

2015 Goshen College
Self-Study Report

Executive Summary



Introduction to Executive Summary

This document is the Executive Summary of the **2015 Goshen College Self-Study Report** submitted in early January to the **Higher Learning Commission (HLC)** by Goshen College. The report was submitted in support of the college's request for **continued accreditation** by HLC, which is based in Chicago and accredits colleges and universities in Indiana and 18 other states. In a larger sense this report also is a snapshot of Goshen College's current status as well as the strengths and challenges facing the institution.

For students, **accreditation** provides assurance that the college is accountable for achieving what it sets out to do, and that in doing so it is engaged in continuous review and improvement of its quality while meeting the accreditation agency's requirements and criteria. GC **administrators, faculty and staff conducted this self-study over the past three years**. That process allowed the college to evaluate its compliance with accreditation criteria as well as strengths of the institution and areas for improvement.

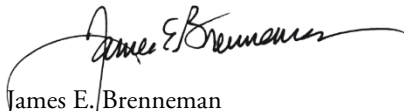
The Higher Learning Commission evaluates educational institutions in terms of their missions and HLC's **Criteria for Accreditation and Core Components**. Besides assessing formal educational activities, the commission evaluates such things as governance and administration, financial stability, admissions and student services, institutional resources, institutional effectiveness, and relationships with internal and external constituencies. For continued accreditation, the commission will need to determine that GC has met the Criteria for Accreditation and Core Components. **Those criteria are as follows:**

- **Criterion One. Mission.** *The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.*
- **Criterion Two. Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct.** *The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.*
- **Criterion Three. Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support.** *The institution provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.*
- **Criterion Four. Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement.** *The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.*
- **Criterion Five. Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness.** *The institution's resources, structures, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. The institution plans for the future.*

From **March 9 to 11, 2015**, a team of peer consultant-evaluators from the Higher Learning Commission will visit campus to conduct a **comprehensive visit and evaluation** of the college. Based on the information provided within the self-study and discussions with students, faculty, staff and other constituents, the HLC team will document and confirm Goshen's conclusions and future directions and make a recommendation about continued accreditation.

I would encourage you to read through this executive summary and explore the additional materials, not just in preparation for the HLC campus visit, but as a great summary of both the challenges, and more importantly, the countless and amazing successes that have transpired over the last decade at Goshen College.

Peace and blessings,



James E. Brenneman
President

Preface

As it prepares to celebrate 121 years as Elkhart County's only residential higher education institution, Goshen College will continue to develop servant leaders for the church and the world while realizing its vision of becoming an influential leader in liberal arts education focusing on international, intercultural, interdisciplinary and integrative teaching and learning. Guided by President James E. Brennenman, who has begun his third four-year term, Goshen is moving forward with a new strategic plan that promises to increase enrollment, strengthen its already superb academic program and improve operations. This forward momentum aligns well with the 2015 timeline for seeking continued accreditation through the Higher Learning Commission (HLC).

The self-study report is the culmination of a multi-year process, beginning in the fall of 2012, that weaves together three key institutional efforts: preparation for the 2015 HLC Comprehensive Visit, strategic planning and budgetary prioritization. The board of directors, executive team, steering committee and members of the campus community engaged these efforts in a wide variety of ways as part of the over-arching process. Taken together, the results of these efforts position the college to continue its mission-driven educational work, demonstrate the institution's fulfillment of the HLC Criteria and Core Components, and articulate a prioritized plan for the coming five years.

Current Context

A challenging reality

Goshen College joins many other small, private liberal arts colleges in navigating a rapidly-changing, fiercely competitive, and increasingly cost-sensitive educational marketplace. Many of these challenges began to have a concrete financial impact amid the global economic downturn of 2008-09

GC was not alone in realizing substantial losses in the market value of its long-term investments—the college's endowment dipped from approximately \$121 million in 2007 to \$72 million in 2009. Also as a result of the financial crisis and its impact on family incomes and state support of education, the college has since 2009 invested more substantially in need-based financial aid in order to ensure that GC remains affordable to students. Accordingly, the institution joins much of higher education in observing pronounced increases in its tuition discount rate, tracking closely today with averages for other similar institutions at around 48 percent.

These financial challenges aligned with increasing difficulty in achieving sustained success in recruiting new students. With only several exceptions in the past 10 years, the incoming cohorts of first-time, full-time undergraduate students have remained smaller than the stated goals of 200 or more. See Table 1 for detail on enrollment and financial challenges. With pressure on both the discount rate and the number of new students enrolling, overall operating budget revenues became insufficient to cover costs. Anticipating these pressures, the president's council together with the board of directors developed a three-year plan to tap into long-term unrestricted endowment investments for operating budget support while also making strategic investments to strengthen revenues. This multi-year plan, which focused largely on developing programs for adult and graduate students, growing undergraduate enrollment, and funding a series of strategic initiatives was approved by the board in October 2012 and concludes at the end of the 2014-15 fiscal year.

Though the college has found some success at increasing enrollment with graduate and non-traditional students, this growth taken together with continued challenges in recruiting traditional undergraduate students led to continued projections of operating revenue shortfalls. As a result, the president's council, under direction from the board of directors, undertook a substantial budgetary prioritization process during the 2013-14 academic year.

Table 1. Ten-year trends in enrollment, tuition discounting, and endowment market value.

	05-06	06-07	07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15
Incoming Class (UG)	195	206	202	172	238	180	170	168	167	159
Total FTE Enrollment	859	895	906	891	971	887	893	875	837	768
Discount Rate	39%	41%	42%	43%	47%	49%	50%	49%	48%	
Endowment (\$M)	106	121	106	72	83	99	94	102	117	

This process was integrated into strategic planning and self-study processes already underway, and sought to restructure

the institution in ways that maintained the integrity of academic programs and support services to students.

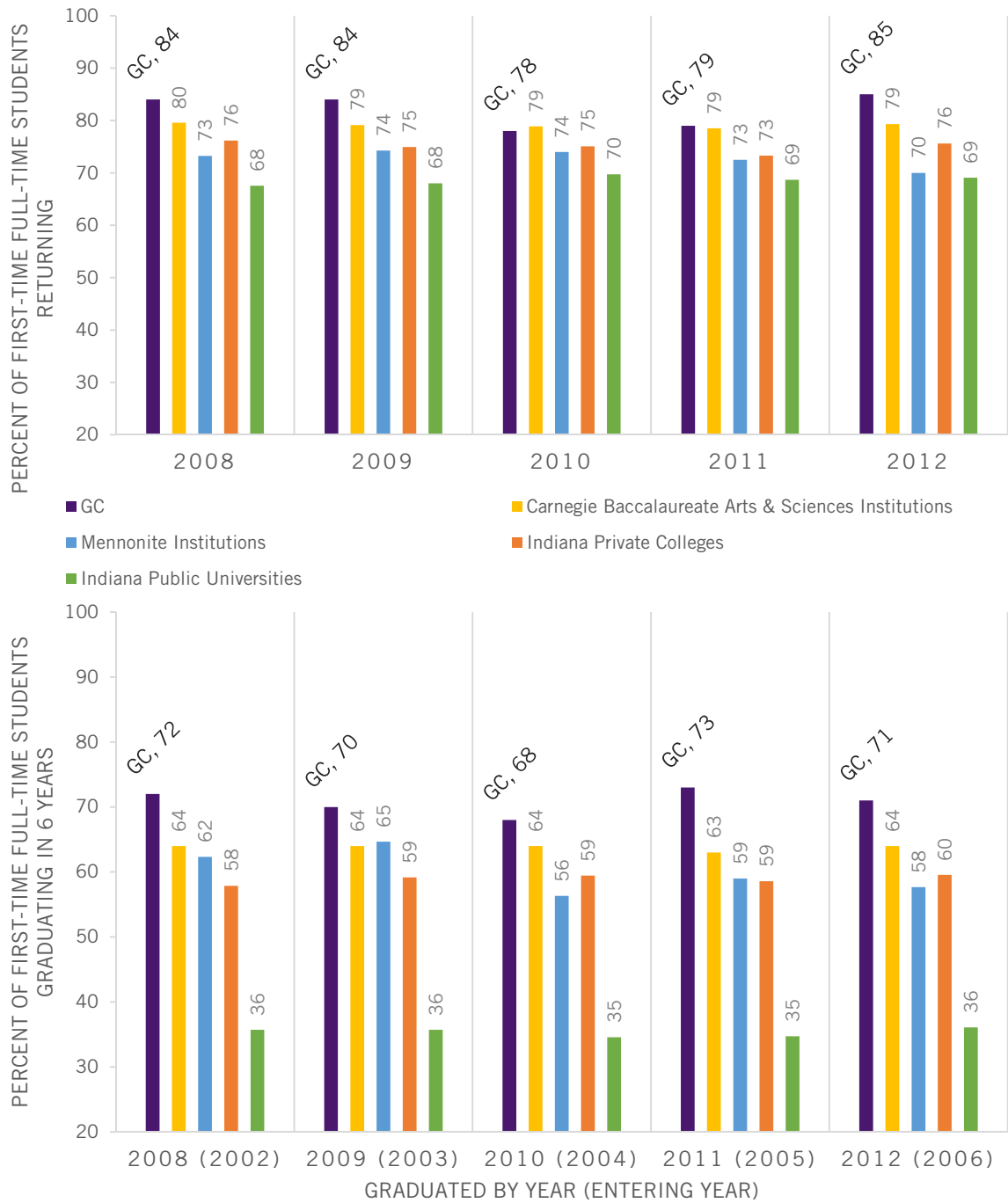
Altogether the prioritization process achieved substantial budgetary savings via administrative and faculty workforce reductions and through decreases in discretionary spending.

A tradition of academic excellence

Yet amid these significant challenges, the institution’s tradition of academic excellence thrives. As represented in

Figure 1, its strong persistence and completion rates stand testimony to this at the macro level: GC meets or exceeds average first-year retention and graduation rates for Carnegie Baccalaureate Arts & Sciences institutions,

Figure 1. First to second year retention rates and six-year graduation rates for GC, with benchmark comparisons.



exceeds averages for both private and public Indiana four-year institutions, and outperforms its sister Mennonite institutions.

Further, the college continues to see strong levels of alumni and current student satisfaction. Alumni surveys administered in 2013 confirm that 90 percent of graduates are satisfied or very satisfied with their GC education. Results from the 2012 and 2013 administrations of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) confirm that, respectively, 93 percent and 95 percent of seniors evaluate their entire educational experience at GC as good or excellent. This compares to 86 percent and 87 percent of students nationally for these two respective administration years. Myriad other indicators confirm the college's academic excellence at the micro level: repeated awards of excellence for the communication program, top rankings for the accounting program, high-quality music and theater productions, award-winning student literary work, excellent medical school acceptance rates, record numbers of NAIA scholar-athletes, a recognized e-portfolio system serving student and assessment needs, as well as ongoing faculty research and publications.

Teaching faculty maintain a deep commitment to student learning and development as evidenced, in small part, by attention to excellence in the classroom and in academic advising. Student ratings of instruction measured via the IDEA course evaluation system (instituted in the fall of 2013) confirm GC instructors meet or exceed national benchmarks. Quality of advising, as measured via the Student Satisfaction Inventory (last administered in the fall of 2013) remains among one of the institution's strengths and exceeds national and peer benchmark averages.

Current efforts and progress

The 2014-15 academic year might best be characterized as a year of transition and of renewed focus. As part of continual adaptation to challenges the institution faces, the president—upon re-appointment to his third term beginning in 2014—re-instituted an executive team structure that incorporates a provost/executive vice president. This change reflects consensus on campus and with the board of directors that on-campus and off-campus demands are best served via this type of structure. For the 2014-15 academic year, this position is filled on an interim basis. The search for a long-term appointment began in the fall of 2014. The arrival of the interim provost and executive vice president coincided with the departure in August 2014 of the vice president for enrollment management and marketing. This transition initiated a thorough review of strategy and

operations in the enrollment management and marketing areas.

In August 2014 the administration invited several external evaluations of enrollment management operations. The assessment reports identified several major problems in admissions and recruitment: 1) a basic lack of effective admissions processes in place, including little staff training and accountability; 2) insufficient number of inquiries in the recruitment pipeline; and 3) high turnover and unfilled admissions staff positions. Upon recommendation that enrollment management expertise be brought in quickly, Goshen College secured the services of Noel-Levitz (N-L) for assistance in student recruitment and marketing.

Under the expert guidance of N-L's Sarah Keating, a 30-60-90-day plan was outlined for a fast start in corrective action. With a goal of establishing a systematic, data-informed marketing and recruitment process and with intense training for admissions staff—along with the appointment of a new interim admissions director—staff responded with renewed energy and determination to meet the recruitment challenge for the incoming class of 2015. That work continues, with no illusion that the turnaround will be easy or quick. The difference is that admissions positions have been filled, counselor training has been completed and consultations with Sarah Keating continue, both on-campus and remotely, to ensure that basic admissions systems are functioning and improving. In addition to supporting admissions, Sarah Keating's broad depth of experience in enrollment management will assist and inform marketing, communications and financial aid decisions. This work is further supported by ongoing investments in new partnerships with external organizations and groups via the Center for Intercultural and International Education (CIIE). These partnerships will increase the college's contacts with diverse youth.

Amid the enrollment challenges, the college continues to enjoy an enviable financial position. Evidence of this includes a Department of Education financial strength ratio of 3.0 (the maximum possible), and a Council of Independent Colleges Financial Indicators Tool (FIT) composite ratio that places Goshen College very significantly above the median for Midwest schools its size. That FIT ratio is also well above the national median of *all* schools its size for each of the last six years. In addition, the college enjoys an enviable endowment of just over \$117 million as of the June 30, 2014 audit which, along with approximately \$2 million of current unrestricted gifts each year from donors, provides a very strong underlying annual

base of operational support. Overall giving to the institution is currently at its highest levels since 2009.

Goshen College is committed to fulfilling its mission and vision, building on its strong academic program and financial position and growing enrollment. As an institution of teaching and learning, Goshen is also committed to growing in knowledge and wisdom through the re-accreditation process. We look forward to the upcoming campus visit by the Higher Learning Commission review team.

Criterion 1. Mission

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

Goshen College has, from its founding, operated as a mission-oriented institution having been established by a denomination for the purpose of educating its young people. Already in the institution's early years its motto, "Culture for Service" linked the aims of the academy—here manifest in the form of a classic liberal arts college—to the Anabaptist-Mennonite ethic of Christian discipleship or service. This synthesis at the core of the mission—a marriage of academy and church—has driven the institution's evolution and adaptation over its 121-year history and functions as a creative tension central to decision-making.

The historic mission threads of Anabaptist-Mennonite identity, liberal arts education, service orientation, and international experience are currently woven together and freshly articulated via three key statements: the mission statement, the college's five core values, and the more recent vision statement. It is via these statements that the institution most fully communicates its identity, purpose, direction and aspirations. Additional governance documents such as the institutional bylaws and board of directors ends statements provide further clarity.

Mission

Goshen College is a liberal arts college dedicated to the development of informed, articulate, sensitive, responsible Christians. As a ministry of the Mennonite Church, we seek to integrate Christian values with educational, social and professional life. As a community of faith and learning, we strive to foster personal, intellectual, spiritual and social growth

in every person. We view education as a moral activity that produces servant-leaders for the church and the world.

Vision

Goshen College is recognized as an influential leader in liberal arts education focusing on international, intercultural, interdisciplinary, and integrative teaching and learning that offers every student a life-orienting story embedded in Christ-centered core values: global citizenship, compassionate peacemaking, servant leadership and passionate learning.

Reflection

Goshen College's enduring mission guides all aspects of its operations as it expands beyond its liberal arts roots to serve the broader educational needs of the community and the world. The college has continued to articulate and broadly communicate its mission. It has ensured academic programs, services to students, new initiatives, as well as budget priorities and planning are consistent with the mission. Goshen is serving the local community well, and leading for positive change as it pertains to changing demographics, and has maintained excellent academic programs while remaining true to its values and mission. As presented in chapter one of the self-study, the institution meets HLC expectations as described in this criterion, core components, and sub-components. Still, this self-study has given the college many opportunities to better understand the challenges facing the institution, especially in the areas of academy-church relations, increased ethnic and racial diversity, student and faculty recruitment, and an increase in non-traditional students. Administrators, faculty and staff members look forward to addressing these challenges to ensure Goshen College remains "a community of faith and learning that fosters personal, intellectual, spiritual and social growth in every person."

Strengths

- Goshen College is guided by core values, a mission and vision that are deeply embedded in the institution's history and its operations.
- Over the past decade, the college has widely communicated the core values and mission and developed and disseminated a new vision statement that outlines the aspirations of the college.
- Budget priorities and planning processes are guided by a commitment to stay true to the college's mission as are programs, services and new initiatives.

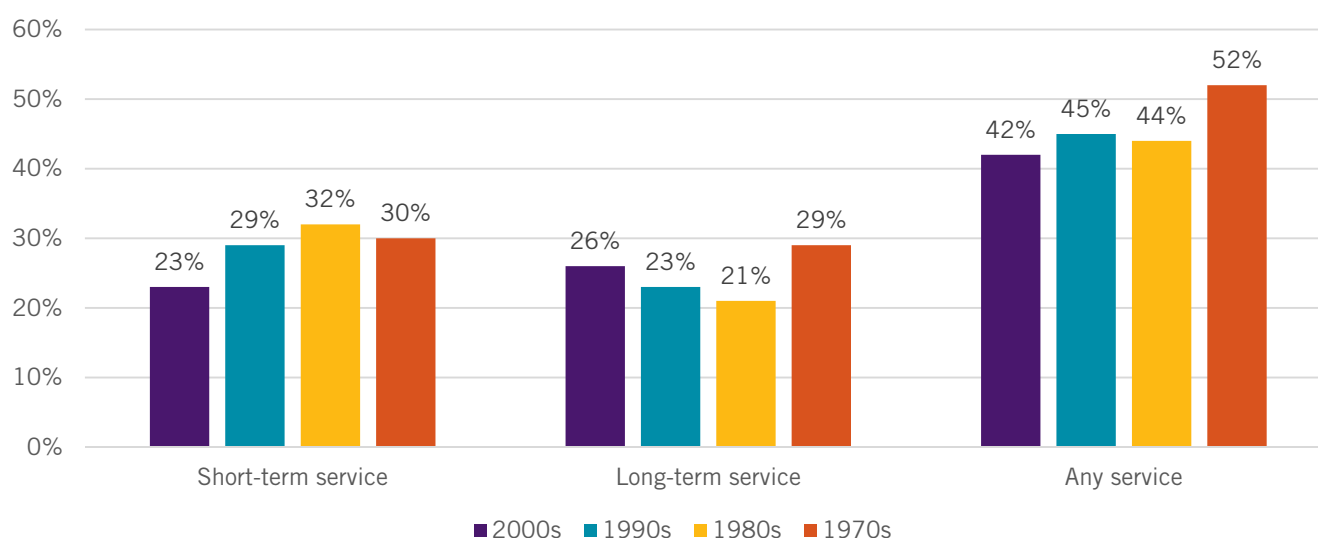
- Goshen's efforts in the past 10 years to further strengthen its intercultural programming have resulted in a more diverse learning community, and a deepened commitment to engaging diversity on the part of faculty, staff and students. (See Table 2)
- The institution has diversified its board of directors by adding numerous leaders of color.
- The 2012 launch of a revised general education curriculum, the Goshen Core, represents a significant achievement, linking the organization's core values, mission and vision directly to the educational experiences it offers students.
- Consistent with its historic Mennonite commitment to be servant leaders for the world, the college remains deeply committed to the common good. Service learning is embedded in academic programs and the institution supports a broader range of community programs than 10 years ago. This service ethic is clearly lived out by our alumni after they leave the college (See Figure 2).
- The college benefits from a deeply committed alumni base that provides significant financial support and engages with the institution at many levels.
- In addition to maintaining strong relationships with the Mennonite Church USA, the college has substantially increased the breadth and depth of its engagement with the local and regional communities and, particularly, its partnerships with the local Latino community.
- Goshen College is an Associate Member of the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) as an emerging Hispanic Serving Institution. President James E. Brenneman has served two terms as Regional Representative on the HACU Associate Members Committee.
- Since it was founded, Goshen College has been guided by its values and mission and it has endured despite considerable challenges, including the Great Recession, enrollment issues, and budgetary shortfalls. While the college will face future challenges, it can be expected to endure based on those same values and mission and by a vision that has been designed to inspire students, faculty and staff well into the 21st century.

Table 2. Ten-year trends in undergraduate enrollment diversity.

	05-06	06-07	07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15
Traditional Undergraduate Percent diverse	17%	18%	18%	17%	17%	20%	23%	26%	27%	32%
Traditional Undergraduate Percent Hispanic	4%	5%	6%	6%	7%	9%	11%	12%	14%	15%

**Percent diverse and percent Hispanic include international students*

Figure 2. Percentage of GC alumni engaging in short- and long-term voluntary service



Challenges

- Like other small liberal arts college, Goshen College faces enrollment and financial challenges. The college will need to continue reaching out to diverse prospective students and to the community to build enrollment and carefully manage its resources.
- Also like other denominationally-affiliated colleges and universities, Goshen continues to navigate a 90-year-old dialogue between church and academy within the context of increasingly diverse communities with increased needs. As the institution expands its constituency base and develops more intentional relationships with groups outside the church, it must continue to attend with care to the articulation of its mission and the ways in which that mission both adapts to new realities and maintains integrity to its rich history.
- Goshen College and its mission may be affected by possible changes in the authority and structure of Mennonite Church USA, prompted by the desire of some affiliated churches and institutions to have a more independent relationship with the denomination. Such changes are being contemplated because of an inner-denomination disagreement about gay marriage as well as other matters of church polity.
- The percentage of minority students at Goshen College is expected to increase (it was 35 percent non-white in Fall 2014), including more students from non-Mennonite faith traditions. This will accelerate the shift from being “a college for Mennonites” to being “a Mennonite college for all.” The college will need to position itself—and consider adaptations of its mission statement—to offer a distinctive, theologically-rooted education to anyone who wants it based on shared values.
- The college’s mission statement may need to be adjusted as it expands its educational offerings, including more online and adult education courses as well as an increase in non-traditional students.
- The college will need to leverage its widely supported core values to increase student understanding/application of the college’s mission and vision.
- As Goshen recruits and promotes an increasingly diverse administration, faculty and staff, it will need to make sure employees fully understand, embrace and live out the college’s core values, mission and vision. College employees must continue passing on those important foundational and faith understandings to students and to the community.

- Finally, as the local community becomes more diverse, the college will need to increase and further diversify outreach and services to the community. Personal connections and relationships will need to be widened and deepened, including adding additional non-Mennonite community members to the board of directors.



Criterion 2. Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

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

The Goshen College core values provide the foundation for all of the institution’s decisions and actions: informing the board of directors’ approach to governance, guiding the work of employees in carrying out the mission and vision, establishing standards and expectations for students, and in all things calling the college community not only to self-learning, personal excellence, and ethical and responsible conduct, but to striving for the common good.

The institution works to continually update policies to adapt appropriately to the context in which it operates and widely communicates any changes. As the calls for transparency in higher education have heightened, so has the college responded by sharing increasingly more information about its operations—both with internal constituents and with external constituencies.

Reflection

Goshen College’s core values, mission and vision are the foundation of all operations at the college and encourage self- and team-learning, personal excellence, striving for the common good, acting with integrity, and ethical and

responsible conduct. Policies, procedures and processes—most subject to external review—are designed to ensure integrity in all essential functions. The institution has a track record of operating deliberatively, in a collaborative fashion and with transparency. Students, faculty, staff and the public all have a voice at the college. As presented in chapter two, the institution meets HLC expectations as described in this criterion, core components, and sub-components. Nevertheless, this self-study process has helped the college clarify institutional strengths and some challenges. The college already has begun the process of addressing these challenges to help ensure Goshen College will continue to serve the common good in an ethical and responsible manner.

Strengths

- Goshen College has a tradition of self- and team-learning, personal excellence, striving for the common good, acting with integrity and ethical and responsible conduct.
- Goshen's core values, mission and vision are the foundation for all of the college's decisions and actions and the basis for standards and expectations for students.
- The college maintains policies, procedures and processes that help ensure integrity in academic, financial, personnel and auxiliary functions. Every year, financial policies, procedures and processes are subject to external review.
- Goshen is committed to transparency and provides an appropriate—and growing—range of information to students, parents, oversight organizations and the general public.
- All academic decisions take place within the institution's governance model.
- The board of directors is made up of a cross section of constituents and maintains a structure and procedures designed to ensure engagement in board governance, setting institutional policy, generative thinking about strategic priorities, board education regarding best practices, monitoring fiscal and programmatic outcomes and listening to stakeholder concerns.
- Day-to-day management of the college is the responsibility of the president and his team, who together ensure that the college achieves the educational and institutional outcomes as specified in the mission and vision of the college and as defined by the policy governance policies developed by the board of directors.
- The college maintains a long tradition of being committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of

truth in teaching and learning. The board of directors has affirmed this commitment.

- The college also has in place the policy and procedural infrastructure necessary to ensure integrity in research and scholarly practice.
- All Goshen employees have online access to employee handbooks, which list institutional policies and procedures as well as decision making, performance expectations, grievance policies and the process for the confidential reporting of unethical behavior.

Challenges

- Potential changes in the structure of Mennonite Church USA will create challenges for the college in terms of navigating the future relationship between the church and the college in ways that are mutually beneficial to both.
- The investment of institutional time and energy in preparation for the HLC Comprehensive Evaluation have proven beneficial in terms of careful review of governance, policy and compliance. Looking forward, GC joins other colleges and universities in having to navigate the challenge of maintaining adequate investment of time and human resources in the ever-growing obligations of compliance.
- The self-study process has highlighted the need for a more systematic approach to the review and ongoing maintenance of policies and adherence to compliance requirements. Some improved structures have been developed, and opportunity exists for further refinement of associated processes.
- Goshen also will need to continue to evaluate and enhance salaries and benefits and improve employee training, both to meet student needs, but also to provide an incentive for employees to remain at the college and ensure all aspects of this criterion continue to be met.
- As Goshen becomes more diverse and students, faculty and staff members produce more information based on online sources, the college will need to expand procedures to ensure ethical standards and behavior.



Criterion 3. Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support

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

Goshen College offers a high quality education in all of its academic programs. Faculty are well qualified to teach in their disciplinary areas as well as across disciplines and are deeply committed to the values, mission and vision of the college. Co-curricular programs and support services extend the excellence students encounter in the classroom. Goshen College is fortunate to have strong facility and technology resources and a professional development program that provides resources for faculty scholarship, curriculum innovation and teaching pedagogy. Taken together, the evidence clearly demonstrates that Goshen College is living out its vision as being an influential leader in liberal arts education focusing on international, intercultural, interdisciplinary, and integrative teaching and learning that offers every student a life-orienting story embedded in Christ centered core values: global citizenship, compassionate peacemaking, servant leadership and passionate learning.

Reflection

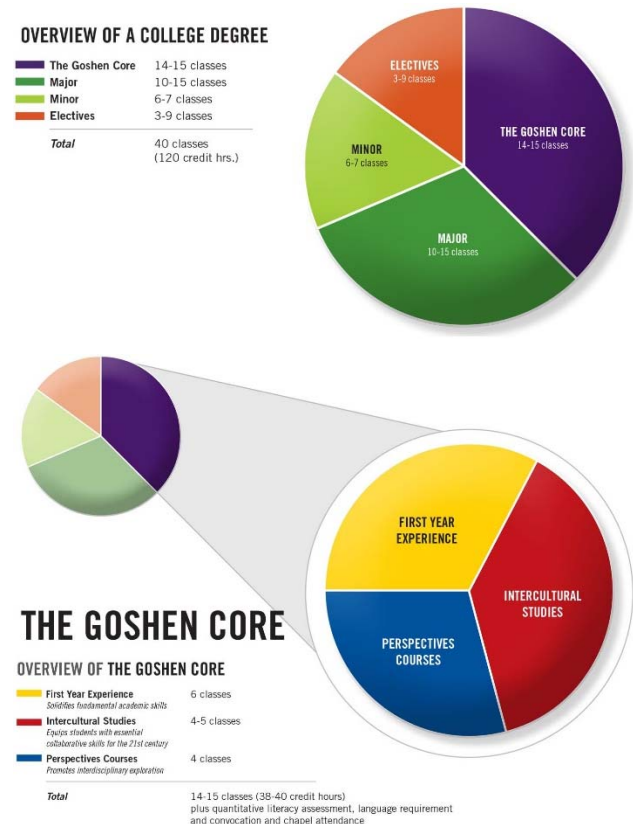
Considering the evidence presented in chapter three of the self-study, Goshen College clearly meets the expectations for quality, resources and support in teaching and learning established by the commission in criterion three. The self-study process has reminded the college of the long history of excellence in academic and co-curricular programs at Goshen College. More importantly, the identified challenges provide the institution with a roadmap for continued investment in maintaining excellence as it looks to the future.

Strengths

- A long tradition of excellent academic programs that manifests itself in noteworthy outcomes: strong graduation rates, unusual alumni success in graduate and professional school, and a demonstrated commitment on the part of alumni to institutional values such as service.
- An innovative model for general education launched in 2012 that integrates curricular and co-curricular aspects of the educational experience, provides students with multiple interdisciplinary experiences in preparation for

facing complex problems after graduating, and aligns well with the emergent work of the AAC&U with regard to best practices.

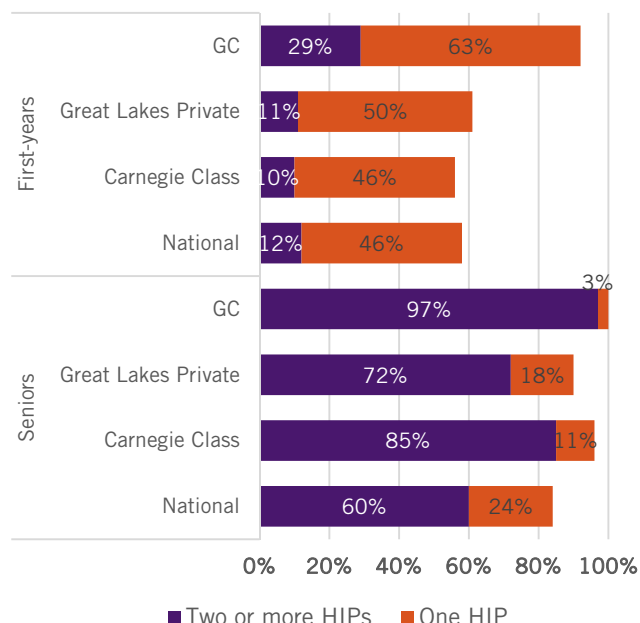
Figure 3. Components of the Goshen Core



- A 47-year history of international and intercultural education built around a Study-Service Term that remains cutting-edge in its application of integrative, interdisciplinary experiences and service learning.
- Strong support programming for diverse students via the efforts of CIIE in collaboration with other areas of campus, resulting in demonstrated success in persistence and completion.
- Robust student services that provide an enriched learning environment for students via residence life and campus activities programming, health and wellness services, career services, and leadership development opportunities
- A strong tradition of faith mentoring and support for spiritual development via campus ministries, inquiry programs and other activities that bring the college's five core values to life in the daily activities of the campus.
- Well-maintained facilities and technology for teaching and learning.

- Widespread implementation of high-impact educational practices that engage students in learning (See 2013 NSSE results in Figure 4).

Figure 4. Participation in high-impact practices



- A tradition of supportive advising relationships between students and faculty

Table 3. 2013 NSSE academic advising results

Question	GC	Nat'l
During the school year, about how many times have you and an academic advisor discussed your academic interests, course selections or academic performance? (Percentage indicating 3 or more times)	52%	44%
During the current school year, to what extent have your academic advisors done the following? (Percentage indicating "quite a bit" or "very much.")		
Listened closely to your concerns and questions	85%	69%
Helped you get information on special opportunities (study abroad, internship, research projects, etc.)	62%	35%
Discussed your career interests and post – graduation plans	71%	52%

Table 4 Student satisfaction inventory (SSI) satisfaction with advising

	2007	2009	2011	2013
Goshen College	5.71	5.77	5.93	6.04
Nat'l 4-yr Private Inst	5.30	5.36	5.45	5.52

Satisfaction in the SSI is measured on a 7-point scale.

- A \$2 million endowment to support the Mininger Center as a resource for faculty development and research.
- Well-developed faculty governance structures that maintain strong faculty participation and buy-in in academic affairs.

Challenges

- Compensation for teaching faculty lags that of established benchmark institutions; the college benefits from the deep commitment of faculty members to the mission, vision and core values of the institution. The college acknowledges the reality of financial pressures on maintaining competitive compensation in order to ensure quality. Looking forward, this becomes increasingly important as it seeks to continue diversifying the faculty and attracting scholars who may not have the same historic commitments to the Mennonite church that many faculty members have historically had.
- Ensuring that the college's students of color and dominant culture students have faculty of color in the classroom and diverse models among administration and staff is an ongoing challenge; the college made great strides in diversifying the faculty via the resources and activities that funded the establishment of CIIE. It is pressed to maintain this momentum, especially at a time when the population of diverse students is growing, but the size of the faculty has remained constant; attracting quality diverse candidates in the few searches conducted has proven difficult.
- To design going forward intercultural competency and interdisciplinary capacities into the fabric of faculty recruitment, promotion, and tenure criteria.
- The college is challenged to continually ensure that its portfolio of programs aligns with both disciplinary standards and market demand. While the evolution of curricular requirements to ensure that students are adequately prepared for careers and further study has been regular and ongoing, it has proven more difficult to sunset programs with waning demand in order to free up resources for new initiatives.

- The institution's enrollment and financial pressures place constraints on academic programming, most notable in upper-level course offerings. Academic departments have been able to maintain quality in their course offerings, but the shift of many upper-level courses to every-other-year offering patterns complicates scheduling for students.
- Financial pressures also make it increasingly challenging to sustain the college's enviable array of programs that enrich students' academic experiences. These programs—such as the Study-Service Term, the award-winning radio station (WGCS) and media production company (Five Core Media), the Mennonite Historical Library, and the Mennonite Quarterly Review—offer unprecedented hands-on experiences and resources to students that contribute significantly to their learning, but also require institutional investment above and beyond core departmental expenses.
- As the college serves an increasingly diverse population of students, it is challenged to maintain strong and robust services to support students who enter with less academic preparation for collegiate work.
- Goshen College is challenged to offer orientation for adjunct instructors and part-time coaches that fully introduces them to the college's history, mission, vision and values; a fuller understanding of these institutional distinctives would enhance the extent to which they can convey them to students.
- Although the Miner Center provides ongoing support for faculty development and research via grants, it remains a challenge to offer faculty adequate release time—perhaps the most important form of support—for pursuit of research and development.
- Although the Good Library has been successful at adapting its programming and holdings to new trends, the library facility itself would benefit from renovation to better support student and faculty collaboration and access to technology.



Criterion 4. Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

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

The strong preparation that the success of our alumni demonstrate is made possible through deep and enduring commitment of our faculty and staff, and through their persistent attention to excellence inside and outside the classroom.

Evaluation and improvement of teaching and learning at Goshen College has over time, and in pace with expectations for excellence in the academy, evolved and deepened its roots in the institutional culture. In the 10 years since the last HLC Comprehensive Evaluation, three major initiatives stand as bellwethers for a wide variety of smaller changes, process improvements, policy revisions and ongoing practices that demonstrate the campus commitment to continuous improvement: substantial investments in professional development, general education revision, and administrative support for assessment.

The first two of these three initiatives are contained within the activities establishing the Center for International and Intercultural Education (CIIE). Specifically, the \$12.5 million Lilly Endowment, Inc. grant which made possible the center included a substantial portion dedicated to the transformation of the campus learning environment and, in particular, the college's general education program.

Investments in professional development

As grant activities designed to transform the campus learning environment were being mapped out, campus academic leaders made a very intentional decision to invest substantial time and resources in course-oriented professional development. The goal was to build faculty capacity with assessment frameworks and outcomes-oriented thinking at the much more concrete course level. These investments would then create space for assessment and outcomes-oriented thinking about the general education program and about the college's other academic programs.

Professional development was built around three major programs: an annual Course Development Institute for

teaching faculty; year-long “critical friends” teaching faculty learning communities focused on continuous improvement with course design; and departmental grants for assessment projects. The professional development opportunities also included a wide variety of seminars, workshops and guest speakers.

General Education Revision

The general education revision—the second of the three major initiatives—grew out of institutional strategic planning processes that had, as early as 2003, identified general education revision as a priority and articulated integration as a key theme. Work began in earnest during the 2008-09 academic year with an extensive, data-driven study of the college’s existing first-year program. This study was largely facilitated by participation in the Foundations of Excellence program sponsored by the John N. Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education. In 2009-10 a representative committee, the General Education Task Force (GETF), began formal work on curricular revisions. Their work was rooted in the findings of the 2008-09 study, and aligned with a variety of emerging AAC&U initiatives, including Liberal Arts and America’s Promise (LEAP) and its associated VALUE (valid assessment of learning in undergraduate education) rubric projects.

The GETF followed the patterns that many of its members had experienced via their participation in the course development institution. Beginning at the end with outcomes, the group used the LEAP knowledge, skills and responsibilities framework to articulate a vision for undergraduate education at Goshen College, adding a fourth component: integration. As the curriculum emerged, it was mapped against the outcomes. The e-portfolio emerged as central to the program because it would foster student reflection and integration—one of the key outcomes—and also because it provided a rich repository of student work for student- and program-level assessment. In the years since the Goshen Core was adopted, it has proven appropriately malleable and has been tweaked several times based on faculty assessment of the extent to which it is achieving its varied objectives.

With three cohorts of incoming students now in the Goshen Core, the e-portfolio has taken root with both students and faculty members. As increasing numbers of students become familiar with the purpose of the portfolio and proficient in the associated technologies, e-portfolio usage is steadily expanding beyond the core. Departments

are increasingly finding ways to leverage the e-portfolio in the major; and co-curricular programs are drawing upon the portfolio as a resource in documenting leadership development, career preparation, and spiritual development—rooting this high-value component further into the educational experiences of our students. Several recent first-year portfolios provide a window into this powerful component of the core, which is also further expanded by students upon completion of the intercultural thread (SST): [example e-Portfolio #1: Cecilia Lapp Stoltzfus](#); [example e-Portfolio #2: Janeth Vela](#); [example ePortfolio #3: Isaiah Friesen](#).

Administrative support for assessment

The third major initiative demonstrating the college’s commitment to continuous improvement was the creation, in 2011, of the director of assessment position. This position and subsequent reorganization signaled a deepening commitment on the part of the institution to carrying forward the culture of data-driven decision making and culture of continuous improvement that was accelerated by grant activities. Upon appointment of the director of assessment, institutional responsibility for assessment (previously coordinated by a faculty member with course release) was integrated with the data management, reporting and analysis operations of the institutional research (IR) area to form an Office of Assessment and Institutional Research. This redesigned structure has facilitated stronger integration into assessment of the wealth of administrative and survey data available through the work of the IR team. The Office of Assessment and Institution Research has clarified and enhanced the many programs, processes and policies that guide evaluation and improvement across campus. After three years of operation, the assessment and institution research team acknowledges both important progress and the many opportunities for continuing to advance the culture of continuous improvement on campus.

As the office looks forward, its staff views its first three years as focused on establishing an expanded solid foundation for evaluation and improvement. In general terms, the task of the years ahead is to “live into” that foundation by supporting the campus in continuing to advance the quality of its assessment work. In many ways, this is educational or professional development work—continued capacity building for assessment among faculty and staff. As in any classroom, skill in this work is uneven across campus. While some faculty members and departments exceed expectations in their assessment work, others’ practice is still emerging.

As a campus, there are further opportunities to analyze, make use of, and communicate assessment results.

Reflection

In the past 10 years, Goshen College has made a great deal of progress in expanding teaching faculty capacity and buy-in with regard to assessment, and in strengthening assessment policies, processes, data collection, analysis and reporting. As presented in self-study chapter four, the institution clearly meets HLC expectations as described in the criterion, core components and sub-components. The self-study has afforded us an opportunity to reflect on our successes thus far and to identify challenges that will guide our work in the years ahead.

Strengths

- In the years since the last comprehensive evaluation, the college has made substantial investments in faculty development that have increased faculty capacity in both course design and assessment.
- The college's new general education curriculum, the Goshen Core, was "backwards designed" after articulating institutional outcomes and provides a center around which the learning outcomes and assessment efforts of other programs can be aligned.
- The Goshen Core's student e-portfolio provides the basis for direct assessment of the general education student learning outcomes, and plays an increasingly important role in assessment within the various major and co-curricular programs on campus.
- The dean's office, institutional research office and assessment committee have collaborated to establish clear policies, procedures and expectations that further embed assessment activity into the annual rhythms of the campus.
- Faculty have reviewed and overwhelmingly approved refreshed assessment policies and procedures, program review cycles and general education assessment plans.
- The institution has successfully established a robust infrastructure for collecting and reporting data to a wide variety of audiences on campus.
- Goshen's assessment practices, while always evolving and improving, demonstrate substantial alignment with widely-accepted best practices.

Challenges

- Although academic departments have long had access to administrative data and indirect measures of student

learning, many are only in the early stages of systematically gathering direct measures of student learning that are keyed to program student learning outcomes. A solid foundation for data collection has been established, and within several years all departments will be relying predominantly on direct measures of student learning in their assessment work.

- The institution is "young" in terms of the extent to which assessment loops are systematic and ingrained in ways that ensure the timely flow of information across the institution. This is particularly true with regard to the linkages between assessment data, academic planning and resource allocation.
- While GC predominantly reports institutional outcomes such as graduation rates, placement rates, graduate school success, and alumni preparation and satisfaction, there is room for more direct reporting of assessment results at the department or program level. Academic departments have, in collaboration with the Communications and Marketing Office, started presenting outcomes on their websites. However, it is less common that these results include data from direct measures of student learning.
- As the college adopts various technologies to support assessment (such as Mahara for electronic portfolios and the IDEA course evaluation system), these new tools provide benefits as well as the challenges of navigating technical hiccups and ensuring that faculty members feel comfortable with the tools so they can be used appropriately.



Criterion 5. Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

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

Over the past 10 years, Goshen College has responded positively to challenges and opportunities because its resources, structures and processes were managed by leaders guided by the college's core values and mission. For example, in the midst of the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression, the college launched its most important and transformative initiative in 38 years. The college also has faced a continuing enrollment challenge and has responded with a wide range of initiatives intended to attract new students while maintaining the high quality of its educational offerings.

In 2006, a year before the recession officially began, Goshen College announced the establishment of the Center for Intercultural Teaching and Learning (CITL), which sought to increase the number of Latino college students, transform the campus into an even more diverse intercultural community and conduct and disseminate research on the resources and challenges that changing demographics had brought to a rural Midwest community and to higher education. It was a visionary partnership based on an audacious idea. Leaders of both the Lilly Endowment, Inc. and Goshen College clearly understood the challenges and opportunities facing the college when the \$12.5 million grant was made public.

Nine years later, the partnership endures and Goshen's success in its intercultural endeavors is apparent. With Lilly Endowment's assistance, the Center for Intercultural and International Education (CIIE), has enriched the campus and had a positive impact in the city of Goshen, the State of Indiana and across the nation.

Enrollment of diverse students has been an admissions bright spot that has demonstrated that Goshen College can increase enrollment among target groups. Overall undergraduate enrollment has continued to be a struggle. Leadership and staffing challenges in the Admissions Office have complicated efforts to reverse a 40-year pattern of low

enrollment. Aggressive efforts are underway to increase enrollment and there are promising signs in that regard.

Amid these challenges, there is optimism about the future of the college based on many performance measures which demonstrate that Goshen is drawing upon its exceptionally strong resource base to provide a top-tier liberal arts institution.



Enrollment overview and analysis

Increasing enrollment is the highest strategic priority for Goshen College and is recognized by all administrators, faculty and staff as an urgent issue that directly impacts the resource base available for carrying out the institution's educational mission. The college's new strategic plan—*Grow Goshen 2020!*—is focused on strategies and tactics to help the college “reach sustained enrollment growth made up of students open to faith and learning from an Anabaptist perspective and reflective of the diversity present in our region, church and world.” The college's enrollment management consultant (Noel-Levitz) has implemented recruitment processes and communication and marketing plans based on best practices and with a keen understanding of the college's challenges and opportunities. Since fall 2014, the college's enrollment management team has added and trained staff, improved procedures, focused outreach to key prospects, improved marketing tactics and messaging, and enlisted college employees as well as alumni and friends in increasing the pool of prospective students. There is growing optimism that admissions and marketing efforts are headed in the right direction.

Following its March 2005 visit, the HLC visiting team noted there had been a “significant downturn in enrollment over last decade,” leaving residence halls and dining facilities to operate below capacity and jeopardizing the capacity of many departments to offer a full curriculum. The team

reported that Goshen's enrollment management team had developed and begun to implement plans that promised to increase and stabilize enrollment and that there was a recognition of the need to recruit non-Mennonite students and target audiences beyond the Mennonite population, especially minority students. The team also stated that "all-campus attention and energy" had to be directed to address the urgent enrollment issue.

Over the past decade the college made measurable progress in addressing the concerns and recommendations of the 2005 visitation team despite considerable obstacles and in a rapidly-changing, fiercely competitive and increasingly cost-sensitive educational marketplace. The Great Recession officially began in December 2007 and had an especially devastating impact in the local community; Elkhart County's unemployment soared to 20.2 percent in March 2009, Goshen's poverty rate peaked at 27 percent and the college's endowment dipped from \$121 million in 2007 to \$72 million in 2009. State support for higher education declined and many family incomes fell, prompting the college to substantially increase need-based financial aid to ensure Goshen remained affordable to students. Overall budget revenues became insufficient to cover costs because of the difficulty in achieving sustained enrollment success and the rising discount rate.

The college also experienced enrollment setbacks over the past decade due to some extent to leadership deficits; admissions efforts have been directed by a half-dozen individuals over the past 10 years. Other factors, especially in the 2013-14 academic year, included admissions and marketing leadership transitions, staff turnover, training gaps, technology transitions, and lack of clarity in marketing goals and strategies. There were also challenges recruiting Mennonite students because of a number of factors influencing college enrollment patterns in Mennonite Church USA. On the plus side, administrators, faculty and staff developed a clearer understanding of these difficulties and how to address them and build a culture of success to reach sustained enrollment growth.

Over the past 10 years, Goshen began to reverse the decades-long slide in enrollment—and statistics bear that out. In the decade before the 2005 accreditation visit, total student FTE averaged 858.84 students per year with a high of 928.5 and a low of 765.5. For the decade before this 2015 accreditation visit, total student FTE averaged 878.2 students per year with a high of 971 and a low of 768. The gains were accomplished largely because of the increase of

non-traditional and graduate students as well as some admissions and marketing improvements.

Perhaps more significantly, Goshen also increased the enrollment of non-Mennonite and minority students—goals that had eluded the institution for decades. Thanks to a \$12.5 million grant from the Lilly Endowment, Inc.—for the CIIE—the college increased minority enrollment to all-time highs. This past fall 22.6 percent of full- and part-time students at Goshen were U.S. minorities—including 15.4 percent Latino—and 9.9 percent are from abroad (25 countries). That meant 32.5 percent of students were minority or international students compared with 17.7 percent in 2006-07. Last spring, 24.6 percent of the graduating Class of 2014 was made up of minority students, including 9 percent Latino. And in fall 2014, Goshen had its most diverse first-year class the college had ever had, with almost 35 percent of traditional students identifying as non-white, compared with 15 percent in 2006-07.

As noted in the Introduction to this report, a thorough evaluation of enrollment management operations conducted over the summer identified several major problems in admissions and recruitment: 1) a basic lack of effective admissions processes in place, including little staff training and accountability; 2) insufficient number of inquiries in the pipeline; and 3) high turnover and unfilled admissions staff positions. Upon recommendation that enrollment management expertise be brought in quickly, the college secured the services of Noel-Levitz student recruitment and marketing services.



Fiscal strength

Goshen College is unique among colleges of its size and location with regard to the strong financial resources available for carrying out its educational mission. Indicators of this strength include the following:

- Total net assets of \$147,397,854 as of June 30, 2014, including a total endowment of \$117,507,429. On an endowment per student basis, this ranks Goshen College at or very near the top among the entire Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCCU), and third on the endowment per student measure among all private baccalaureate colleges in Indiana (per the NACUBO-Commonfund 2013 Endowment Study.)
- The college's endowment assets ranked 423 out of the 849 reporting institutions in the NACUBO-Commonfund 2013 Endowment Study.
- Goshen's Composite Financial Index (CFI) scores per the latest (July 2014) Council of Independent College's report placed the college in the first or second quartile in the Midwest region in five of the last six years, and very significantly above the median nationally of all colleges in its enrollment size category during each of the last six years reported.
- Goshen's Department of Education Financial Strength ratio has never been below a "2" and has been the highest rating of "3" in four of the last six years, including both of the last two years.
- The college enjoys tremendous financial support from donors, including both alumni and other friends of the college, for current gifts of \$1.8-\$2.0 million annually to the unrestricted operating budget. In addition, the normal payout from the endowment to the unrestricted operating budget has been an average of \$2 million per year over the last five years.



Reflection

Goshen College has considerable assets, including an enduring mission, a tradition of ethical and responsible conduct, excellent teaching, learning and student support, and sound assessment practices that have ensured the high quality of educational programs. The college also has

outstanding resources, including fiscal strength, well-qualified employees, outstanding facilities, a strong technological infrastructure and a strategic plan that will guide the college over the next five years. As detailed in chapter five of the self-study, the institution meets HLC expectations as described in this criterion, core components and sub-components. This comprehensive self-study has given the college many opportunities to better understand its strengths. It also has helped clarify such challenges as: reaching sustained enrollment growth, increasing the enrollment of local students and minorities; further diversifying the college's faculty and staff; maintaining competitive employee pay and benefits; and ensuring the college can leverage its strong asset base to overcome any deficits. Administrators, faculty and staff members look forward to addressing these challenges and fulfilling its vision of being recognized as "an influential leader in liberal arts education focusing on international, intercultural, interdisciplinary, and integrative teaching and learning that offers every student a life-orienting story embedded in Christ-centered core values: global citizenship, compassionate peacemaking, servant leadership and passionate learning."

Strengths

- Goshen College is unique among colleges of its size and location with regard to the strong financial resources available for carrying out its educational mission. That includes a total endowment of \$117,507,429.
- The college's faculty and staff provide outstanding teaching and support to students because Goshen fosters a true campus community which nurtures employees and promotes excellent work performance. Goshen's caring campus community has been created through the establishment and maintenance of its Christ-centered core values and mission.
- Goshen has outstanding and well-maintained academic, residential and administrative facilities that are capable of accommodating more students than currently enrolled.
- The college has a sound technological infrastructure and a long history of innovative and high-quality technology offerings to support student learning and effective administration.
- Goshen makes use of a variety of metrics and models to ensure that annual budgets and plans align with both demand and capacity.
- Despite financial challenges over the past decade, the college's governing board and leadership have protected the academic core of the institution and in so doing have

maintained its ongoing commitment to mission, vision and values, and academic excellence.

- Goshen maintains a tradition of shared governance that involves faculty, staff and students in a wide variety of decisions regarding academic requirements, policy, and processes. In addition, planning incorporates the perspectives of internal and external stakeholders.
- The college has, for numerous years, participated in a wide variety of externally-sponsored data collection surveys that provide valuable data to place its operations in a broader context.
- Although overall greater enrollment is necessary, Goshen has demonstrated the ability to boost overall enrollment among select groups, especially among minorities. This past fall, 22.6 percent of full- and part-time students at Goshen were U.S. minorities (including 15.4 percent Latino) and 9.9 percent were from abroad (25 countries). That means 32.5 percent of students were minority or international students compared with 17.7 percent in 2006-07.
- The college's new strategic plan—Grow Goshen 2020!—is focused entirely on strategies and tactics to help the college “reach sustained enrollment growth made up of students open to faith and learning from an Anabaptist perspective and reflective of the diversity present in our region, church and world.” The college's enrollment management consultant (Noel-Levitz) has guided the implementation of recruitment processes and communication and marketing plans based on best practices and a keen understanding of the college's challenges and opportunities. Since fall 2014, the college's enrollment management team has added and trained staff, improved procedures, focused outreach to key prospects, improved marketing tactics and messaging, and enlisted college employees as well as alumni and friends in increasing the pool of prospective students. There is growing optimism that admissions and marketing efforts are headed in the right direction.

Challenges

- Goshen College faces persistent enrollment and annual operating budget financial challenges that place pressure on campus operations. The college will need to achieve sustained enrollment growth and carefully manage its resources.
- Goshen will need to continue reaching out to diverse prospective students— increasingly non-Mennonite and from the local community—to increase enrollment.
- As a college in the midst of transformation, Goshen's enrollment is becoming more ethnically and racially diverse. Correspondingly, the college will need to hire and promote more minorities to faculty and staff positions to better serve students who will increasingly function in an intercultural world. The college's success in diversifying the employee base—particularly the teaching faculty—has been noteworthy, yet to sustain this diversity requires persistent effort.
- Goshen has good and dedicated employees, but will need to respond to the market challenge of providing better pay, benefits and training. The college also will need to consider moving from a compensation system that rewards longevity to one that rewards merit—the quality of work.
- The college has made significant structural changes, especially in terms of administration and staffing, and needs to assess the outcomes of the restructuring to ensure student and institutional needs are being met. Such a review will assure a more proactive response when deficits exceed assets.
- Similarly, the college has developed assessment and review cycles on the academic side and needs the same on the administrative side. This could help assess facility and infrastructure needs in a more timely fashion.
- The college will need to continue giving faculty and staff adequate and timely opportunities to provide input on important decisions, especially in planning and evaluation. While opportunities for input have been plentiful, stronger faculty and staff engagement over the coming decade will be essential to address challenges and remain a strong institution.



Formal Request for Reaffirmation

Taken together, the institutional self-study, strategic plan and supporting evidence demonstrate Goshen College's fulfillment of the Higher Learning Commission's Criteria for Accreditation and embody its ongoing commitment to reflection, improvement and excellence within the context of its vision and mission:

Vision

Goshen College is recognized as an influential leader in liberal arts education focusing on international, intercultural, interdisciplinary, and integrative teaching and learning that offers every student a life-orienting story embedded in Christ-centered core values: global citizenship, compassionate peacemaking, servant leadership and passionate learning.

Mission

Goshen College is a liberal arts college dedicated to the development of informed, articulate, sensitive, responsible Christians. As a ministry of the Mennonite Church, we seek to integrate Christian values with educational, social and professional life. As a community of faith and learning, we strive to foster personal, intellectual, spiritual and social growth in every person. We view education as a moral activity that produces servant-leaders for the church and the world.

The president of Goshen College, Dr. James E. Brenneman, requests reaffirmation of Goshen College's accredited status by the Higher Learning Commission.

Questions and Comments

If you have questions or comments regarding the content of this summary, the self-study report and evidence, or the team visit on March 9-11, 2015 please do not hesitate to contact:

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Thank-You

Any list of contributors is sure to exclude, and indeed all GC staff, administrators and teaching faculty have played an important role in preparing for HLC. We offer particular thanks to the following teams, without whom this work would not have been possible:

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