay Diocese not only embody growth potential but afford important opportunities for collaborative planning and programming.

The [Schneider School of Business and Economics](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684310) is critical to SNC’s connection with external organizations and companies. The school also interfaces with leaders in the broader community through its [MBA program](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684313), [Center for Exceptional Leadership](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684311), [CEO Breakfast Series](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684302) and its [Board of Advisors](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684312). External insights influence curriculum, personnel, facilities and other decisions.

**8 and 9: SNC has placed a central priority on data analysis and assessment improvement.**

Following visits to SNC over the past decade, the HLC recommended institutional development around assessment and the implementation of plans to document evidence-based outcomes. Consistent with SNC’s ongoing efforts to enhance its many strengths, HLC recommendations influenced and improved institutional planning in specific ways. Experienced OIE staff lead this effort, working in close contact with faculty leaders and the President’s Cabinet.

SNC regularly monitors external variables to gauge their potential impact, including with the help of its trustees, many of whom are successful executives of businesses and nonprofit organizations. Linking assessment and monitoring procedures with the budget process helps the College make appropriate shifts in resource allocation. Annual budget reviews permit adjustments to assumptions based on new data. Because regular review is an ongoing practice, the College can easily incorporate changes suggested by self-study recommendations.

Of note, the unanticipated death of OIE’s well-regarded leader, coming in tandem with the Covid-19 pandemic, challenged SNC to keep its self-study process on track. A one-year delay of the decennial visit was warranted and approved, and faculty leaders, OIE and, more recently, the interim vice president for Academic Affairs led efforts to complete the self-study and prepare for the 2023 visit.

**10: SNC is implementing a carefully conceived Campus Master Plan.**

SNC’s long association with a local architectural and construction firm and its tradition of employing highly experienced directors of facilities have moved the College’s carefully developed Campus Master Plan from paper to realization. Of significant note is the close tie between the specific elements of the plan itself, current [Strategic Plan-related projects](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684301) about to be executed and the deep level of [engagement in the process](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684369) by campus constituents most affected by the plan’s intent and content.

**11: SNC has enjoyed significant fundraising success.**

The College’s last campaign, [Full Ahead](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684295), raised revenue for key initiatives in the 2016-2021 Strategic Plan. That campaign’s $105 million total allowed SNC to thoroughly modernize its physical plant and infrastructure, increase financial aid, and improve the student experience. The current campaign, [Support What Matters](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684307), has already raised over [$90 million](file:///C%3A/Users/evidence/viewfile%3FfileId%3D1684293) toward its $125 million goal.

**12: SNC’s financial outlook is stable and likely to sustain the College into the future.**

SNC’s record of financial stability and monitoring of changing variables suggest that continued effective performance, while not assured, is likely. Net assets have grown significantly over the decade. Each year, the College attempts to develop a conservative budget, which is then periodically reviewed during the fiscal year. Ongoing monitoring of resources, especially considering enrollment realities, both increases accountability and affords the greatest flexibility in redirecting resources toward the highest priorities. Investments are professionally managed and meet or exceed objectives to support SNC programs, faculty and initiatives. Finally, funding of the College’s Strategic Plan is achieved through a combination of endowed funds, capital reserves, operating budget and gifts.

**Accomplishing the Mission in the Future**

The indicators described above lead St. Norbert College to believe it can continue to accomplish its mission in the future. Positive change over the past decade has demonstrated SNC’s ability to meet student needs and maintain high academic standards.

Key financial indices suggest a healthy future for SNC. Over the past decade, St. Norbert’s healthy position can be seen in its strong financial statements. The College maintains a commitment to operating in the black, evidenced by rigorous management of the operating budget and successive years of gifts and pledges in two successive and successful campaigns over the past decade, to date yielding nearly $200 million in gifts and pledges.

Regular curriculum revision points to a faculty attuned to market imperatives, student needs and current developments within the disciplines. Significant effort to maintain stable enrollment and improved retention and graduation rates provide evidence that the College can continue to meet demand and embrace opportunity within the educational market.

The College has increased aid to financially needy and academically talented students while keeping tuition increases competitive. Its enrollment improvement efforts are undergirded with professionally guided data analysis and planning. It is clear St. Norbert has experienced significant increases in private gifts and pledges, substantial increases in its invested funds, and marked increases in capital funds.

Perhaps the clearest indicators of St. Norbert College’s ability to continue to accomplish its mission are the comprehensive Strategic Plan, which will guide SNC into the future, and the unwavering faculty, staff and trustee commitment to the College and its mission. These strengths, coupled with continued effort to address ongoing enrollment, governance and financial challenges, will ensure success.

St. Norbert College adapts to changing needs and market imperatives without compromising its core mission. It intends to continue this pursuit long into the future, and to do so with integrity and excellence.

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* 230917\_PRES\_Resource\_Addressing Sexual Assault and Other Gender-Based Violence at St. Norbert College\_2022-08-10
* 231143\_ADV\_Resource\_Support What Matters\_2022-08-13
* 231147\_Cross-Divisional\_Data\_Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity Data at SNC\_2022-02-01
* 231186\_AA\_Website\_Schneider School of Business and Economics- What the Strategic Research Institute Can Offer Your Organization\_2022-07-21
* 231187\_AA\_Website\_Schneider School of Business and Economics- Northeast Wisconsin\_s Hub for Business Intelligence\_2022-08-14
* 231188\_AA\_Website\_Schneider School of Business and Economics- What Sets a Schneider MBA Apart\_2022-08-14
* 231189\_AA\_Website\_Schneider School of Business and Economics- Inspiring Greatness The Center for Exceptional Leadership\_2022-08-14
* 231190\_AA\_Website\_Schneider School of Business and Economics- Board of Advisors of the Donald J. Schneider School of Business and Economics\_2022-08-14
* 231195\_ADV\_Resource\_Campaign St. Norbert Full Ahead Fall 2015\_2020-08-14
* 231210\_Cross-Divisional\_Website\_Faculty Development- SNC Professional Development Days 2022\_2022-08-14
* 231327\_ENR\_Website\_GRACE Partnership\_2023-01-10
* 231328\_ADV\_Data\_Support What Matters Campaign Report\_2023-01-10
* 231357\_ENR\_Data\_SNC Enrollment History and Data for HLC\_2023-01-01
* 231358\_ENR\_Resource\_Fall 2023 Enrollment, Marketing, and Financial Aid Strategies\_2023-02-03
* 231369\_PRES\_E-Communications\_Input from Constituent Groups\_2021-02-05

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