

Report to the
Faculty, Administration, Trustees, Students

of

WELLESLEY COLLEGE

Wellesley, Massachusetts

by

An Evaluation Team representing the
New England Commission of Higher Education

Prepared after study of the institution's
self-evaluation report and a site visit
March 10–13, 2019

The members of the team:

Chairperson: Ms. Clayton Spencer, President, Bates College, Lewiston, ME

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This report represents the views of the evaluation committee as interpreted by the chairperson. Its content is based on the committee's evaluation of the institution with respect to the Commission's criteria for accreditation. It is a confidential document in which all comments are made in good faith. The report is prepared both as an educational service to the institution and to assist the Commission in making a decision about the institution's accreditation status.

**New England Commission of Higher Education
Preface Page to the Team Report**

Please complete **during the team visit** and include with the report prepared by the visiting team

Date form completed: 03/05/2019

Name of Institution: Wellesley College

1. **History:** Year chartered or authorized: 1870 Year first degrees awarded: 1875
2. **Type of control:** State City Religious Group; specify: _____
 Private, not-for-profit Other; specify: _____
 Proprietary

3. **Degree level:**
 Associate Baccalaureate Masters Professional Doctorate

4. **Enrollment in Degree Programs:** (Use figures from fall semester of most recent year):

	Full-time	Part-time	FTE	Retention ^a Fall 2017 cohort	Graduation ^b Fall 2012 cohort	# Degrees ^c 2017-18
Associate	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Baccalaureate	2379	13	2383.33	96%	92%	589
Graduate	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

(a) full-time 1st to 2nd year (b) 6 year graduation rate (c) number of degrees awarded most recent year

5. **Student debt:**

	Most Recent Year	One Year Prior	Two Years Prior
Three-year Cohort Default Rate	Not yet available	0.7%	0.8%
Three-year Loan Repayment Rate	Not yet available	90%	86%

	Associate	Baccalaureate	Graduate
Average % of graduates leaving with debt (2017-18)	N/A	50%	N/A
Average amount of debt for graduates (2017-18)	N/A	\$9,923	N/A

6. **Number of current faculty (includes professorial and nonprofessorial faculty):**

Full-time: 322 Part-time: 128 FTE: 364.66

7. **Current fund data for most recently completed fiscal year: (2017-18)**

(Double click in any cell to enter spreadsheet. Enter dollars in millions, e.g., \$1,456,200 = \$1.456)

Revenues		Expenditures	
Tuition	\$93,194	Instruction	\$75,693
Gov't Appropriations		Research	\$11,530
Gifts/Grants/Endowment	\$122,258	General	\$82,994
Auxiliary Enterprises	\$5,634	Auxiliary Enterprises	\$7,146
Other	\$5,970	Other	\$63,218
Total	\$227,056	Total	\$240,581

8. **Number of off-campus locations:**

In-state 1 Other U.S. 0 International 0 Total 1

9. **Number of degrees and certificates offered electronically:**

Programs offered entirely on-line 0 Programs offered 50-99% on-line 0

10. **Is instruction offered through a contractual relationship?**

No Yes Specify program(s): _____

Introduction

The Evaluation Team visited Wellesley College on March 10–13, 2019 for a comprehensive evaluation. This visit followed a preliminary campus visit by the chair of the team and careful review by team members of the institution’s self-study and additional materials.

The basis for the information and evaluative judgements contained in the nine sections of this report is the team’s review of the self-study and other materials provided by Wellesley and the meetings held during the team visit. Each of the nine sections of the report addresses one of the *Standards for Accreditation* of the New England Commission of Higher Education.

Wellesley’s self-study was thorough and informative. It presented a comprehensive, accurate, and compelling description of the institution. Where members of the Evaluation Team had questions about issues raised in the self-study, members of the Wellesley staff were generally able and willing to supply additional materials for clarification.

During the team visit, members of the Evaluation Team met with many members of the Wellesley community, including:

- Members of the Board of Trustees
- Senior administrators
- Faculty, staff, and student leaders
- Other key members of Wellesley’s faculty and staff

The team also held three open sessions, one each for faculty, staff, and students.

The team reviewed a great quantity of documentation provided by Wellesley, including:

- Administrative policies
- Statements of mission and values
- External department and program reviews
- Governance minutes
- Survey results
- Course syllabi
- Planning documents

Throughout the review and visit, the Evaluation Team found the members of the Wellesley College community to be helpful, candid, and committed to the mission of the College.

In conjunction with its own self-study, it is the hope of the Evaluation Team that the administration of Wellesley College will find this report a helpful reference point for its ongoing efforts in planning and development.

Standard 1. Mission and Purposes

Wellesley appropriately characterizes its mission statement as “simple” but “essential”: *“To provide an excellent liberal arts education for women who will make a difference in the world.”*

The College adopted its current mission statement in 1989, and it was formally re-endorsed by the Board of Trustees in 1998.

The mission statement is clear and concise. It is well established and continues to resonate with students and alumnae alike. It both situates Wellesley in context, as a highly selective small liberal arts college, and describes its distinctiveness, in educating women and emphasizing “making a difference in the world.” In its brevity, the statement allows flexibility for more elaborated statements of values, as well as descriptions of programmatic initiatives that allow the College to adapt with the times.

As stated in the self-study, Wellesley is admirably conscious of, and active with respect to, “what it means to be a women’s college in an era of changing understanding of gender identity.” It is possible that the students of today (and tomorrow) may view the meaning of a women’s college differently from current alumnae—that is, there is a tension for Wellesley between being a women’s college and evolving notions of gender. From a policy point of view, the institution has negotiated this tension well. But the complexity of Wellesley’s identity as a women’s college is likely to intensify as the broader societal debate about gender and its signifying language continues.

As Wellesley undertakes its 2019 strategic planning effort, it will be interesting to see what arises in discussions of the mission and values of the College. The planning effort provides an excellent opportunity for the College to hold such discussions.

Overall, Wellesley’s mission statement is appropriate to higher education, consistent with the College’s charter, and implemented in compliance with NECHE standards. It also gives direction to the College’s activities and provides a sound basis for assessment and enhancement of Wellesley’s effectiveness.

Standard 2. Planning and Evaluation

The evaluation team reviewed Standard 2 of the self-study, its associated documentation and data, and had conversations with stakeholders throughout the campus community about planning and evaluation at Wellesley. The team learned about prior planning efforts, in particular Wellesley 2025, a “blue sky” campus renewal planning exercise that, while inspiring and aspirational, produced many ideas that were ultimately found to be beyond the resources of the College to implement. Through the reaccreditation process, the team learned of more recent financial planning efforts and the groundwork laid for the soon-to-be-launched strategic planning process. The team also learned of the many ways in which useful data are gathered, shared, and considered in campus deliberations. The team is optimistic that the College is eager to establish a clear vision and priorities for the future through strategic planning, and that Wellesley will be able to inform and evaluate the development and execution of this plan with appropriate data.

Planning: The College is in a transitional moment with respect to planning. The past decade has been characterized in part by the need to understand and respond to financial challenges. The most

recent planning effort, Wellesley 2025 (adopted in 2013), was focused largely on the need for significant campus renewal efforts, integrating considerations of future programmatic needs. This effort was aspirational and future-oriented, and resulted in an extensive set of innovative ideas, some of which were ultimately determined to be unfeasible because of the resources required to implement them. Related planning has focused on fundraising for some of the campus projects identified (resulting in the “Wellesley Effect” campaign).

Current planning continues to revolve around financial resources, especially the need to make funding available to support long-term campus renewal needs. The team heard from members of the administration about the current five-year plan to address the most urgent needs, although not all of the funding to support this plan has yet been identified. The longer-term renovation unaccounted for by this plan will need to be further articulated and funded over time and will undoubtedly place constraints on future strategic spending.

The team heard from College leadership and members of the community about plans to launch a strategic planning process to begin soon after this reaccreditation review. The foundation for this effort has been laid by the work of the self-study, by the in-process efforts to develop a set of institutional values, and by the articulation of annual College priorities. It will be important for strategic planning to address the need to work within resource constraints, even as it provides space for aspirational and creative thinking about Wellesley’s future. In particular, a guiding narrative will need to be developed that explains strategic progress as achievable through the reallocation of resources and redesign of existing programs and curricula, rather than through increased resources and incremental growth. More broadly, the coming strategic plan offers an opportunity for members of the community to adopt a forward-looking perspective, and for providing concrete opportunities for stakeholders to link their own contributions to the larger vision.

This work will undoubtedly be led by the administration, but there is an important opportunity to engage with the various governance bodies responsible for advising the administration about resources and program planning, including the Advisory Committee on Budgetary Affairs (known as BAC) and the Advisory Committee on Academic Staffing (ACAS). The team heard about the significant contributions made by these committees in recent years, including the important efforts on the part of ACAS (a fairly new committee) to create its protocols and practices in the context of reduced faculty positions (e.g., asking each department for a five-year curricular plan). The team believes these groups have the potential to help Wellesley achieve its strategic and curricular goals within a context of financial discipline.

In support of this work, it may be useful to consider the roles and responsibilities tied to planning that reside across several areas at Wellesley. Academic planning and budgeting takes place within the Provost’s area, and financial and facilities planning and budgeting takes place under the auspices of the Vice President for Finance and Administration. The self-study notes that planning efforts have not been well coordinated and integrated in the past. With that in mind, Wellesley is encouraged to develop clear roles and responsibilities around the articulation and implementation of a strategic plan. Those with designated planning responsibilities can help to monitor progress and promote accountability for achieving the plan’s strategic goals and objectives. This work will likely benefit College leadership in communicating broadly about strategic priorities and progress toward the collective vision.

Evaluation: Wellesley has a culture of striving for excellence, with a particular focus on the quality and rigor of their academic programs. Evaluation of the success of these efforts is carried out in a variety of locations, including throughout many faculty committees and various administrative offices. The Provost's Office is most broadly responsible for these efforts. There is a practice of conducting regular external reviews of academic programs, the results of which are used by administration and faculty committees in their work. In the context of a steady-state faculty size, these reviews may become increasingly valuable opportunities for faculty to learn about opportunities for innovation and curricular reform that do not require additional resources.

The team heard repeatedly from academic leadership and committees that the Office of Institutional Research (OIR), which resides in the Provost's area, routinely provides them with accurate and useful data in support of their work. That office has made a concerted effort in recent years to maximize the quality and reliability of the information it provides, placed an emphasis on the efficient use of data that are already collected by the institution, and minimized the number of interesting, but less directly useful, surveys that are conducted. Based on the team's conversations with stakeholders, important data regarding financial resources and plans are also provided by staff in the Finance and Administration area in a timely way to relevant committees (e.g., BAC).

Some progress has been made in the collection and analysis of student learning assessment data, although this still appears to be somewhat ad hoc. The College acknowledges in the self-study that they "still have much work to do." This work is well supported by Institutional Research, including through a grant-funded position, but the next phase of progress will likely require a greater sense of institutional priority and faculty ownership. (See Standard 8 for a more thorough discussion of this topic.)

Standard 3. Organization and Governance

Wellesley has a comprehensive governance structure at all levels of the College, with no deviations from good practice or from standard college administrative structures. There is widespread participation of faculty, staff, and students in own-governance and College governance. Overall, Wellesley has a strong ongoing tradition of collaboration and commitment to shared governance, with a President who clearly values and encourages this tradition and a fervent set of alumnae who support the College's traditions as well.

Governing Board: The Board of Trustees has a standard structure and operation for a liberal arts college and holds regular meetings during the academic year and periodic retreats. The Board undertook a bylaws review in 2011 and reduced the maximum allowable term along with other steps to increase renewal while still preserving continuity. A major change made in Fall 2017 was to reduce the total number of standing committees to three major committees by consolidating functions (e.g., combining facilities and finance into one committee). Attendance expectations regarding committees was also clarified and more briefing sessions outside of committee added on various matters. The Board reports general satisfaction with this new, more streamlined structure, and Board evaluation survey results show high general satisfaction with Board functioning and individual members' experiences with service on the Board.

Internal Governance: The current senior leadership structure is standard for a liberal arts college in terms of number and composition. The senior leadership team consists of the president plus nine

senior administrators—provost and dean of the college, dean of students, chief communications officer, chief investment officer, vice president for finance and administration and treasurer, general counsel, dean of admission and financial aid, director of human resources and equal opportunity, and dean of academic affairs—some of whom also hold vice president titles. The list of 23 chief institutional officers (all of the above plus the chair of the Board of Trustees and another set of administrators) are an even mix of long-serving members of the Wellesley community and more recent arrivals, with nine having started after or concurrently with President Johnson in 2016. The Provost is the longest-serving member of the team, having served since 2004.

The faculty governance structure is comprehensive, with numerous standing elected committees and standing appointed committees including a new committee charged with considering the allocation of open tenure lines. A high percentage of faculty serve on committees and new faculty are brought into service after their first year at the College. The faculty has no clear internal executive function, however, and the faculty meeting is chaired by the President rather than by a member of the faculty.

The tenure and promotion structure is quite streamlined compared to many similar institutions, with only three levels of decision (department, an eight-member committee on which the Provost and President sit, and the Trustees).

Student participation in own-governance and College governance is significant. Student Government has budgetary control over student activity fees and thus is managing and allocating substantial funds; it steers a large range of student activities and social events either directly through organizing them or indirectly through funding them. An executive group serves as the student administrators of the government, while a larger senate meets regularly in open meetings where all students can attend and speak. Students also participate in the Honor Council, self-regulating both academic and social infractions, and contribute membership to various campus committees as well.

Staff governance has more structure than at many colleges, including an Administrative Council in which all staff are members. The Administrative Council meets six times per year for an hour and has a number of standing committees as well as designated representatives to other entities. Staff did not, however, think that this structure worked well in terms of leading to self-governance or project completion. The standing committees do not report to the Administrative Council either during meetings or with filed written reports, and time is limited for discussion as most of the Council meeting time is consumed by introductions of new staff and reports by senior administrators.

The College's overall governance structure is highly inclusive and notable for its proliferation of standing committees—but it appears to lack committees with sufficiently broad purview and power to assist in effecting institutional change. While the trustees recently took steps to change this for themselves, reducing their committee structure down to three comprehensive committees and enforcing attendance, other parts of the College— faculty, staff, and students—still operate using large numbers of committees with highly variable membership, , and relatively narrow or unclear mandates.

The tendency at the College seems to be to break decisions down into small units and to farm the pieces out to committees. In combination with the widespread commitment to committee service by faculty in particular, this approach tends to lead to a great deal of time being spent in committees on managing routine tasks that are commonly done by administrators at other colleges (e.g., allocating research funds, determining merit pay, and managing admissions, fellowship, and graduate school

application processes). As administrators also spend much time on committees, this structure does not free up their time to take care of other duties. Thus, a governance structure that is intended to enfranchise faculty and staff in college decision-making may in fact be reducing opportunities both for open discussion and for administrators to get work done, resulting in a system that is biased toward deliberation over action and routine allocation over strategic planning.

The complexity of Wellesley's governance structure (particularly for a relatively small college) also contributes to a lack of clear communication channels between committees and up and down the hierarchical structure. When a substantial decision is made at the College, such as the recent voluntary retirement programs (VRP) for faculty and staff, who made the decision and the process that led to the decision can be unclear, resulting in confusion, particularly among staff and students. The use of executive or coordinating committee structures could help faculty and staff to better monitor the operation of their complex committee system. The student government system does appear to be functioning well, although changes designed to improve its functioning further are too recent to be evaluated.

Standard 4. The Academic Program

Wellesley offers a liberal arts academic program leading to the bachelor of arts degree in 55 possible major areas of concentration with optional minors offered by most departments. The College awards approximately 580 degrees per year. The degree consists of 32 units of credit (comprising a major and the general education requirements) and a physical education requirement. The most popular majors are economics, political sciences, psychology, computer science, biological sciences, and neuroscience. The departments with the highest enrollments are economics, biological sciences, mathematics, and psychology. General education includes an expository writing course, proficiency in one language in addition to English, two quantitative reasoning courses (of which the student may test out of one), at least four 300-level courses of which at least two must be in the major, one multicultural course, and the distribution requirement of seven units of credit across the divisions of study—three arts and humanities courses, one social science course, and three science and mathematics courses.

Assuring Academic Quality: The academic program is overseen by the faculty through several modes of governance. The Committee on Curriculum and Academic Policy (CCAP) is charged with overseeing the curriculum, vetting new curricular proposals, generating proposals for and reviewing any changes to academic policy, and making these proposals to the full faculty at meetings of the Academic Council. CCAP is comprised of eight faculty members (of which three are elected—one from each division of study—and five are appointed by the faculty's agenda committee), five administrators, and two students. With support from the registrar, the committee solicits for the next academic year each department's slate of new and repeat courses, changes to major requirements, and revisions to the course catalog description of each major. Each faculty member on the committee is assigned to a group of departments, to advise those departments on the process, working closely with them to iteratively review new course proposals and other changes. CCAP members will, for example, advise a department to consult with another department when the committee recognizes significant overlap with other majors in new course proposals.

In a meeting with CCAP members, the team heard an example of two new courses being proposed simultaneously: one by a science department on the science of one of the arts, and the second by the

art department proposing to teach a course in relation to that particular science. The CCAP faculty member brought the two departments together and the two clarified the distinctions between their courses. CCAP also asked them to stagger the courses rather than offer them in the same semester.

CCAP reviews and votes on each department's proposed curriculum, then presents next year's complete college curriculum to the Academic Council in spring for a vote by the full faculty. Proposals for new majors and minors are included as part of this ballot.

CCAP is also responsible for reviewing and shaping proposals from students for independent majors that require a detailed proposal plus supportive letters from two faculty who agree to advise it. After approval, if the student wishes to change the plan, she must petition CCAP. In cases where CCAP has received several proposals for independent majors on the same topic, they have worked with faculty advisors to develop a "structured independent major." For example, in the case of the new interdepartmental major in Chemical Physics, the program of study began as a structured independent major, and only after vetting its success and seeing demonstrated student interest did CCAP support its development as a major.

In addition to the ongoing work of managing the courses and majors, CCAP is the faculty body responsible for shaping proposals for new academic policies and initiatives. The committee is currently in the process of evaluating the College's grading policies and the general education requirements. Faculty members expressed to the team their sense that the Wellesley faculty has full and independent responsibility for the curriculum through the governance of CCAP and Academic Council.

The College follows a policy of conducting external reviews of all academic departments and programs every ten years. No external reviews were conducted in 2018–2019 due to the reaccreditation review. Five departments will undergo external reviews in 2019–2020. Members of CCAP meet with each external review committee during their on-campus visit. Recent external reviews have led to substantive changes in majors. Astronomy changed the sequence of its courses leading to the major and revised the introductory courses. The departments of Chinese Language & Literature and Japanese Language & Culture, along with the (non-departmental) course sequence in Korean language, merged into one department—East Asian Languages and Cultures. The new department continues to offer both majors and minors and has incorporated Korean language courses and added a minor in Korean Language and Culture. Each of these programs of study were redesigned to encourage students to study the other cultures of East Asia.

The team heard from faculty and administrators that the external reviews generate productive internal reflection and useful external advice that inspire curricular innovation. In some cases, other departments adopt some of the changes developed by a department after an external review—for instance, Anthropology changed its course sequence and the structure of its 100-level courses after seeing Astronomy's positive changes.

Undergraduate Degree Programs: Wellesley offers only the Bachelor of Arts degree. With 55 majors and 9 interdepartmental or stand-alone minors hosted by 29 departments and 23 interdepartmental programs, staffed by 300 full-time professorial faculty, Wellesley aspires to offer a curriculum broader in scope than might be expected of a small liberal arts college with its student body size. This has the benefit of offering students an array of choices but it brings the challenge of being "in some ways unwieldy" (self-study p. 31). The slate of majors features the core liberal arts

disciplines as well as a few distinctive majors such as Chemical Physics and Peace and Justice Studies.

The wide scope of majors and minors is supported in several ways. Some majors are interdepartmental, with requirements met by courses offered across several departments (many faculty have interdisciplinary expertise such that one course can serve several majors). Some majors are sub-specialties within one department or program (e.g., the International Relations program offers majors in IR-Economics, IR-History, and IR-Political Science; the Department of Art offers majors in Art History and Studio Art). Wellesley's self-study acknowledged the challenge of mounting a curriculum that invests in new areas of knowledge and student interest (e.g., computer science) while also supporting the traditional core of the liberal arts curriculum. During the visit, the team heard spirited discussions from faculty about this challenge, especially in the context of the recent reduction of the size of the faculty.

General Education: Wellesley acknowledges that it has a large number of general education requirements compared with many of its peers, and since 2017 it has been re-evaluating the question of their number and nature. The current requirements have been in place since 1994, with only modest changes. Several trends have inspired the current review, including the growing number of students who complete a double major, changes to the nature of pre-collegiate education, and student concerns about the multicultural requirement.

The self-study describes a thorough, deliberative, and distinctly Wellesley approach to the process for reconsidering general education. This began with a series of meetings held by the agenda committee of Academic Council in 2017, focusing on the question of what it means to be an educated person. The Board of Trustees held conversations on this question and the goals for general education during 2017–2018. That year, CCAP dedicated much time to evaluating the distribution requirements. In November 2018, CCAP presented a proposal to Academic Council for changes to the requirements. This proposal, still under consideration, included multiple options for going forward.

The student government highlighted student concerns over the multicultural requirement in the 2017–2018 academic year. In response, surveys and interviews of students were conducted. These revealed various changes that students wanted but also revealed the challenge of finding consensus on the primary purpose of the requirement. CCAP considered the student concerns raised and the information gathered, resolving that changes to the multicultural requirement should be considered as part of the overall reconsideration of the general education requirements currently underway.

All first-year students are required to take an expository writing course with a limit of 15 students per section. The faculty who teach these courses are drawn from across the college and include specialists in the teaching of collegiate writing whose appointments are in the Writing Program. The course orients students to basic college academic skills including understanding plagiarism and how to conduct research at the library.

Though not required, a varied slate of first-year seminars are offered. The shadow grading policy is seen as the most significant aspect of the first-year experience. Under this policy, first-year students receive a report of their letter grades but those course grades are not recorded on the transcript nor factored into the GPA. The goal is to encourage students to take academic risks by pursuing challenges without worrying about grades. Faculty voted to implement this policy as a pilot in 2014,

and—by a very slim margin—voted to renew it through 2019. The team heard thoughtful faculty discussion of the pros and cons they see in this policy. Much of CCAP and Academic Council’s time in Spring 2019 will be dedicated to considering new models for the College’s grading policy that limits the mean grade for many courses to 3.33 (B+). Consideration of changes to this longer-standing policy will precede a vote on the question of whether to again renew or terminate the shadow grading policy.

The team heard consensus from faculty that academic advising of first-year students and majors achieves the College’s goals. All first-year students have faculty advisors. Advisors are assigned to students by the class deans. Each department chair is told each spring how many first-year students need to be advised by departmental faculty in the coming fall and the chair is responsible for recruiting sufficient faculty to serve in the role. (For a more detailed discussion of advising, see Standard 5.)

The Major: All students must complete a major in order to graduate. Students must declare a major in spring of the sophomore year. They may declare a major as early as December of sophomore year if planning to study abroad. Students are not allowed to elect more than two declarations: They may complete one major, or two majors, or one major and one minor. They may not triple-major. Requirements for majors are clearly articulated in the catalog, with all majors requiring at least eight courses or the equivalent, including at least two 300-level courses through which to gain in-depth knowledge of the field.

Although capstone experiences, per se, were not emphasized to the team or in the self-study, discussions with students and faculty clarified that multiple opportunities are available for students to pursue a culminating project in the major. These vary by department. Some departments require students to complete a research project or take a senior seminar. A student must have a 3.5 GPA to be eligible to enroll in the year-long thesis course, which is Wellesley’s form of honors. Only 15 percent of students complete a thesis.

The infrastructure to support Wellesley’s 55 majors relies on faculty participation in more than one department or program. The number of majors offered by the College continues to grow, however incrementally. While this model has the virtue of leveraging faculty strengths to encourage innovative intellectual work at the intersections of disciplines, the team also saw its challenges. Because every individual department and program requires administration—a faculty chair and other forms of overhead—this model contributes to the administrative workload of faculty. Many of the departments and programs have relatively few faculty, which can also lead to difficulties in the governance of the major. The team heard a variety of concerns in its discussions with faculty about the sustainability of this approach.

Integrity in the Award of Credit Hours: Members of the team reviewed the course catalog, posted policies on the degree requirements, and multiple course syllabi at all levels and in all divisions of study. Meetings were also held with the Committee on Curriculum and Academic Policy (CCAP), the Dean of Academic Affairs, and the registrar. Through this review, the team found the degree requirements posted online were clear. The minimum number of credits required for the degree is 32. Wellesley changed the class schedule—adding ten minutes to the total amount of class meeting time per week (from 140 minutes to 150)—in order to map onto the NECHE definition of the credit hour; this change took effect beginning with the current Spring 2019 semester. Wellesley spent four years working on the issue of changing the class schedule, beginning with a committee,

developing new models, conducting faculty surveys, and selecting a small group of departments to test the model that was ultimately adopted.

The course syllabi as reviewed by the team reflected an appropriate correspondence between course numbering and increasing complexity and challenge as students progressed through the disciplines from the 100 to the 300 level. This review corresponded affirmatively to the self-study and to team meetings on the question of whether the amount of academic work required for each unit of credit is sufficient. In some instances, a department will propose to offer a course for credit at both the 200- and 300-level, usually because the major is small (e.g., Russian) and cannot offer enough advanced level courses for a class of senior majors. The process for approval of these dual-level courses requires the department to submit a set of additional requirements that the higher-level students would complete—such as additional (more advanced) reading assignments, advanced writing assignments, and additional class meetings. Each such proposal requires special review and approval by CCAP and Academic Council.

Wellesley assigns one unit of credit for one (regular) course. Credit levels for courses are stated clearly in the Course Catalogue. Some courses, such as first-year Chinese and introductory chemistry with lab, offer 1.25 credits to reflect additional class time and coursework. “Non-academic” credit is awarded for approved internships as well as the required physical education classes. These courses appear on the student’s transcript but the credit does not count toward the 32 credits required for the degree.

Transfer of Credit and Articulation Agreements: The College accepts transfer credit only for courses that map broadly onto Wellesley’s liberal arts curriculum. (Note: Because MIT courses are treated as Wellesley courses for this purpose, this rule does not apply here.) For students admitted as transfer students, their previous college transcripts and course syllabi undergo an initial review by the registrar and class deans. The department chair is also asked to review any course that would be used to fulfill a major requirement, or when it is not clear if the course is appropriate for transfer.

Wellesley allows students to take courses at MIT for Wellesley credit. The Wellesley transcript lists the course as “MIT: Course number, course title.” The letter grade from the course is included on the transcript and calculated in the student’s GPA. The department must approve using any MIT course for credit toward the major; some majors, such as Economics and Architecture, have a list of MIT courses that are preapproved to apply to the major. Over the past five years, Wellesley students have completed an average of 350 enrollments at MIT each semester. MIT students do not typically opt to study at Wellesley.

Wellesley also participates in an informal “Babson, Olin, Wellesley Collaborative” through which students at each institution are allowed to take courses at the other institutions. Wellesley treats these courses more like transfer courses: The letter grade does not appear on the transcript nor is it calculated into the GPA. The three institutions jointly offer a five-course certificate in sustainability, which requires the student to take one course at each institution.

Wellesley has two joint degree programs to support the study of engineering. In the double degree program with MIT, a Wellesley student may earn a Wellesley bachelor of arts and an MIT bachelor of science degree over five years (three at Wellesley then two at MIT) upon fulfilling the degree requirements of both institutions. In the double-degree program with Olin, the student completes four years at Wellesley and a fifth year at Olin. As an alternative to the double degree, Wellesley

students have the option of pursuing a certificate in engineering studies from Olin through cross-registration during their four years of coursework for the Wellesley degree.

Standard 5. Students

Admissions and Financial Aid: Since the College's last comprehensive evaluation, the Office of Admission at Wellesley has experienced significant success. It achieved an historic high in Fall 2018 with 6,631 first-year applications, including 806 Early Decision applications, allowing for a 19.5 percent acceptance rate to enroll a class of 614 students. The quality of the class is impressive, including 83 percent in the top 10 percent of their senior class (of those from schools that rank their students), representing 45 states and 32 nations, with 48 percent identifying as students of color and 17 percent as first-generation college-goers.

The growth in the applicant pool from just over 4,000 in 2009 to 6,631 in 2018, and the decline in acceptance rate from 35 percent to 19.5 percent over the same timeframe, is worthy of note and provides evidence of the market demand that Wellesley enjoys. This growth is influenced by recent efforts to increase the personalization of outreach via a robust customer relations management system, targeted recruiting in areas of the country that will continue to produce significant numbers of college-goers into the 2020s, inclusion of a new source of applications from its membership in POSSE, the addition of an Early Decision II program, and other recruitment and technological enhancements.

This entering class contributes to total headcount enrollment of 2,534 for Fall of 2018. With a desire to keep the mission of the College relevant, Wellesley enrolls those who identify as women and live consistently as women despite assignments at birth, as well as those who are assigned female at birth and identify as nonbinary and feel they belong in Wellesley's community of women. This broader definition of eligibility reflects an appreciation for the current understanding of gender in our society and makes Wellesley attractive to students of many identities that might not be as comfortable with a narrow and less relatable definition. This change in eligibility, as it is mission-related, needed approval from not only the Admission and Financial Aid Committee (composed of faculty, staff, and students) which is charged with setting admission and financial policy, but also the Board of Trustees of the College that adopted it in March of 2015 following conversations with the campus community. There are some students who believe the continued reference to Wellesley as a "women's college" as opposed to a "historically women's college" ignores the attendance of trans and non-binary students; however, the College's written statements around the 2015 eligibility decision make clear the College's stance.

Evaluation of individual applications is the responsibility of the Board of Admission (made up of students, faculty, and staff) in accordance with the policies and criteria defined by the Admission and Financial Aid Committee. The Admission Office was granted permission, as a result of the significant increase in applications this year, to introduce new practices during the holistic review process that allowed for better consistency between reviewers and supported the admission of a talented, diverse, and academically gifted class. These efforts were further supported by the piloted use of the College Board's Environmental Context Dashboard that provides the reader with contextual information about the student's academic indicators in light of their high school and neighborhood.

Appropriate public information is provided about recruitment and admission of students on the College's website and in various admission publications. The goals for admission are outlined as is the College's commitment to attracting a diverse—especially racially and socio-economically diverse—and academically gifted class. Continued use of admissions software and the implementation of the Workday Student Module should provide the Admission and Financial Aid staff with the necessary tools to achieve their application and enrollment goals.

Of the entering class of 614 students in Fall 2018, 60 percent received financial aid totaling close to \$20 million. Keeping in mind that Wellesley has expressed specific interest in attracting talented low- and middle-income applicants by recruiting students through programs like Questbridge, POSSE, and the Coalition of College Access, and by highlighting MyinTuition, a cost estimator tool, the high percentage of students on aid and the discount rate of approximately 51 percent is not surprising. However, it does beg the question of whether Wellesley's financial modeling is sustainable over the long term. The College's message of affordability has clearly been received. The growth of applicants with demonstrated need is significant, and has put a strain on the Student Financial Services Office. Current students commented that while they received generous aid, they found it difficult to communicate with financial aid officers who were eager to help but stretched thin by applicant and student demand for their time.

The self-study addresses the attention Wellesley is paying to the impact of its financial aid policy on net tuition revenue and the administration has annual conversations with the Board of Trustees to discuss the financial picture. The Campus and Finance Committee of the Board of Trustees has identified warning signals to help them closely examine the amount of funding the College is providing. Being need-blind and meeting full demonstrated need, while "the Wellesley Way," may in the future require additional funding to be allocated to support Wellesley's financial aid budget and/or consideration of a shift from need-blind to need-aware.

The current staff in Admission and Financial Aid are quite impressive and have the knowledge and commitment to support the process of recruiting, admitting, and funding Wellesley students. As is the case with admissions, the financial aid process is well documented internally and appropriate information is provided publicly to assist students and their families through the process.

Student Services and Co-Curricular Experiences: Wellesley attracts students with a promise of a holistic student experience and they deliver on that promise. Students are given access to a robust array of student services to meet their needs outside of the classroom and to foster their success in the classroom. Policies, procedures and practices are well articulated in the College's materials and students have access to the information they need to navigate their Wellesley experience with relative ease.

The student services staff is committed to working together and learning from each other to keep informed about changes at the College. Their weekly meetings focus on realizing the division's mission and vision, opportunities to maximize staffing, budgets, and students or student groups of concern. They value professional development for its educational and inspirational value as they provide services to a student population that has become more complex in recent years with increases in racial, ethnic, religious, gender identification, socio-economic, and first-generation status groupings. They are also mindful of the need for cultural competencies with a multicultural lens even though students are demanding more and more individual cultural spaces and support.

The student services staff is eager to collaborate with other departments across the College in an effort to eliminate or at least minimize the existence of silos on campus. To that end, they include Athletics, Career Education, and Information Technology staff in their monthly division-wide meetings. The new implementation of software products to support residential life (StarRes) and serve disabled students (AIM) and student organizations (Presence) will further professionalize their operations and make them more efficient in their delivery of services.

Students have access to academic support. Wellesley uses a class dean model in which the first-year class dean offers support for students in their first year before handing them off to another class dean, who then stays with the class through graduation. Students are also assigned a faculty advisor upon arrival. It was surprising, though, that many students didn't seem to feel as connected to their advisors as one might expect at a small liberal arts college. However, students did report having strong connections with faculty—just not their advisor. Additional academic support is provided by the Pforzheimer Learning and Teaching Center (PLTC) in the form of peer tutors and academic coaches. The PLTC hires over 160 students for these positions and many of them are supported by federal work-study funds, thereby providing jobs for the College's low-income students.

The offices of Religious and Spiritual Life and Intercultural Education provide a strong framework for helping students to do the work of identity development and finding meaning and purpose. The Multifaith Council and the first-year retreat for students who could use help developing relationships on campus are just two examples of how this work is being done. These offices also help develop student leaders through their engagement with student government, neighborhood chaplains, and club leadership. The addition of a credit-bearing course that will be taught by the Assistant Dean for Intercultural Education next spring is designed to help first-year students examine their identities.

The student government is working well and seemed well versed in the range of student interests and concerns, as was evident from the issues raised by students at the open forum with the visiting team. (More detail on student governance is available in Standard 3.)

As a residential college, Wellesley enriches the student experience through the offering of a residential curriculum and the engagement of the Residential Assistants who regularly offer programming in the houses to enhance community and social life. While students are appreciative of improvements being made to housing policies and activities in the residence halls, the need for renovations to the housing facilities was loud and clear. Renovations are needed not simply to update the look of the residence halls, but to address ADA issues, significant leaks, infestation of termites and other bugs, and heating and plumbing problems. Lack of attention to these issues in the very near future will likely have an impact on the recruitment of new students and the retention of current students. (More detail about the residential facilities is available in Standard 7.)

Physical Education, Recreation, and Athletics, while reporting to the Provost, reported a much greater collaboration with Student Affairs, allowing for an integrated approach to engaging students. They touch student lives in many ways, from offering physical education classes for all students to employing approximately 130 students, from providing a host of recreational options to supporting 160+ varsity athletes. While overall the diversity of the Wellesley student body has increased, athletics noted that their teams don't currently reflect that diversity. Another concern that was highlighted is that the concept of the "scholar-athlete" does not appear to be celebrated at Wellesley. The impression given was that being an athlete and being an intellectual can't be reconciled in one body at Wellesley.

Students benefit from ample support from faculty and staff alike, and yet they frequently commented that they lack a sense of community at Wellesley. The concept of “stress culture” was referred to often, as was their concern about the availability of sufficient mental health and wellness resources. While not unique to Wellesley, the College will need to find ways to meet the growing student demand for these services. The online system that was implemented in both the medical and counseling offices to give students the ability to make online appointments and same-day appointments is an important improvement. Wellness education is also important, as is the visibility of wellness education and messaging from orientation onward to make self-care a priority.

Last but certainly not least, Career Education sets a high standard for student service. As the beneficiary of a very generous gift, the size of its staff and range of its offerings make it very attractive to students and alumnae alike. Students are guided through opportunities to explore various career communities and experiential options as they transition from students to alumnae. The analytics and operations arm of the department uses various platforms (Handshake, the Hive) to capture and analyze data every step of the way making it possible to improve or change services as needed. Students and alumnae in a “one-stop shop” can consider fellowships, graduate and professional schools, domestic and international internships, civic engagement, and labs for skill development, and they also have the space for reflection to maximize the learning that takes place during the provided experience. Wellesley is clearly facilitating the ability of its students and alumnae to “make a difference in the world” in accordance with the College’s mission. (More detail is available in Standard 8.)

The very high-touch model of service and the many options available in Career Education made possible by the gift is quite noticeable, particularly when compared to some of the other student services provided. Finding ways to fund other aspects that directly impact the student experience will be important going forward.

Standard 6. Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship

Faculty and Academic Staff: For the current academic year, the College has 300 full-time and 47 part-time faculty members in the professorial ranks and 22 full-time and 81 part-time faculty members in the non-professorial ranks (as of October 1, 2018 per the Data First forms). This is a decrease of 35 faculty members since 2015–2016, which will be discussed below. This faculty count results in a student-to-faculty ratio of about 8:1, indicating that there is an adequate number of faculty. Approximately 90 percent of courses are taught by full-time faculty members. Consistent with the College’s mission as an undergraduate institution, there are no research, clinical, or adjunct faculty members. The typical teaching load for tenure-eligible faculty is two courses per semester, consistent with the College’s expectations for teaching, scholarship, and service. The faculty handbook, available online, clearly sets out the expectations for faculty members in each category, and hiring guidelines for departments and governance documents delineate the roles that tenure-eligible faculty, faculty on term appointments, and non-professorial faculty play in service to the curriculum.

The faculty are well-qualified, with 99 percent of the tenure-eligible faculty holding a doctorate or other terminal degree. Of all tenure-eligible faculty, 108 are at the rank of professor, 72 at the rank of associate professor, and 48 at the rank of assistant professor. The College has increased the

percentage of faculty members on non-tenure lines that are full-time to 61 percent, up from 32 percent at the last accreditation, reflecting a commitment to an on-campus presence of the faculty for their undergraduates and to professional treatment of their faculty. The faculty handbook assigns responsibility for faculty mentorship to both department chairs and to the tenured faculty in the departments who comprise the Reappointment and Promotions committee. In meetings with the Committee on Faculty Appointments, Tenure Track Advisory Committee, and with other faculty, the extent of mentoring and the expectations for tenure and promotion were not consistent between departments, with some faculty members suggesting that a review of their responsibilities by Reappointment and Promotions committee members might be warranted.

As appropriate for an elite liberal arts college, and especially one with a mission of educating women, 64 percent of all professorial faculty are women. The self-study reports that 54 percent of the tenured faculty are women and 67 percent of the tenure-eligible faculty are women. The self-study reports that there is little to no salary or merit score discrepancy between male and female faculty, as supported by a salary analysis in 2017 by the College's Budget Advisory Committee. The College notes in its self-study that it plans to monitor whether female faculty potentially lose income if they take longer to be promoted, as a large salary increase is applied at promotion to full professor. A 2011 Cambridge Hill Partners retention survey provided data that suggest female faculty perceive they perform more service and that this service is less robustly rewarded than for their male peers.

The College has 20 percent faculty of color. This percentage has not changed since the last accreditation and, despite the hiring of more faculty of color into the tenure-track ranks, differential rates of retention and the impact of retirements have prevented progress to a higher percentage. The 2011 Cambridge Hill Partners retention survey found that less than half of minority faculty felt a sense of inclusion and belonging at the College and that only 28 percent of minority faculty felt that Wellesley "is welcoming for faculty from historically underrepresented or marginalized groups."

There was also concern expressed in the self-study that "invisible service" by minority faculty can be overlooked in evaluation. In response, the Committee on Minority Recruitment, Hiring, and Retention (MRHR) recommended the recent adoption of formal recognition for "contributions to racial and ethnic diversity and equity" as a part of the annual report faculty submit on their activities. MRHR also advocated for an addition to faculty service preference forms that allows the Agenda Committee to consider a wider variety of other service obligations when considering who to appoint to additional committees. In addition, there has been an ongoing search for a potential chief diversity officer to replace the departed Associate Provost for Diversity and Inclusion, and the Black Task Force, established in 1970, facilitates community building among faculty and staff of African descent, as well as communication of issues of concern from the community to administration.

Given the 10 percent increase in faculty from 2005 to 2015, followed by a voluntary early retirement plan in 2017 that resulted in 34 faculty retirements, the distribution of faculty among the disciplines was influenced by who chose to accept early retirement. An Advisory Committee on Academic Staffing (ACAS) was created in 2016 to provide a faculty voice in the review of proposals for new tenure-track line requests. The Provost and Dean of Academic Affairs are non-voting members of this committee. While the assignment of visiting or non-tenure track lines rests solely in the Provost's Office, the ACAS may recommend that a request for a tenure-track line might instead be resolved by a non-tenure track hire. As noted in its self-study, the transitional nature of the composition of the Wellesley faculty will be an important issue to monitor over the next 10 years, including careful consideration by the ACAS of how changes in the faculty composition could

influence the teaching load of non-professorial faculty such as teachers of writing courses and science labs.

During the site visit, faculty members expressed concern that the number of faculty departures, particularly in some departments, might result in higher service demands or class sizes for pre-tenure faculty. In addition, reductions in staff lines have increased the workload of the faculty in administrative roles thereby diverting them from other responsibilities. Both the Provost and the ACAS noted the importance of the link between discussions about the strategic direction of the curriculum and decisions about the assignment of tenure-track lines.

Department faculty participate in all search processes for continuing instructional faculty members at all ranks and levels, and department chairs ensure that faculty assignments are equitably determined. Faculty candidates are reviewed by established policies that include verification of educational records, employment history, and criminal and sexual offender records. Appointment letters for potential hires outline job obligations, benefits, and criteria for reappointment and tenure.

The Committee on Faculty Appointments (CFA), which includes six faculty members and the Provost and President, reviews faculty for reappointment, tenure, and promotion, and makes recommendations directly to the Board of Trustees. Rules and procedures for reappointment and promotion for all faculty are readily available in the Faculty Handbook, as are policies that ensure faculty act responsibly and ethically and policies for grievances and sexual harassment/misconduct that are also available online.

In response to concerns about the transparency and consistency of the tenure process in the last comprehensive evaluation, the CFA now provides an annual letter to pre-tenure faculty explaining the process. The Tenure-Track Advisory Committee (TTAC) was also established. The TTAC members who met with the visiting team were appreciative of panel discussions led by CFA members to demystify the process and noted that formal documentation on the tenure process is clear. TTAC members did identify variation in department-level mentoring that is a particular issue for faculty with interdisciplinary interests and for those in departments with fewer senior faculty due to retirements. This issue was also a finding of the 2011 Cambridge Hill Partners retention survey, which noted concerns about some departments having a “sink or swim” approach as opposed to mentoring.

Partly in response to the concerns about the clarity of the promotion process identified in the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) survey, associate professors are now formally reviewed in their second and fifth years post-tenure to provide guidance toward a path to promotion. The Pforzheimer Learning and Teaching Center provides a structure for professional development in creative pedagogy, and the Office of Sponsored Research and internal faculty research grant opportunities, as well as a generous conference travel policy, allow for continued professional development in scholarship.

The Faculty Handbook delegates the role of “upholding standards of academic freedom” to the department chair. A Task Force on Speech and Inclusion was formed in May 2018 in order to “focus now on understanding what free speech looks like in an inclusive environment.” The President noted that a committee, including participants in the self-study process, was asked to present a values document to the Academic Council for approval that reflected how the mission

statement was lived. One of the six draft values statements addresses academic freedom and notes: “we embrace the principle of freedom in scholarly inquiry.”

Non-tenure-eligible faculty (FIP) are represented by an advisory council (FIPAC) that serves as a liaison between the Committee on Faculty Appointments (CFA) and the FIP. These faculty have teaching roles across campus, including in science labs and language and writing courses, and in Physical Education, Recreation, and Athletics (PERA). The FIP faculty are evaluated by departmental Reappointment and Promotion (R&P) committees through a process that includes classroom visits and annual conversations. The FIP faculty who met with the visiting team were appreciative of the standardized approach, but noted variation in the quality and amount of mentoring FIP faculty receive from their departments, as well as in expectations for research and service. The College plans to address potential salary discrepancies for more recently hired FIP faculty, who also may not be eligible for the faculty tuition benefit, and to consider revision to the merit pay process to reward excellent teaching.

Wellesley faculty are productive in scholarship. The self-study reports that in 2018 faculty produced 13 books, 220 academic articles, 56 works of creative or popular writing, and 17 artistic/musical productions. Faculty are successful in funding their research with awards from the National Science Foundation, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the National Geographic Foundation, the Russell Sage Foundation, the Social Science Research Council, The Research Corporation for Science Advancement, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the National Institutes of Health. Five recipients of Frederick Burkhardt residential fellowships from the American Council of Learned Societies since 2015 is noteworthy.

The College has an Office of Sponsored Research with a director and associate director that provides support for post-award management, biosafety, and animal care and use oversight, and an institutional review board for work with human subjects. In addition, the College supports faculty scholarship through a recently increased conference travel allotment of \$2000/year. Start-up funds for new faculty ranged from \$3,000 to over \$190,000, depending on need and discipline, over the past three years. Further support for faculty scholarship is awarded through grants administered by the Committee on Faculty Research and Awards of up to \$3,000 per year, as well as by department funds. Faculty are eligible for one semester of research leave at full pay for every three years of teaching after tenure, and a full-pay year of pre-tenure leave for tenure-track faculty after reappointment.

Teaching and Learning: The College has demonstrated its commitment to investing in the excellence of teaching. The College has supported faculty pedagogical training with the Pforzheimer Learning and Teaching Center (PLTC) since 1992, led by a faculty director, that has focused since the last reaccreditation report on evidence-based assessment and inclusive teaching strategies. The Center’s efforts have included an Inclusive Excellence Working Group and a retreat attended by over 200 faculty members. The President highlighted the work of this group in her meeting with the review team and noted that inclusive excellence was a strategic priority. The College was awarded a \$800,000 Mellon Grant to translate research on student learning into the classroom, and the library and PLTC have supported faculty efforts to create new initiatives in evidence-based learning. Faculty attendance at events led by on-campus experts is high, including at informal sessions to discuss pedagogical “knotty problems.” The College makes grants to faculty in support of pedagogical innovation through the Committee on Educational Research and Development, and recognizes innovative and excellent teaching with two highly visible College awards.

In 2013, the College launched the innovative Calderwood Seminars in Public Writing, which train students to translate their disciplinary knowledge in writing for a public audience. An external evaluation of the seminars conducted in 2017 notes that it is a signature program that provides students with “new skills in communicating, enhanced confidence, and a clearer sense of purpose.” Five peer schools have since adopted this model. The College launched a public speaking initiative in 2012 that works with faculty to make existing courses speaking-intensive. The Madeleine Korbel Albright Institute for Global Affairs was established in 2010 and offers an internship experience for fostering the development of young women leaders.

The Chief Information Officer is responsible for Library and Technology Services (LTS). There is an Advisory Committee on Library and Technology Policy (ACLTP) in which faculty, students, and staff advise the CIO on information resource needs. Research librarians and librarians responsible for the collections serve as liaisons to academic departments to facilitate conversations and collaboration between faculty and library staff, and the library works with the first-year writing program to integrate informational literacy into the curriculum. The librarians and instructional technologists work as an integrated team to promote and support faculty and student initiatives. The College has also supported curricular innovation through its Blended Learning Initiative, designed to integrate technology into humanities and social science courses.

The College’s advising program for first-year students pairs upper-level undergraduates with a faculty member to mentor a small cohort of students who live together. This program is a collaboration between the Provost’s Office and Student Life. Senior survey data indicates that three-quarters of students strongly agree that faculty members are available to them and that at least one faculty member has taken an interest in their academic trajectory.

The Office of Sponsored Research maintains a website that highlights faculty research projects facilitated by external funding, as well as links to College policies on research. The Office assists faculty in finding and preparing grant proposal opportunities required for full salary support during faculty leaves.

Funding for students to participate in research both in the summer and during the academic year are advertised on the College’s website, and reports of visiting evaluation teams have noted the importance of student research to the College. Letters from the Committee on Faculty Appointments to the pre-tenure faculty also indicate that faculty-led student research is valued as part of the evaluation process.

Standard 7. Institutional Resources

Human Resources: With 347 professorial faculty, 103 non-professorial faculty, and over 800 administrative staff, the College allocates a significant portion of its budget to compensation to support its mission. After reaching a peak of 1,373 full- and part-time employees in FY 2016, the College determined that such growth was unsustainable and implemented a one-time voluntary retirement program in FY 2018 with the intent to move from a 7:1 to an 8:1 student-to-faculty ratio and to align non-faculty staffing levels more closely to those of peer colleges. The generous retirement package resulted in 34 faculty retirements as of June 30, 2018, and 38 administrative staff retirements as of December 31, 2017. Total direct costs of the program were \$9.8 million and

payouts were funded by a supplemental draw on the endowment. As previously noted, however, the voluntary nature of the retirements left certain academic departments and administrative offices across campus disproportionately affected.

A longstanding faculty compensation policy targets salaries at 105 percent of the average pay, by faculty rank, at selected colleges and universities in the region. Tight operating budgets over the past decade have limited salary pool increases for faculty, resulting in average salaries that fall below the policy target. Average pay for assistant and associate faculty currently sits roughly at 100 percent of the group average, while full professors are at 102 percent. There is general acknowledgement on campus that the structure and goal of this policy is not widely understood by the faculty. The College is evaluating an alternative faculty pay model that would benchmark salaries and total compensation against a group of peer colleges, as opposed to geographically proximate institutions of various sizes and missions, and adjust salaries, as needed, to account for cost-of-living differences.

Human Resources annually benchmarks administrative staff salaries against regional and national market data. Staff operate under a pay-for-performance structure, with annual salary increase pools and bonuses allocated in a way that recognizes top performers. Human Resources has implemented a new performance evaluation process in which a goal-setting conversation between supervisor and employee occurs in August, followed by a performance review meeting in April. Human Resources personnel estimate that roughly 300 out of 500 non-union staff participated in a goal-setting conversation and performance review with their supervisor in August 2018. Expectations are for better than 80 percent adoption next year.

The benefits package available to faculty and non-union staff is rich and includes competitive health plan options, generous employer contributions to the retirement plan, tuition remission, and employee-friendly vacation and leave policies.

Staff in dining services, facilities, and campus police are unionized, with wage and benefit negotiations occurring every three or four years. As stated in the self-study, union relations are characterized as positive. Union employees are recognized as an important part of life at the College given their frequent interactions with students and generally take great pride in working at Wellesley and supporting the mission.

Employment policies and other essential information for faculty and staff are readily accessible via Workday and the Human Resources website and are updated periodically. In response to concerns raised by administrative staff regarding the grievance process, the College has made an effort to fully broadcast the referral procedure and the various channels available to employees.

As is the case at most small colleges, opportunities for advancement within a department can be limited for administrators. A recent review of exit interviews indicated that only 8 percent of administrators left the College to accept a similar role at another institution, suggesting that promotional opportunities elsewhere are the driver of turnover at Wellesley. The College recognizes the importance of retaining high performing administrators and does what it can to keep them at Wellesley through bonuses, restructuring of departmental roles, and professional development. The LEAD Program is a year-long workshop designed to prepare administrative staff for future leadership roles with the College. A recently hired associate director of talent management will be piloting professional development programs for non-managerial staff in the coming year.

Financial Resources: The College’s considerable financial resources and tradition of philanthropy by its alumnae underpin its ability to deliver a premier liberal arts education. An endowment of over \$2.1 billion represents \$886,000 per student, an amount that places Wellesley among the wealthiest of national liberal arts colleges. Over \$637 million of its \$2.3 billion net assets are unrestricted, putting the College in a uniquely advantaged position to weather financial headwinds. The \$241 million of GAAP-basis operating expenditures in FY 2018 is the equivalent of \$101,000 per student, or \$34,000 above the published comprehensive fee. Wellesley’s large endowment and generosity of its alumnae enable the College to operate viably under this heavily subsidized business model.

A seasoned chief investment officer and investments office staff, as well as a deeply engaged investment committee of the board, oversee the endowment portfolio. Stellar investment performance, inclusive of an 11 percent return in FY 2018, has placed Wellesley in the top quartile of college and university endowments for investment returns over the 1, 3, 5, and 10 year periods. Although the endowment is invested heavily in alternative assets, portfolio liquidity is well managed and, when combined with a \$60 million line of available credit, well-positioned to cover the endowment distribution in a stressed market.

Since adoption of a new spending rule in FY 2013, the effective spending rate has averaged a prudent 4.8 percent. The annual spending distribution from the endowment reached \$90 million in FY 2018, covering 38 percent of operating expenditures.

The College also enjoys a strong tradition of fundraising as evidenced by the record-breaking success of the “Wellesley Effect” campaign launched publicly in FY 2016. As of June 30, 2018, the College had exceeded the ambitious \$500 million campaign goal a year early with over \$514 million raised, of which \$323 million had been received in cash. Over the past three fiscal years, average annual gift revenue for operations was a robust \$33.4 million and, inclusive of capital gifts and bequests, the average over the same period was \$66 million. The campaign benefitted from a broad base of support from alumnae with class participation rates, by decade back to the 1940s, ranging from 61 percent to 88 percent. The campaign prioritized areas consistent with the College’s mission including support for the academic program, affordability and access, facility renovations, and career planning.

The annual operating and capital budgeting process begins each fall with discussions by senior leadership and the budget team regarding the key drivers—comprehensive fees, financial aid, endowment payout, and salary increases. These assumptions are plugged into a five-year budget model to analyze the downstream impact of the financial levers. The Budget Advisory Committee (BAC), consisting of faculty, staff, and students, reviews preliminary recommendations for the comprehensive fee increase prior to making an official recommendation to the President. Departmental operating and capital budget requests are submitted in February via the Workday Finance module. The budget office compiles the requests and works with senior leadership to refine and balance the budgets. In April, the campus and finance committee of the board reviews and recommends the draft operating and capital budget to the full board for approval.

After many years of limited transparency and education on the sources and uses of college operating and capital funds, Budget 101 presentations by the current vice president for finance and administration & treasurer have been highly appreciated by faculty and administrative staff. Such education and collaboration is essential to a healthy budget process. The level of engagement of faculty and staff representatives in the budget process at Wellesley through the BAC is admirable

and has served the senior administration well in building trust and community support for financial policy changes and allocation decisions.

Along these lines, the College may wish to consider developing a comprehensive operating and capital budget document that provides comparative data, clear explanation of revenue sources and natural expense categories, and context for allocation decisions. Currently, department heads only see the discrete segment of the approved budget that they are responsible for. The only financial report currently available on the College website are the audited financial statements, inclusive of some historical data tables. The accounting language and standards used in the statements are not always intuitive to the general reader. A comprehensive budget report that is readily accessible to the community online could help communicate a clearer picture of what it costs to run the College, emphasize the allocation of resources toward strategic priorities, and serve as a useful reference throughout the year and beyond.

The FY 2019 operating budget is \$233 million. For revenues, net tuition (42 percent), endowment distribution (41 percent) and gifts for current use (13 percent) represent the largest sources of funds. Payroll and benefits represent roughly 60 percent of Wellesley's expenditures, driven by its low student-to-faculty ratio, administrative staffing, and generous benefit programs.

The financial aid budget for FY 2019 is \$67 million. Wellesley's tuition discount rate of 51 percent is among the highest for need-blind liberal arts colleges, as is the 59 percent of enrolled students receiving need-based support. The College operates under a deeply rooted commitment to admitting and meeting the full calculated need of qualified applicants from across the socio-economic spectrum. This historically unassailable commitment to need-blind admissions, in its purest sense, has constrained and will likely continue to constrain the growth of net tuition revenues absent increased enrollment or above-market tuition increases.

Until very recently, the College has struggled to live within its means in spite of its considerable wealth. As indicated in the 2018 Wellesley College Annual Report, since FY 2009, a year which ended with a GAAP-basis deficit of \$5.8 million, total operating revenues have grown at 2.2 percent compared to expenditure growth of 2.4 percent. The seeds of the structural operating deficit can be traced to years of excessive reliance on the endowment to underwrite the expansion of faculty and academic resources during a period of flat enrollment growth, a squeeze of net tuition revenue caused by modest tuition increases netted against an accelerating financial aid budget, and the lack of attention to a swelling balance of unfunded depreciation. From FY 2013 to FY 2015, the College generated material operating losses on both a GAAP and cash basis.

The extent of the College's fiscal challenges were communicated broadly in FY 2016 along with recommendations developed by senior leadership and the Budget Advisory Committee to correct the structural imbalance. As outlined in the self-study, the College took immediate action on those recommendations. Actions included aggressive increases to the comprehensive fee over four years, the capping of faculty tenure lines, the implementation of a voluntary retirement plan to reduce the size of the faculty and staff, and the adoption of a more disciplined review of requests to replace administrative vacancies.

The collective result of this work, so far, has been dramatic. The five-year projections (FY 2019 – 2023) are all balanced on a GAAP-basis. However, realization of these projected results hinges critically on leadership's commitment to the cap on tenure line faculty, strict control of instructional

and administrative staff headcount, and a willingness to dial back non-strategic programs and non-essential services.

Debt and treasury management is performed by the vice president for finance and administration and treasurer and the controller. The Yuba Group serves as the College's debt advisor and provides comparative financial metric analyses to the finance team. Wellesley's debt capacity within its current credit rating is not heavily constrained, but, for reasons previously described, the College's ability to absorb additional debt service in the operating budget is.

As of June 30, 2018, the College had total par debt outstanding of \$313 million, of which \$77 million is variable. The College entered into an interest rate swap in 2008 to fix the rate on its \$57.4 million Series I floating rate bonds. Adjusting for these synthetically fixed bonds, the College's overall debt composition is 94 percent fixed and 6 percent floating. The principal amortization schedule of the College features large bullet payments, with \$182 million coming due in 2039–2042. The College has implemented plans to set aside funds annually to address these payments when due, in addition to relying on market access to roll over portions of the debt on a taxable basis.

Board policy mandates auditor independence and review of the financial statements by the audit committee prior to a board vote to accept them. Due to pricing and service concerns, KPMG LLP will replace the College's long-serving auditors for the FY 2019 financial statement audit. The College has a history of clean audits and has not received any management letter comments in the past three years. Wellesley is a member of the Boston Consortium for Higher Education, which offers co-sourced internal audit, risk management, and operational efficiency consulting to member institutions.

Institutional risk is very much a focus of senior leadership and trustees. The Finance Office maintains appropriate insurance coverage and a comprehensive list of relevant policies. The addition of in-house general counsel to the senior leadership team has greatly enhanced the College's ability to navigate the increasingly complex legal and compliance landscape in higher education. While financial and operational risks are discussed regularly in the audit committee, there is a clear understanding among board members that risk management does not solely rest with the audit committee. That said, the audit committee chair is working with the vice president for finance and administration and treasurer and general counsel to develop a formal institutional risk register for discussion with the full board at a future meeting.

The Business Conduct Policy Manual establishes the ethical standards by which all employees are expected to conduct themselves when carrying out their duties and responsibilities. The manual includes a whistleblower policy and the procedure for filing a report.

Information, Physical, and Technological Resources: Wellesley's historic campus features a stunning mix of red brick and stone facades, gothic arches, slate roofs, and a sublime interplay of trees, pathways, and open spaces. The campus consists of 105 buildings spread over 500 acres. Of the 1.3 million square feet of usable space, roughly one third is dedicated to residential life and 12 percent to classrooms and laboratories (per the Data First forms). The College's investment in its physical plant has focused on renovation and repurposing of spaces within existing buildings. The 10,000-square-foot addition to Pendleton West in 2017 is the only new square footage added over the past ten years.

The College engages a consultant to perform annual facilities benchmarking and analysis. Notably, the 2018 consultant report indicates that 61 percent of Wellesley's buildings have not been renovated in over 50 years, compared to 37 percent amongst selected peers. While most small liberal arts colleges founded in the nineteenth century carry a substantial deferred maintenance backlog, the accumulated backlog at Wellesley has grown to precariously high levels over time. There is a narrative on campus and among trustees that the College "borrowed from its buildings" to finance the growth of the academic program over the last 25 years.

A comprehensive facilities condition assessment, initiated in FY 2017 by the new assistant vice president of facilities management and planning, identified \$325 million of deferred maintenance projects needed over the next 10 years, exclusive of \$100 million of deferred maintenance related to the science center that is currently under renovation. The College has used this report to develop a 10-year capital renewal plan which envisions roughly \$590 million of capital renewal projects through FY 2028 inclusive of the \$215 million science center renovation.

The early years (FY 2019–2022) of the capital plan prioritize facilities with components that are at the highest risk of failure, such as academic and residence hall elevator systems, life safety upgrades and repairs to residence halls, and replacement of the track and turf field. Also planned for completion by the summer of 2021 is the \$24 million upgrade and replacement of equipment in the cogeneration, chiller, and boiler plants. The new, more efficient equipment will achieve the dual goals of reducing utility costs and positioning the College to meet emissions reduction goals outlined in the 2016 Sustainability Plan.

To fund the \$590 million renewal program, the College has accumulated \$268 million of bond proceeds, gift commitments, and operating budget contributions to a capital project reserve as of June 30, 2018. The substantial unfunded balance will rely on additional fundraising, debt issuance, line of credit utilization, and consistent contributions from the operating budget over the next ten years. As discussed in the Financial Resources section, budget discipline to generate the cash surpluses and create room within the operating budget to absorb the added debt service will be critical to the successful completion of the capital renewal plan.

Information and technological resources to support the academic mission and administrative needs of the College are significant. The Library and Technology Services ("LTS") team that oversees these resources consists of 79 full time equivalent positions spread across seven functional groups. Within the past eight years, the team has migrated from a dispersed model of support featuring IT professionals embedded within departments to a highly centralized and cross-trained unit. This relatively new configuration has proven instrumental in LTS's ability to adapt to evolving technologies and emerging threats to the network without requiring additional resources.

Library collections serve as a critical resource on campus for teaching, learning, and research. The collections have grown by 789,588 volumes since 2009. While library collections continue to grow, the volume of electronic resource-related acquisitions has steadily outpaced physical books, representing 52 percent of the collection in FY 2018. The close partnerships between library professionals and students and faculty is a point of distinction at Wellesley. The library's substantial materials acquisition budget of \$2.3 million is largely underwritten by endowed funds. Careful management of subscription renewals, which involves a review of usage and an exploration for cost-effective alternatives, has enabled LTS to maintain a relatively flat acquisition budget over the past three years.

LTS administers a standard four-year replacement cycle for all desktop and laptop computers allocated to faculty and staff. The chief information officer works closely with senior staff to understand their respective technology needs and to prioritize projects and capital purchases. A comprehensive set of policies governing privacy, information security, and acceptable use of electronic resources are available on the LTS web page.

With the support of senior leadership, LTS has implemented a number of initiatives to protect the College from cyberattacks. A dedicated information security officer monitors daily threats and provides training and support to the community. Outside consultants are engaged periodically to perform network penetration tests and unannounced campus-wide phishing tests. Multi-factor authentication for email and Workday accounts is mandatory for all faculty and staff, as is annual online training for tips on identifying cyberattacks and protecting sensitive data. There are plans to move all students to multi-factor authentication in the fall of 2019.

Network bandwidth is more than sufficient to handle campus use. Peak demand is roughly 1.6 Gigabytes on a system with 3 Gigabyte capacity. The College has addressed disaster recovery for its critical on-premises systems through a back-up feed to servers located in a leased facility in Marlborough, Massachusetts.

Beginning with the Workday human resources implementation in 2017, the College has been aggressively transitioning away from its 25-year-old Banner enterprise system to cloud-based software services. Workday Finance went live in 2017 and Wellesley has agreed to serve as an early adopter of Workday's in-design student service module. The College uses Sakai 10 open-source learning management software. Faculty satisfaction with Sakai has been uneven over the past five years but it continues to serve as the primary platform on campus and there are no current plans to replace it.

In response to low scores received from faculty in a 2015 survey of information services, new standards for audiovisual systems were developed for classrooms to better support instructors and emerging pedagogies that require interactive tools and multiple displays. This standard is now being applied to all new construction and renovated spaces. Classrooms in Green Hall and Founders Hall have received modernized audiovisual systems and classrooms in the new science center will be similarly outfitted.

Standard 8. Educational Effectiveness

The team's review of the self-study, departmental learning goals, and conversations with numerous faculty and administrative staff convince it that Wellesley's standards of achievement are appropriate for the undergraduate degree awarded. There is no doubt that Wellesley graduates some 580 women every year who, true to the College's mission, have received "an excellent liberal arts education" and are well-positioned to "make a difference in the world."

The team notes with particular enthusiasm the extremely high-functioning relationship between the Office of Institutional Research (OIR) and Library and Technology Services (LTS). It is clear that tremendous improvements were made since the last review and that, as a result, Wellesley is better positioned than most colleges to use data for educational improvement. The team notes the

existence of an unusual staff position, “Business Intelligence Specialist” (in LTS), whose role is to explicitly help other staff access data for purposes leading to institutional improvement. This position extends the ability of a traditional IR office: When users do not need to grapple with issues of data access more time is left for analysis and interpretation.

The team notes the OIR/LTS achievement of creating a robust data warehouse and the concomitant benefits of specifying data definitions, creating guidelines for user access, and forming a Data Governance Committee. The data warehouse, and the reporting module that sits atop it (known as WANDA), has reduced the technical expertise needed to access and analyze data. The team was given a demonstration of WANDA’s “Faculty Chair’s Dashboard” reporting module. As a relatively user-friendly way to extract useful information that a department chair would have a desire to know, including facts about their major such as trends in overall student enrollment, demographics of students, and the percentage of majors who double-major (and in what other majors), it was impressive. In addition, WANDA’s chair’s dashboard is a transparent tool—every department chair can see the top-level data for every other department, making cross-department comparisons simple.

For the Career Education office, OIR/LTS combine data from WANDA (the student data system) with data from the First Destination Survey to create the First Destination Dashboard. OIR, LTS, and the alumnae association use WENDY (the alumnae data system) to analyze data on alumnae of Wellesley going back several decades. WENDY allows the alumnae association to answer questions such as, “Are there any alumnae lawyers who majored in history who live in Colorado?”

Wellesley has also made substantial progress in developing the systems to use data to further institutional effectiveness and the assessment of student learning. The data warehouse and its reporting overlay (WANDA) are major achievements. The adoption of Workday may bring even more data into the warehouse to advance institutional improvement over the next ten years.

Some departments have already used data from the warehouse to change their curriculum. The Economics Department observed that the likelihood of majoring in econ differed based on racial and socioeconomic background. Economics has the most majors by far—97 in the class of 2018 vs. the next-largest department’s 57 (computer science). Said one economics faculty member, “We didn’t like that we were perceived as unwelcoming. We want people to be exposed to basic economic ideas.” The faculty hypothesized that the department’s reputation as standoffish was in part due to its relatively large introductory class sizes, which led to relatively low student/faculty interaction in a student’s first experiences with economics. Further, they hypothesized that this perception was felt most acutely by traditionally underrepresented students. To help address the problem, the department created a half-credit class focusing on contemporary economic issues with an enrollment average of about 10. A faculty member describes the half-credit class as “almost a motivational class.” The idea is to use this class to get first-generation-to-college students and students from underrepresented minorities exposed to economics in a way that humanizes their first experience with an economics professor.

Another example from economics is an innovative use of grades to predict persistence in the major. Economics faculty collected student final grades from a number of course sections in both numeric (e.g., 0–100 point scale) and final letter (e.g., A, A-, B+, etc) form. They then made matched pairs of students who had been given very close numeric averages (e.g., 92.1 percent vs. 91.8 percent) but that resulted in different letter grades (e.g., an A vs. an A-). This can happen every time a boundary

between two letter grades is drawn. The two students performed almost the same but received different grade signals. The department found that students who received the lower signal were less likely to persist in the major despite having achieved nearly the same numerical score in the course. Knowing this, faculty can now be more sensitive in how they draw letter-grade boundaries.

In 2016, the College won a \$800,000 four-year Mellon grant to fund evidence-based teaching innovations. This “EBTI” project has allowed some faculty to examine the question of how students learn in their courses. The grant has funded 14 projects. The grant also funds a staff position within OIR. One of the funded projects examined an intermediate cell biology laboratory course (BIOC/BISC 220). Students in the course reported on surveys that the topics in the lecture felt “disjointed” from the lab. Using a pre- and post-test model that coded positive and negative survey responses they found that, after a change to the topic sequencing, students were better able to connect their lab work to broader scientific concepts in the lecture. The findings were presented at the 2018 Society for the Advancement of Biology Education Research conference.

A second Mellon grant, the Mellon Blended Learning Initiative, has also funded course innovations, mostly in the humanities. An example is an Italian Language professor who wanted to see if changing the course-meeting frequency would affect learning. The course had traditionally met in-person five times a week but she switched it to three times a week in-person with two online modules. She found that students in the blended format mastered more vocabulary and more complex conversations. She also found they could engage in more colloquial language (like understanding jokes).

The Mellon EBTI grant is fully funded through June 2020 with the possibility of a no-cost extension through December 2020. This presents Wellesley with just one more year to use the grant, and the assessment FTE it funds, to catalyze evidence-based teaching innovations in more courses.

In the past, Wellesley’s Office of Institutional Research fielded six to eight major surveys every year. These surveys touched almost every population—students, alumni, faculty, staff, and parents. They were often done as part of a consortium of other colleges, which allowed the College to compare itself to peers. Wellesley has used these data to direct resources where they can be most effective. For example, Health Services fielded the American Collegiate Health Assessment and was able to de-emphasize tobacco cessation programming because they found that fewer than 7 percent of students had used cigarettes and even fewer had used e-cigarettes.

That said, participation in major survey efforts is time consuming. Internal survey work, often commissioned by faculty committees, further compounds the over-surveying problem. Instead of taking on more survey research than can be reasonably analyzed and reported upon, Wellesley’s OIR has tried to wind down the number of ad-hoc surveys it fields to focus primarily on the most institutionally-important efforts. The instinct of OIR to resist adding new major institutional survey work and rather to prioritize among its existing efforts seems prudent. This will allow OIR to focus on enhancing access to and the analysis of “hard” student and administrative data described above—an example of which is further developing WANDA as a tool to understand Wellesley’s curricular and co-curricular programs.

Learning Goals and Assessment: Since the five-year review, Wellesley has undertaken a “comprehensive review of the wording, effect, and utility of learning goals for every degree program” (self-study, p. 27). Indeed, a review of the E-series forms shows that all academic

departments and interdepartmental majors and minors have published learning goals in the “Programs of Study” section of Wellesley’s online course catalog. This is a nontrivial accomplishment considering that there are 55 departments and programs. It is possible that the fruits of this accomplishment will go unappreciated if, as seems likely, this section of the online catalog is rarely perused by students. We note that many departments also take the step of posting learning goals prominently on their departmental website. Departments should be encouraged to post learning goals more prominently and, ideally, in a consistent place accessible to students and the public at large.

Some academic departments have modified their curricula in light of departmental conversations about learning goals. A good example is the Biological Sciences Department, which annually examines students’ trajectories through the major to ensure that all students are exposed to core competencies that are suggested by learning outcomes. They recently concluded that the 300-level courses, specifically, needed to emphasize the learning outcome of “effectively communicate both orally and in writing about biological topics.” Likewise, after formulating its learning goals, the History Department asked its faculty to identify which courses in the major addressed which specific goals. They then undertook a curricular mapping exercise to map all the ways a student could possibly navigate the major. Being a relatively unstructured major, there were many ways. They noted that several of the possible paths resulted in a course sequence that left gaps in the students’ exposure to goals—that is, it was possible to choose a series of courses such that one or more of the goals was unaddressed.

Looking at the responses to the E-series forms, the team found that departments use a wide variety of ways to assess student achievement of discipline-specific outcomes. These include:

- capstone courses
- pre and post tests
- portfolio submission and review
- Alumnae feedback via panels and surveys
- Job and graduate school placement
- Other, more innovative, techniques like a “Senior Challenge” done by the Chemistry department that challenges its senior majors to work together to critique a manuscript as if they were peer reviewers and then awards a prize for the best team.

Building upon the establishment of learning goals this next year, each department chair will be asked to explain how, for at least one of the learning goals, the department has collected evidence, used the evidence, and made a change.

The E-series forms show that some departments have already made program improvements based on data analysis. For example:

- The Economics Department conducted an experiment to see if students who took online lab sessions scored any differently than students who covered the same material in a more traditional classroom format. Finding no significant difference on a common final exam, the department changed the lab portion to an online format and thus saved an FTE without a decline in student achievement.

- The Biochemistry program tracks its students' performance on the ABSMB accreditation exam that, while not mandatory, is taken by about 70 percent of majors. The program uses the results to consider what, if any, changes should be made to its course sequence.
- The Art History faculty observes students' public-speaking skills at events such as gallery talks, museum exhibitions, and undergraduate symposia. This led the art faculty to add direct instruction in public speaking into more art courses. This last example, in particular, speaks not only to departmental learning objectives but also to the College's mission of graduating "women who will make a difference in the world"—because effective public speaking is, in practice, so often the conduit by which we influence others and thus "change the world."

While department-level learning goals appear to be in good shape, the E-series forms show that the faculty have not yet been able to articulate a set of institution-wide learning goals and, likewise, learning goals that underpin general education requirements—both appropriate tasks to tackle during the strategic planning exercise this next year.

The team was pleased to find a commitment from the Office of the Provost and the Agenda Committee to provide the resources to support an emergent culture of assessment in the faculty. As progress on assessment in the next decade will need to be faculty-led, the College is encouraged, particularly given the recent faculty turnover, to inculcate in its next generation of faculty expectations around setting course-level learning goals and self-critically asking if (and how) they are met. The College could also think about how faculty are rewarded (or not) for curricular risk-taking in the service of educational improvement.

Retention and Graduation Rates: On the industry-standard metrics of retention and graduation rates, Wellesley performs beyond admirably. 95 percent of its first-year students return for their second year and about 92 percent will graduate in 6 years or less. (Compare these statistics to national averages of 81 percent retention and 60 percent graduation at four-year colleges.) These statistics are a testament to the College's investment in academic support services as well as the high-touch academic environment enabled by a low student to faculty ratio.

Wellesley has disaggregated those statistics by demographic variables such as race and socioeconomic status and found that student background is a predictor of graduation and retention. With the help of an economics faculty member, Wellesley drafted an extensive report on this topic. The analysis showed that African American and Latinx students earn lower grades, on average, possibly contributing to an observed difference in four-year graduation rates by race and socioeconomic status. The College will be looking at how the meeting of financial need could be addressed to improve graduation rates among these groups.

Other Measures of Student Success: Wellesley appears to have a very good understanding of what alumnae do post-graduation. The data come from a variety of sources including the COFHE alumni survey, a "First Destination" survey of recent graduates, and the National Student Clearinghouse.

Around 76 percent of Wellesley graduates were employed or doing volunteer/service work within six months. And almost everyone else (17 percent) went immediately to graduate school. This job placement success is aided no doubt by 86 percent of students having had at least one internship during their time at Wellesley. Indeed, almost all students who have done internships state that their internship "contributed somewhat or quite a bit to their career readiness."

Despite the small sample sizes, it is worth noting several other objective indicators of student success:

- 1) 84 percent acceptance rate to law schools in recent years;
- 2) 70 percent acceptance rate to medical schools; and
- 3) Almost 100 percent of students who sit for the Massachusetts Teacher Education License pass it (as noted in Standard 8's *Educational Effectiveness* data forms).

Career Education has also turned the microscope on itself. From 2012 to 2015, they noticed that student satisfaction with the office was declining despite career-outcomes remaining basically stable. A major gift allowed Career Education to completely reimagine itself and to expand to a remarkable ~30 staff. They now take a more intentional approach to connecting students and alumnae with one another and with postgraduate opportunities. They have also invested in technology, including Handshake, the Wellesley Hive (a 1:1 mentorship platform), and a robust website that includes webinars on topics like networking and negotiating. The Hive is an online platform that connects students and alumnae with each other, with jobs, and with networking opportunities.

Last fall, based on student and employer feedback, Career Education launched the “Skill Series,” which is a way for students to learn a marketable skill that they may not have been exposed to in their academic curriculum. For example, an art major might take the skill series “Using Excel” to become more attractive to employers in finance. Other skill series topics include graphic design, sales, and finance. Each skill series has an enrollment of around 22 and is about four classes long. Students must attend all four classes. Student report that these series help them get a “second look” by employers who might have passed otherwise.

Career Education carefully tracks students’ utilization of and satisfaction with their services. 99 percent of first years have engaged with Career Education at least digitally (i.e., logged on to Handshake). By graduation, the average senior has engaged with three career communities (e.g., business, law, nonprofits). Career Education assesses student satisfaction after every in-person interaction using a web-based form. A student participant in the visiting team’s open student session gratefully noted that “Career Education really wants us to succeed.”

Standard 9. Integrity, Transparency, and Public Disclosure

Integrity: Wellesley College has an impeccable reputation regarding its ethical standards and commitment to compliance with all relevant public laws and academic best practices. The recent hiring of General Counsel and an Ombudsperson, along with expansion of the Ombudsperson’s hours, purview, and formal training, underscore the College’s commitment to maintaining the ethical soundness of its institutional structures. The strong student government approach to maintenance of the honor code ensures that students are also aware of the importance of their upholding ethical standards in the College community.

Yet even a community with high integrity can still experience situations where ethical standards come into direct conflict with each other. Issues such as where to draw the line between protected free speech vs. protection from what some might consider harassing behavior, and—particularly for this College—woman-centric vs. nongendered policies and outlooks, will continue to be important.

While students are often the catalysts for these institutional discussions, many faculty and staff also hold strong beliefs regarding these matters and their views need to be engaged as well. Ultimately, the College then needs to come up with clear and well-explicated approaches to its stance regarding these conflicts.

Transparency and Public Disclosure: The College has a thorough set of policies covering the important and relevant issues that relate to Standard 9, as is thoroughly documented in the College’s self-study chapter regarding this Standard. Materials related to this Standard are publicly available on the College’s website and easy to locate. The Communications staff is aware that policies still need to be made easy to find both using the search feature, a master list, and appropriate linking.

Society’s changing views of and standards for transparency require the College to consider various situations regarding what to reveal and to which internal and external audiences. In higher education settings, there is often a tension between maintenance of ethical standards such as an individual’s right to privacy and the desire to hold open and honest discussions that may be better facilitated in closed or semi-closed forums, versus providing increased transparency regarding both outcomes and decision-making processes. Again, the College needs to develop and explicate clear approaches to its resolution of these tensions.

Finally, the very diversity that the College is endeavoring to increase regarding its student body, faculty, and staff will likely also lead to a greater variety of student, faculty, and staff approaches to integrity and transparency. Increased diversity of the College community means that the College cannot assume that all come to their community with the same set of shared values and assumptions. Disagreements over challenging areas of conflict such as religious beliefs and how they are to be accommodated by the College are increasingly complicated when community members have a wide range of such beliefs, as well as different understandings about how those beliefs should be accommodated. Treatment of animals, food service, noise in public and semi-private spaces, and many other areas of academic and social life are open to higher levels of negotiation than in past eras. Successful outcomes from these various negotiations will be key to achieving tolerance and acceptance of a range of approaches to work and student life at the College.

Affirmation of Compliance

To document the institution’s compliance with Federal regulations relating to Title IV, the Evaluation Team reviewed Wellesley College’s Affirmation of Compliance form, signed by the President. As discussed in Standard 4, the team’s review of course schedules and syllabi for a cross-section of Wellesley’s course offerings found the assignment of credit reflective of the College’s policy and consistent with the Commission’s standards. Wellesley publicly discloses on its website, in the Student Handbook, and in other relevant publications its policy on transfer of credit. The handbooks for students, faculty, and staff all contain detailed information about the College’s grievance procedures. Public notification of the evaluation visit and of the opportunity for public comment was made two months prior to the visit on the Wellesley web site and in the *Wellesley Townsman*. The College does not offer any online courses.

SUMMARY

Wellesley is a remarkable institution with a compelling mission, a rich history, and an exceptionally vibrant academic culture. The faculty are impressive in all aspects of the role—teaching, research, and service to the institution. Students are talented and intense in the ways that young people should be. And the Trustees are deeply committed to the institution, and informed and highly engaged in their work.

Strengths:

In its very brevity, Wellesley’s mission statement puts a stake in the ground about the distinctive mission of the College. Wellesley’s mission is “to provide an excellent liberal arts education for women who will make a difference in the world.” The mission, which has been reaffirmed at intervals, is widely understood and enacted throughout the many facets of life at the College.

The president is an inspiring leader with a clear vision and strong ambition for the institution, tempered by a healthy pragmatism—what President Johnson likes to call “practical dreaming.” Her leadership style is open and collaborative, and these values translate to the functioning of a talented and collaborative senior team.

The academic program is very strong, with a broad and varied curriculum, opportunities for interdisciplinary study, a rich array of research opportunities and academically relevant internships for students, and high accessibility of faculty to students, enabled in part by the low student-to-faculty ratio.

The College’s considerable financial resources and history of successful fundraising underpin its ability to deliver a premier liberal arts education now and into the future. Wellesley has an endowment of over \$2.1 billion, or \$886,000 per student, an amount that ranks among the very top for national liberal arts colleges. On an annual basis, the College’s \$241 million operating budget funds the Wellesley experience generously at approximately \$100,000 per student. Total outstanding debt is \$313 million.

The College has a strong culture of faculty engagement in governance and a practice of approaching institutional challenges collectively, through standing committees or ad hoc planning processes, involving staff, faculty, and students. The College is thus well-positioned, as it moves from reaccreditation to strategic planning, to identify clear priorities that will carry legitimacy with the College community as a whole. This prioritization will be crucial as Wellesley works to create a culture of financial discipline while sustaining its commitment to excellence and innovation.

Following a period of sustained focus on the academic program and faculty issues, Wellesley is turning its attention to the student experience as a whole. Strong leadership in admissions, financial aid, and student affairs has brought fresh perspective, vision for the future, and a commitment to inclusive excellence in the recruitment, admission, retention, and development of students. Additionally, a well-resourced and well-received Center for Career Education has established a new, high bar for student services.

Challenges:

Planning: As Wellesley moves from reaccreditation to strategic planning, it will be important for the College to establish a well-designed, staffed, and unified process that goes beyond the model of committee deliberation to establish clear goals, plans and timelines for implementation, and metrics for success. The plan should outline a motivating vision for the College community while continuing to strengthen the culture of financial discipline. Given that Wellesley does not have a tradition of strategic planning and that its academic governance culture tends to emphasize deliberation over execution, this process will need to be carried out in a structured and focused way.

Finances: Notwithstanding its strong financial fundamentals, the College faces significant financial challenges. It is a strength that current leadership, at the institutional and board levels, has called out these structural financial challenges and begun to analyze the College's financial drivers in an integrated way. Within the past decade, the College has run material operating deficits over multi-year periods, relied on endowment payouts above 5 percent, and over a fifty-year period accumulated a backlog in deferred maintenance of approximately \$325 million. Within the past two years, College leadership has acted decisively to begin to reverse these trends through the Voluntary Retirement Program, increases in the comprehensive fee, and increased investment in capital renewal. It has taken clarity and courage on the part of College leadership to move swiftly to reduce costs and signal to the entire community a long-term commitment to financial discipline.

A longstanding commitment to need-blind admissions, in its purest sense, will continue to constrain the growth of net tuition absent higher enrollment or a continued cycle of elevated tuition increases versus peers. We understand that the College is well aware of this dynamic, and with the need for revenue to support compensation, programmatic, and deferred maintenance needs.

The ability to generate positive operating cash flows moving forward to support the College's capital renewal plan will hinge on leadership's commitment to maintain discipline on the addition of tenure lines, strict control of staff headcount, and willingness to dial back non-strategic programs and non-essential services.

The College needs to develop a capital renewal plan that is underwritten by realistic assumptions about funding from borrowing, gifts, and contributions from the operating budget. The most recent 10-year capital plan is underfunded by \$155 million. At most risk are the strategically important renovations to the residence halls.

Disciplined Growth: Beyond financial discipline in the strict sense, the College may wish to consider developing a higher bar for adding programs and activities. As we all know, higher education has a tendency to define excellence through addition and to have difficulty eliminating legacy programs in administrative, academic, and student areas. Indeed, we heard from students that the student government undertook a project within the past two years to "do less." Because eliminating activities is so difficult, it is important to create clear standards for evaluating requests for faculty lines, majors, minors, concentrations, or centers, and to consider protocols for evaluating the continued relevance of programs that may have outlived their usefulness. This kind of discipline will free up staff and other resources to reallocate to institutional priorities.

Governance: Notwithstanding strong leadership from the president and senior team, it was suggested during our visit that there may be too many committees who work on individual projects,

without much communication or coordination between them. It also appears that the College may be too quick to look to committees to make progress on issues, rather than adopting straightforward organizational solutions in areas where faculty participation is not central.

Academic Program: In an era of constraint in faculty growth, the College needs to think strategically about the goals of a Wellesley education, the curriculum writ large, and how to shape the faculty to deliver it. Although there is strong engagement with curricular issues at the departmental level, it is not clear who owns the curriculum overall. The early challenges faced by ACAS in assigning faculty lines, without responsibility for educational policy, is a symptom of this problem, as is the fact that the College's distribution or general education requirements have not been comprehensively revisited in 25 years. We were told that work on these issues will resume next fall (after revision of the grading policy is completed), led by the Dean of Academic Affairs.

Student Life: As the new Director of Residential Life works to make much needed and well received changes to create a residential life community and curriculum, the College will need to prioritize repair and renewal of the residence halls. Second, since staff in Student Affairs have become a more professionalized work force, the College may wish to examine compensation levels, academic vs. year-long employment, and opportunities for professional development.

Educational Effectiveness: With the Mellon grant for Evidence Based Teaching Innovation, the College has an opportunity to make progress on course level assessment with identified course objectives and measurement. Although there is support for this effort at the staff level, real progress will depend on institutional emphasis as well as faculty leadership and widespread adoption. The College may wish to consider rewarding faculty in tangible ways, through pay or reviews, to signal that risk-taking in the service of educational improvement will be acknowledged in concrete ways.

Staff: We heard from a number of staff, the majority of whom are women, that they do not seem to count in the College's mission to empower women to make a difference in the world. There seems to be a hunger for professional development throughout the staff, as well as a desire to participate meaningfully in the governance of the College. The Administrative Council lacks clear goals, is cumbersome in structure, and frustrates those who step up to take leadership roles. The College would benefit from having someone in a leadership position take a close look at the experience of staff at the College and develop strategies for improving it.