

Report to the
Faculty, Administration, Trustees, Students

of

RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE
Providence, Rhode Island

by

An Evaluation Team representing the
Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
of the
New England Association of Schools and Colleges

Prepared after study of the institution's
self-evaluation report and a visit to
the campus 30 October - 2 November 2011

The members of the team:

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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.

COMMISSION ON INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

New England Association of Schools and College

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: October 11, 2011

Name of Institution Rhode Island College

1. **History** Year chartered or authorized 1854 Year first degrees awarded 1855 (Normal School; 1924 (4-Year College))

2. **Type of control:** State City Other; specify: _____
 Private, not-for-profit Religious Group; specify: _____
 Proprietary Other; specify: _____

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	Graduation ^b	# Degrees ^c
Associate	0	0	0	0	0	0
Baccalaureate	5,707	1,781	6,238	76%	44%	1,212
Graduate	174	576	524	90%	77%	286

(a) full-time 1st to 2nd year (b) 3 or 6 year graduation rate (c) no. of degrees awarded most recent year

5. **Number of current faculty:** Full time 337 Part-time 360 FTE: 478.4

6. **Current fund data for most recently completed fiscal year:** (Specify year: 2011)
 (Double click in any cell to enter spreadsheet. Enter dollars in millions; e.g., \$1,456,200 = \$1.456)

Revenues

Tuition	\$62,981,170
Gov't Appropriations	\$37,567,515
Gifts/Grants/Endowment	\$799,736
Auxiliary Enterprises	\$18,370,687
Other	\$18,944,151
Total	\$138,663,259

Expenditures

Instruction	\$41,754,526
Research	\$12,515,228
General	\$0
Auxiliary Enterprises	\$14,410,529
Other	\$59,373,810
Total	\$128,054,093

7. **Number of off-campus locations:**
 In-state _____ Other U.S. _____ International _____ Total 0

8. **Number of degrees and certificates offered electronically:**
 Programs offered entirely on-line 0 Programs offered 50-99% on-line 0

9. **Is instruction offered through a contractual relationship?**
 No Yes; specify program(s): Radiologic Technology (Medical Imaging)

10. **Other characteristics:**

Introduction

This comprehensive evaluation of Rhode Island College follows submission and acceptance in 2006 of Rhode Island College's fifth-year interim report; in 2008 of a focused report on mission, planning, and the joint doctorate with the University of Rhode Island; and in 2009 of a proposal for a bachelor's degree in Radiologic Technology offered with Rhode Island Hospital to be encompassed within Rhode Island College's accreditation.

During the evaluation team's visit to Rhode Island College, we met with many members of the campus community, all of whom understood our purpose in visiting and were open and welcoming. Many had participated in the development of the re-accreditation self-study, which was an inclusive process with 87 subcommittee members, and the self-study was thoughtful and well prepared. Campus faculty and staff members indicated that they saw the NEASC visit as a logical step in Rhode Island College's on-going process of institutional assessment and strategic planning, a view shared by evaluation team members.

Evaluation team members held one-on-one and small group meetings with students and alumni, faculty and staff members, administrators at many levels and across the campus divisions, union leadership of all unions, and members of the Board of Governors. In addition, team members held a luncheon meeting with approximately a dozen undergraduate and graduate students, including student government leaders and student athletes; an open meeting for students and another for staff members, both of which were well attended; a luncheon meeting with 17 faculty leaders, including program directors and chairs of campus-wide committees such as the College Council and the Committee on Academic Policies; and an open meeting for faculty, with 49 faculty members in attendance. Three members of the Rhode Island Board of Governors for Higher Education, including Chair Lorne Adrain and Vice Chair Michael Tikoian, attended the Sunday dinner; 10 members of the 13-member Board met with us on Monday morning, as did Ray Di Pasquale, the Commissioner of Higher Education; and the Board leadership joined us again for the exit report. One evaluation team member visited the off-site facilities at Rhode Island Hospital, where the Radiologic Technology program (now renamed Medical Imaging) is in part delivered.

The evaluation team found the prepared materials, including the self-study, strategic plan, catalog, master plan, auditors' reports, and more, to be comprehensive and accurate. We appreciated having materials in accessible electronic form, with links to additional data. Evaluation team members' advance review of these materials, the Chair's preliminary visit in April, and the team's site visit from the 30th of October through the 2nd of November are the basis of our narrative, which we hope will be useful to Rhode Island College and to which Rhode Island College will have the opportunity to respond before the Commission's review.

Standard 1. Mission and Purposes

Rhode Island College, the state's oldest public institution of higher education, was founded in 1854 as a normal school, became a four-year educational college in 1920, and began offering graduate work soon afterward. In 1959, the state General Assembly relocated the

institution to its current campus and a year later approved its development as a comprehensive institution. Although Rhode Island College continues to serve the state's K-12 schools in educating teachers and providing opportunities for graduate study and professional development for educators, it has expanded its undergraduate and graduate offerings in the arts, sciences, humanities, social sciences, and professional programs and has become a respected comprehensive public college.

Since 2008, when President Carriuolo assumed her position, Rhode Island College has revised its mission to clarify its distinctiveness and the students it serves; built a vision statement that is both based in the mission and looks forward to the future; developed with the wider community and stakeholders a strategic plan based in mission; and moved forward to achieve goals that can be assessed. The mission statement, developed with the Committee on Missions and Goals, was approved by the campus Council, the President, and the Rhode Island Board of Governors, the state governing authority, in 2009. It reads as follows:

Rhode Island College is one of the region's leading comprehensive public colleges. Our mission is to offer accessible higher education of the finest quality to traditional and nontraditional students from around the state, the region and beyond. Students here are members of a caring community that respects diversity and values academic excellence informed by cultural inquiry, civic engagement, and co-curricular activity. The college offers a wide variety of liberal arts, science and professional programs in which dedicated faculty and staff work with students to achieve the promise of higher education: an open and inquiring mind.

Rhode Island College's purposes, then, are significant and appropriate: academic excellence that is accessible and affordable, welcoming both traditional and non-traditional students (for example, veterans). It is a challenge to explicitly include non-traditional students in the mission statement and then consider how best to serve them, and the College is responding with initiatives such as a Veterans Resource Center and a Preparatory Enrollment Program. The College prepares students for success as professionals in the workplace, provides critical need programs such as nursing, and contributes to the state's economic development and culture, enhancing the region.

Members of the evaluation team spoke to people from many sectors of campus during the site visit: governors, students, staff, and faculty members. All had a strong sense of the College's mission and its niche in Rhode Island and within the public system of higher education. Faculty and staff spoke often of the importance of the work they do. According to those we interviewed, the mission was the basis of all that followed as the College developed institutional learning goals and the strategic plan, Vision 2015, that had emerged from campus dialogue. The mission statement also led to the new tagline, "Reach, Inspire, and Connect," which appears on campus doors, in publications and on the website, and on the burgundy, gold, and white banners that line the campus.

Institutional Effectiveness: According to campus policy, established in 2007, Rhode Island College re-examines its mission and vision every three to five years, under the leadership of the Vice President for Academic Affairs and with the participation of the Committee on

Mission and Goals of the campus Council. Strategic planning and evaluation enhance the College's awareness of progress toward its goals. The campus has been active and engaged over the past three years in focusing on mission, which does provide direction for resource allocation in a difficult economy and for continued implementation of the specific objectives within the strategic plan.

Standard 2. Planning and Evaluation

Planning: Planning at Rhode Island College is highly participatory and appropriate to the College, an iterative, ongoing process that values a wide range of inputs and seems in recent years to have become an organic part of the institution. We commend Rhode Island College on its planning.

Since the last NEASC ten-year report, two strategic plans through 2010 were instituted and evaluated. Seeing the need to respond to significant changes in the economy that had huge impacts on a small state and to demographic and ethnic shifts in the prospective student population, the campus in 2008 moved to develop a longer-range strategic plan that became Vision 2015. The Vice President for Academic Affairs convened a representative committee, held open meetings, and made use of the campus website to post ideas. The plan was widely communicated as it developed, and people in our campus meetings all knew Vision 2015 and could discuss its contents. It was approved by the Board of Governors in 2010. The plan addressed issues such as enrollment management, graduate programs, and workforce needs, and established goals and objectives for each campus division, with measurable metrics (see page 8, Standard 2 in the self-study and online).

From the larger strategic plan emerged other more specific plans, and the College has a demonstrable record of success. The goal of appropriate facilities for teaching and learning, for example, led to a campus master plan, also completed in 2010, after charettes involving on- and off-campus constituencies. The results were communicated to the campus, reported to the Board of Governors, and eventually proposed to the voters of Rhode Island. The College in November of 2010 was awarded a bond issue for \$17 million to renovate the Art Center and has prioritized two classroom buildings for renovations.

The campus also implemented a safety plan about which students said they are pleased. President Carriuolo listened to student concerns, and Rhode Island College developed a safety plan that included an illuminated walkway across campus, 39 new blue lights, and regular safety exercises. Emergency planning has been a priority, with workshops and a multi-state collaborative exercise. The President and other campus leaders were praised for Rhode Island College's emergency planning in a recent article in *College Planning and Management* (July 2011).

As part of the College's initiatives to diversify revenue streams, the Foundation, under the Vice President for College Advancement, created the College's first development plan. Various schools have strategic plans, academic departments similarly either have created or are creating plans, and academic programs are reviewed internally each six years or

externally by accrediting agencies or both. The College has begun enrollment management planning, creating its first such plan.

Significantly, resource allocation follows Vision 2015 (and assessment is conducted on the strategic plan each year). All changes to campus budgets must be justified by reference to Vision 2015, and the College's overall budget presented to its Board of Governors sets priorities according to the plan. The Board of Governors this year as one of its top priorities created a committee on institutional effectiveness to develop data-driven metrics for each of the campuses according to campus mission and plans.

Evaluation: The College regularly engages in benchmarking via national surveys such as NSSE, the HERI Faculty Survey, and the *Chronicle of Higher Education's* Great Colleges to Work For. Sustaining these practices and using the data to improve are important ongoing goals. Efforts are under way to survey alumni and collect additional data about them, with intent to use this information in part to improve academic and support programs. There is as yet no comprehensive plan for evaluation of student services or co-curricular programming, which members of the evaluation team believe, given the student-focused nature of the College, would be useful in assessing recent initiatives.

Faculty have led the development and implementation of assessment of student learning in academic programs. Assessment reports include "the learning outcomes for each major, criteria for measuring the outcomes, evidence of each department's effort and commitment to the assessment process, assessment measures, benchmarks that define acceptable levels, actual outcome data, and analysis and discussion of the data." The process is overseen by a Committee on Assessment of Student Outcomes. The Academic and Student Affairs Committee of the Board of Governors also receives and reviews the reports. Rhode Island College is proud that all of its undergraduate programs have achieved the designation of 1 (highest score) and successfully completed a cycle of assessment. (The Board of Governors' cycle of master's level reviews is under way, and doctoral programs will follow.)

Assessment of general education also indicates students' educational gains. The Committee on General Education "has developed learning outcomes and assessments for writing, critical reading, critical thinking, Western culture (HIST 161), Cores 3 and 4, and mathematical competency. The first round of assessment in Writing 100 and English 161 was conducted in summer 2010. The college is currently engaged in a revision of its general-education program and has developed new student learning outcomes and assessment measures for those outcomes." The new general education program, which has involved many faculty members, is moving forward.

Institutional Effectiveness: The College's constituencies understand that planning and evaluation are important and that they have a voice in these processes. Rhode Island College has made great strides in these areas and is committed to continuing to do so. The campus is moving toward larger institutional learning outcomes. Student learning is the primary focus of regular planning and assessment activities.

Standard 3. Organization and Governance

As noted in the self-study, the authority, responsibilities, and relationships among the Rhode Island Board of Governors for Higher Education, the college administration, faculty, and staff are described in Title 16, Chapter 59 of the General Laws of the State of Rhode Island; in the regulations of the Board; in the Charter and By-Laws of the Council of Rhode Island College; in faculty and staff collective bargaining agreements; and in the College Handbook, all available online at the College and Board websites. Institutional organizational charts are also published online and illustrate structures and roles of institutional personnel.

The Charter of the Council outlines the roles of the faculty and administration, see <http://www.ric.edu/council>, and academic and other policies are developed through the Council and its committees. Aspects of shared governance also are defined through collective bargaining agreements; see <http://www.ric.edu/humanresources/policies.php>. Information about the agreements was verified in discussions with the President, the Commissioner, and union leadership. The Charter requires the president to inform the Council and seek input before undertaking decisions that affect the faculty. Among other initiatives, President Carriuolo led the development of a Policy on Administrative Policies, so that every new or revised administrative policy is now reviewed by all faculty and staff before being adopted (see <http://www.ric.edu/administration/policies.php>). Faculty interviewed believe that consultation is appropriate and that communication regarding initiatives and decision-making is ongoing and serves to maintain a positive campus climate.

The Board is an independent public corporation. Its 13 members are appointed by the governor. An in-state student from one of the institutions serves a rotating term, and the chair of the Board of Regents for K-12 education is a member. Board members serve *pro bono* and, by regulation, cannot have any financial interest in the schools. The Board members we interviewed reiterated their clear understanding of their roles as fiduciaries and advocates for all three public institutions, including Rhode Island College.

The Board oversees the Office of Higher Education (OHE). OHE staffs and provides legal advice for the Board under the direction of the Commissioner of Higher Education. OHE undertakes initiatives of the Board as directed, and the Commissioner meets regularly with the presidents as well as with the Board chair. There appears to be regular communication and consultation between the Commissioner and Board chair.

The Board reviews substantive policy changes, new or significantly revised programs, annual financial reports, and major new initiatives such as master planning. Much of the Board's work occurs in its subcommittees, each of which reports to the full Board. Since the time Rhode Island College submitted its self-study, the Board has created a new subcommittee on institutional effectiveness. In addition to the standing committees, an Executive Committee consisting of the Board chair, presidents, and the Commissioner (who at this time, and we were told for a short term in his dual roles, also serves as president of the Community College of Rhode Island) meets monthly. Recommendations from this Committee are passed to the Board through the Commissioner.

The Board examines admissions, enrollment, financial, and staffing data submitted by the College each year to evaluate the status of the institution. Discussion with the governors indicated there has been some use of data for planning, even though most governors have served less than a year in this role. (Previous members whose terms were completed had not been replaced for some time and according to state law had continued to serve, with the result that last year, when members were replaced, many members were confirmed at once.)

Board members are instructed in their responsibilities as fiduciaries and overseers through orientation and professional development sessions. New members attend an orientation held by the board chair and OHE staff. Although a retreat was not held in 2010, an annual retreat is usually conducted and includes interactive discussions of issues facing higher education in the state. The Board has undergone a different professional development process this year, because so many members are recently appointed.

The governors report substantive commitment of time and energy to the work of the Board and its subcommittees. How the Board will undergo evaluation is not clear from the materials provided, but given the emphasis on board development, evaluation should emerge from the Board's continued working out of its role.

The Board promotes communication between its members and the Rhode Island College community. Board meetings, agendas and minutes are publicly posted, and each meeting begins with an open forum. Interactions among board members, OHE staff, and College faculty and staff take place in the form of meetings, reports, data files, letters, and queries. The board holds eight or more open meetings and executive sessions each year. The Board subcommittees meet five to ten times per year. Appropriate faculty and staff from the institutions, including the vice presidents, attend each meeting and provide regular reports. The Finance and Management Committee, the Associate Commissioner for Finance and Management in OHE, and the President, Vice President for Administration and Finance, and Budget Director at Rhode Island College work together to evaluate, assess, plan, and manage revenue and spending. Annual budgets are prepared and reviewed at all levels before being approved by the Board and the legislature.

The Board evaluates the president of Rhode Island College and that process is described in Board policy available at <http://www.ribghe.org/evaluationofpresidents.pdf>. The Board delegates authority to the President to manage the College in accordance with the College's mission. The President and her cabinet work to assess and manage risks, as evidenced by completed emergency management training, response to required federal and state level regulations, and regular discussion and planning.

The President and her senior management team have maintained and organized structures appropriate to administering and planning for the institution. While there are not as many resources available as the College might need, stewarding of the existing resources is thoughtful and according to plan, and all segments of the College appeared to understand and support this approach to making improvements.

Staff appointments to support the mission of the institution are constantly being considered. The President and her senior managers require that several metrics be evaluated before approving any searches. For faculty searches, the President and senior administrators examine change in number of majors, student credit hours generated per faculty FTE, and percentage of classes taught by adjuncts, among other metrics. Analogous factors are considered for other types of staff positions.

The President and administration are a collaborative team, and they communicate and consult with faculty, students, and staff widely and in multiple ways. A number of community members mentioned that communication was greatly improved in the last few years. The Council provides significant consultative as well as decision-making participation in governance given its extensive committee system. The President serves on Council, providing monthly reports and receiving feedback from members. The President also informs and consults with Council regarding administrative policies. The President's Executive Cabinet meets twice each semester with the Student Community Government executive board to hear students' views on college policy. Informal as well as formal means of gathering information are used to enhance the flow of information around the campus.

The Vice President of Academic Affairs reports directly to the president, and oversees the deans of the five schools, the Dean of Graduate Studies, the Director of Adams Library, the Assistant VPAA for Enrollment Management, and the Special Assistant for Student Outcomes Assessment. Academic leadership works with the faculty through the academic departments as well as various Council committees, as evidenced by organizational charts, discussions with community members, and minutes and reports of various committees, available at <http://www.ric.edu/council/ccdts/index.php>.

Faculty exercise a central role in developing, approving, delivering, and overseeing the academic programs. Through their collective bargaining agreement, faculty have a defined role in the academic leadership. The Undergraduate Curriculum Committee provides oversight and approval of the undergraduate curriculum. The Graduate Committee reviews and approves graduate curricula. The Committee on General Education, a subcommittee of the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, develops policies and reviews curriculum for the general education program. The Committee on Academic Policies and Procedures is chaired by a faculty member (see the Council materials at <http://www.ric.edu/council/>).

Students are represented throughout the governance system. A student representative from one of the public institutions serves on the Board. Two students serve as voting members of Council, and students serve on Council committees as well as on the strategic plan monitoring task force. Student Community Government oversees student organizations and represents student interests to the administration and faculty.

The articulated shared governance structures of the College appear to operate as intended, and committees and groups understand and carry out their functions. Executive decisions are informed through appropriate consultation and communicated effectively to the campus community. Decisions are made and processes concluded in a timely manner.

Institutional Effectiveness: The administrative structure is strong: appropriate for the mission of the institution, with a strong emphasis on teaching, a shared governance structure over academic matters, good communication within the campus community, and positive campus consultation and involvement as evidenced by committee composition, records, and participation levels. Although there have been several personnel changes at the senior administrative level in the past three years, faculty, staff, and students report that they are pleased with what they describe as dynamic and well-integrated leadership.

As noted in the self-study, Rhode Island College's internal processes "have been in a state of constant renewal for the last few years. Numerous changes document the degree to which the College is able to respond to fluctuating needs and circumstances." President Carriuolo and her team have emphasized transparency and consultation with affected parties in making decisions and moving policies to implementation. The administration and Council regularly review their own policies and governance structures. The Bylaws Committee of Council is charged with regular review of the Charter of Council and ensuring that the policies of Council, its committees, and the College are consistent with the charter. A review and update of the bylaws were conducted in 2010.

The Board supports Rhode Island College through its advocacy for public higher education, and the governors are active and engaged, ready to deal with larger issues and advocate for the campus. The College also has the acknowledged responsibility of making its unique needs known in the context of being one of the system's three public higher education institutions.

The Rhode Island legislature called for a report on restructuring higher education that was published during the team's visit, on 1 November 2011. Work on the report was led by the Director of the Department of Administration. The legislature has also formed its own committee on access and affordability. Interviews with campus constituents supported the assertion made in the self-study that the breadth and depth of involvement in governance is more than adequate to ensure appropriate consultation and participation in decision-making; and we expect that the internal governance system is likely to function effectively as any state restructuring begins, due to its dynamic nature.

Standard 4. The Academic Program

Rhode Island College offers 50 undergraduate and 41 graduate majors in five schools: the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, the Feinstein School of Education and Human Development, the School of Management, the School of Nursing, and the School of Social Work. Master's level programs are offered in each school, and the School of Education offers a doctorate jointly with the University of Rhode Island.

Faculty, chairs, deans, and the VPAA all have prescribed roles in the supervision of academic programs. Proposals for new or modified courses and programs originate in academic departments, are approved by deans, reviewed by the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (or Graduate Committee as appropriate), and signed by the VPAA and President. For new programs and those with at least 25 percent of content revised, proposals must be

approved by the Board of Governors. The policies and procedures for new and revised academic programs are widely available online. In 2010, the Curriculum Committee split into the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee and the Graduate Committee, speeding the approval process for graduate offerings. Since the fall of 2009, transparency in the management of these processes has been enhanced through a web-based tracking system.

Academic programs are coherent in terms of goals, structure, and content. Most undergraduate programs require 120 credits, including general education, the major, cognates, and electives. Master's programs require at least 30 credits. Program goals / outcomes are published on departmental websites, and expectations of students are graduated by degree level. All programs require that students demonstrate collegiate-level skills in the English language. Writing instruction is a central feature of the College's faculty development programming, with the annual January workshop and keynote devoted exclusively to writing.

Information technology is an important component of the learning environment. While email is the designated means of communicating with students, and students access records and register online, Blackboard 9.1 is the principal electronic platform. In fall of 2010, the great majority of students (almost 90% of undergraduates and 79% of graduate students) had at least one Blackboard enhanced course. As of fall 2011, 95% of general purpose classrooms have a basic level of technology.

A real strength of the academic programs at Rhode Island College is the focus on the assessment of student learning. Through annual departmental assessment reports and the Committee on Assessment of Student Outcomes (CASO), the College applies a consistent standard of quality to the oversight and delivery of its academic programs. The work of CASO, annual reports, college-wide forums, and faculty development events have institutionalized a culture of assessment at the College.

The College has a regular cycle of program review. Six programs (Education, Music, Art, Social Work, Nursing, and Medical Imaging) hold national specialized accreditations. In the past, OHE has solicited program reviews of low enrolled programs, eliminating 18 programs since 2003. When programs have been eliminated, the College has arranged for students to complete their academic programs with minimal disruption; and no faculty members have lost their positions. The College is now taking a proactive approach to program review, approving new procedures in spring 2011 for reviews in Arts & Sciences for programs not subject to external accreditation. Three programs (English, Political Science, and Psychology) are voluntarily participating in the new process during AY2011-12. This process includes an external perspective. The School of Management is in the process of pursuing AACSB accreditation.

Undergraduate Degree Programs / The Major: Rhode Island College is primarily an undergraduate institution, with strong academic programs. The programs are structured to provide a balance of requirements and electives, general content and discipline specific expertise in the majors, and knowledge and skills. Program information, including program goals, is readily accessible on departmental websites. The College seeks to ensure a balance

of liberal arts and professional programs that are responsive to external needs, such as programs in health related fields. Liberal arts programs often describe available career options, while professional programs also have a strong liberal arts base.

The College recently has implemented a universal advising system. While the effectiveness of the system has yet to be determined, initial indications suggest that it is providing opportunities for increased faculty-student interaction, enabling students to follow more appropriate plans of study. The College needs to address the issue of large faculty-advisee ratios in some departments and to determine if the system has the desired outcome of increasing student retention and graduation rates.

The College regularly examines its programs with respect to student and state needs and has expanded its options in allied health. In 2009, NEASC approved a new program in Radiologic Technology within the College's accreditation and suggested it be emphasized in the self-study. With the recent (2008) closure of a degree completion program in Radiologic Technology, the College had reassessed programs in this area and now offers a very popular B.S. in Medical Imaging in collaboration with Rhode Island Hospital (RIH).

The program offers concentrations in Radiologic Technology and Nuclear Medicine / Computed Tomography. Students complete their first two years at Rhode Island College and then complete 24 months of clinical coursework taught by Rhode Island College adjunct faculty at RIH. The first cohort of students will be moving into the clinical component of the program in fall 2012. The program, then, has been successfully implemented, and both the College and hospital anticipate the development of other program options in this growing field, such as ultrasound or MRI.

General Education: Drawing upon data from student learning assessments, the College has undertaken a revision of its 20-year-old general education program. The new program was intentionally built upon a foundation of assessable learning outcomes: (1) critical and creative thinking, (2) written communication, (3) research fluency, (4) oral communication, (5) arts, (6) civic knowledge, (7) collaborative work, (8) ethical reasoning, (9) global understanding, (10) quantitative literacy, and (11) scientific literacy.

The campus engaged in an inclusive process, soliciting input at multiple points in the process. The structure of the new 40-credit program was approved through faculty governance in fall of 2011 (going to Council on 11/4/11) and includes both foundational and upper division courses. The intent is to provide a more welcoming program that allows for increased choice while also assuring competence in the skills necessary for a liberal education. The initial components of the program, such as the First Year Seminar, are scheduled for implementation in the fall of 2012. Additional courses and the assessment plan are still under development.

Graduate Degree Programs: The College offers graduate certificates, master's degree programs, and a joint (with the University of Rhode Island) Ph.D. program. The majority of the master's degree programs are in education (23), but there are also 12 programs in arts and sciences, 1 in management, 1 in nursing, and 1 in social work. As shown on the Data First

forms, the MSW is the largest of the College's programs (197 students). Other programs with significant enrollment include the MA in Counseling (55) and the MSN (41).

During the last several years, the College has begun re-establishing a culture of graduate education. Beginning in 2000 when the position of graduate dean was eliminated, graduate program responsibilities had been decentralized, leading to what the self-study describes as inconsistency in standards, limited communication across programs, and limited services to graduate students. Now, however, there is a new vitality and sense of purpose, which is reflected in the allocation of resources, including library resources. Although the number of graduate students has remained relatively constant, the number of student credit hours has declined by 10% this year. Planning for and responding to change, including anticipated changes in the state's graduate education requirements for teachers, will continue to be essential for the long-term health of graduate education. The development of graduate certificate programs for teachers is a good example of successful planning for change.

An interim graduate dean has worked closely with the Graduate Studies Committee to update policies and procedures and publish them in a Graduate Studies Manual available on-line. She is presently working to re-centralize and rationalize graduate admission policies and procedures, with the support of the academic departments and deans. She has also publicized the program, engaged in outreach to external constituents, and established a coherent web presence. Each graduate program is administered by a program director, the department chair, or a departmental graduate committee and reports to the academic dean; the graduate dean has responsibility for consistency and coherence across programs. There is no graduate faculty, but all faculty teaching in the graduate programs have the terminal degree; most programs have additional standards. In general, only full-time faculty teach in the graduate programs. At the Ph.D. level, the program committee selectively chooses faculty using criteria that include research productivity and experience mentoring advanced students.

Graduate programs in art, music, social work, and nursing, as well as initial (MAT) and advanced preparation programs for educators are nationally accredited through associations that rely on outcomes assessment. The remaining programs have developed student learning outcomes and participate in the College's assessment system. Recent assessment reports document that data are being collected and used as part of a program improvement cycle. Student outcomes included on syllabi that the evaluation team sampled were generally appropriate for the level of the degree. The syllabi and the catalog describe programs that are cohesive and demanding. Practice-oriented programs (for example, the MAT, MSN, MSW and Management) require professional practica and internships. Program requirements are included in the Catalog; additional information, including program outcomes, is posted to the departmental web page.

Most graduate students are part-time, and 91% are Rhode Island residents. Each program has separate admission standards that include a minimum undergraduate GPA and additional requirements including standardized tests. Once admitted, the student develops an individualized plan of study that must be approved by the advisor, program director, and school dean. When needed, the department requires additional coursework or other

preparation to address deficiencies or achieve appropriate levels of proficiency before graduation.

Graduate courses are intentionally smaller than undergraduate courses (10-15 students as compared to 30). Master's students usually enroll in 500-level courses or above, but may be approved to take 400-level courses. If a 500-level course is cross-listed with a 300-level course, or students enroll in 400-level courses, supplemental work (typically a research and writing project) is required to earn graduate credit. Some master's programs offer the option of a thesis; a traditional dissertation is required for Ph.D. In other programs, advanced inquiry and writing is also the norm.

Joint Rhode Island College - University of Rhode Island Ph.D. Program: The Commission's 2008 letter requested an update on the College's Ph.D. program, noting three challenges identified by the College: "using faculty evaluations for program improvement; re-conceptualizing specialized courses, and implementing strategic planning." The Commission's letter also anticipated the College's commitment to completing a program review incorporating both internal and external perspectives.

Since 2008 the College has addressed many of these challenges. The doctoral program mission has been revised, and seven specialized courses in such areas as program evaluation, survey design, and social justice in education have been added. Five are new to either the University of Rhode Island or to Rhode Island College. These courses align with the revised program mission of preparing PK-16 leaders of effective, research-based, educational reform. The program's research strand has been redesigned, new research colloquia have been established, and the Ph.D. in Education Handbook has been completely revised. A new survey provides some evidence of employer satisfaction with graduates and their preparation.

The self-study reports that planning is accomplished by the program's co-directors using feedback from the Program Committee (4 faculty each from the two institutions), other faculty, student groups, and course evaluations as part of an improvement cycle. Evidence of planning included course evaluations and Program Committee meeting minutes, though discussion of evaluation data for improvement is not addressed in the minutes. The co-directors report use of student feedback to guide assignment of faculty to courses and dissertation advising. At this time, although the mission and courses have been positively restructured over the past three years, which reflects planning, there is no written strategic plan. In addition, neither Rhode Island College nor the University of Rhode Island has undertaken a review that incorporates both internal and external perspectives. There is no assessment plan, and the program is not listed on the College's E1a forms. The co-directors have developed new rubrics for the comprehensive examination and oral defense and are beginning to pilot them, indicating they are moving forward, but there is no data at this time. In preparation for their meeting with the team, the co-directors prepared a report of Program Assessment Milestones/Checkpoints, with such indicators as mean GPA, procedures used for qualifying exams; procedures used for comprehensive examinations and the number of students passing since 2009, and processes for oral exams, dissertation proposal, and dissertation defense. Summary course evaluation data for faculty are included. These data indicate a high level of satisfaction.

As sometimes occurs with joint programs, we believe there is insufficient clarity about program ownership. Several people expressed the view that the Ph.D. program primarily "belongs" to its University partner, because of the research university's more fully developed doctoral policies. Perhaps because of this understanding, the program has not been folded into Rhode Island College's normal programmatic expectations, most notably strong assessment and review. In this case, Rhode Island College should more fully incorporate the program into the College's ongoing planning and assessment, thus addressing the Commission's concerns.

Integrity in the Award of Academic Credit: The College offers three levels of degrees: undergraduate (120 credits), master's (30 credits), and Ph.D. (a minimum of 58 credits beyond the master's). Course offerings and academic programs originate in academic departments, and are approved and overseen by the department chair; the academic dean; the curriculum committee and general education committees and, for graduate courses, the graduate committee; the academic vice president; and the president. The joint Ph.D. uses a committee structure comprised of 8 faculty who teach in the program (4 from each institution) and the two co-directors, in consultation with the two campus's education deans.

A single catalog is published for both graduate and undergraduate students. Updated annually, it is available in both print and digital formats. The catalog describes the set of academic policies that apply to undergraduate students with regard to requirements for good standing, termination, readmission, and graduation. The graduate students are directed to the graduate policies manual, which is found on line and provides a complete description of graduate academic policies and graduation requirements.

No students with whom the committee spoke indicated that their graduation would be delayed because appropriate courses were not available, although some indicated a preference for alternate times or a wider selection of courses from which to choose.

The College's policy on the award of academic credit specifies appropriate contact hours for the number of credits to be awarded and is documented in "Chapter 3," the College's policy and procedures manual for undergraduate and graduate programs. All three-credit courses are expected to meet 42 hours during the academic semester. This policy is also published in the Catalog. Typically the academic departments do not offer multiple sections of their courses, but if they did, all sections would be required to adhere to the same student outcomes and assessment requirements. Both outcomes and the means to assess the outcomes are established in departmental proposals to the curriculum committee. The policy manual for graduate programs does not include a statement about contact hour requirements for graduate courses, but both faculty and academic leadership reported that the policy in Chapter 3 was assumed to apply across both undergraduate and graduate courses. A sampling of syllabi from each academic school confirmed this assumption with one exception: syllabi for courses in the joint Ph.D. program specify 13 weeks of instruction rather than the 15 that is the Rhode Island College norm.

Summer session courses are permitted to meet for somewhat fewer hours than courses offered during the academic semester (36 rather than 42 contact hours), but are required to adhere to the same course outcomes and assessment requirements. General practice in each of the academic schools is to expect additional time from students outside of class during the summer session and/or to adjust the curriculum to accommodate the reduction. In addition, academic leaders reported that there is careful consideration about which courses can appropriately be offered in a more intense time frame and how students should be advised into or out of such courses. The College recognizes that some adjustment of the curriculum is necessary when contact time is reduced. For example, a science course might omit one or two laboratories that are not central to the learning outcomes for the course. At the graduate level, summer courses have a lower enrollment limit that serves two purposes: to attract full-time faculty to teach summers and to help the faculty manage the reduction in contact hours.

In general, only full-time faculty teach in summer session, and it is assumed that this general rule will apply to the Early Spring term. The deans and faculty involved with the undergraduate and graduate curriculum approval process agree that Early Spring's courses will be offered with the same time expectations as summer term classes. Similarly, the Committee on On-Line Learning, which is developing policy for courses offered in hybrid and fully on-line format, has not yet promulgated a policy on "contact" time for on-line courses, but will require all courses to use the course outcomes and assessments required for face-to-face courses. Faculty and academic deans asserted that theirs is a fairly conservative and thoughtful faculty culture that requires several levels of review for new courses, regardless of modality. At each level – department chair, dean, curriculum committee, academic vice president – the academic integrity of a course is considered.

The College works closely with its public partners (the Community College of Rhode Island and the University of Rhode Island) to clarify transfer credit equivalencies and update the transfer guide. In addition there are formal articulation agreements with Quinnebaug Valley in Connecticut and Bristol Community College in Massachusetts. All faculty report that the process works very well, with the admissions office serving as the front line for transfer credit reviews and the faculty in each department signing off on or modifying the application of transfer credits to academic programs. Department heads from the three state institutions meet in an annual workshop to assure that their understanding of each other's programs is current. Transfer credit is also awarded to students from other accredited institutions and from international settings using a process that involves minimum academic requirements (grade of C or better; course completed within the past 10 years) and a decision by the chair of the student's major department as to how the credits will be applied to the student's program of study. All undergraduate students seeking a Rhode Island College degree must complete 45 credits in residence. At the graduate level, transfer credit opportunities are limited to no more than one-fifth of the program requirements. Chapter 3, the College's policy manual, includes a policy for the award of academic credit for prior experience achieved through employer training, self-education, work assignments, and so forth. The award of credit requires an academic portfolio and a faculty sponsor. There are also specific academic requirements for award of credit for internship and practice offered by the College, for CLEP and AP exams, and through an Early Enrollment Program offered with cooperating high schools.

In addition to its degree programs, the College offers certificates comprised of undergraduate courses or of graduate courses organized into a thematic or professional area of study. The courses included in the graduate-level certificates are regular graduate courses that have been approved through the same process as any other course. The certificates are primarily intended to provide professional development for teachers and other educators. A certificate of continuing study is offered for students who attend non-credit courses or workshops totaling at least 30 contact hours. As of 2009, all of these programs must be approved through the normal academic governance procedures for degree programs.

At present there are no distance education or correspondence courses, and only one program, the new medical imaging major, is offered partially off-campus. This program is fully within the purview of the biology department and their dean and was established through the normal course and program approval procedures. Rhode Island College faculty are significantly involved with their students both on- and off-campus.

Some of the syllabi sampled during the evaluation visit included statements about academic integrity and the institution's procedures for dealing with academic dishonesty, but there is no stated requirement for this or any other aspect of the syllabus content, beyond the recently implemented standard that all syllabi include course outcomes. A judicial process, facilitated through the Board of College Discipline, addresses infractions. Of 202 reported to the VPAA over a 3.5 year period, 18 cases were referred to the Board of Discipline, which can apply punishments up to and including expulsion. Students are informed of the process through their student handbooks and the college handbook; the process is also described in Chapter 3 (the College's academic policy manual). The College tries to prevent infractions through anti-plagiarism information on the library and information technology websites, and for students who have acted inappropriately, through meetings with a faculty member who is designated as an integrity counselor.

Assessment of Student Learning: As noted earlier, a real strength of the academic programs at Rhode Island College is the focus on the assessment of student learning. Through annual departmental assessment reports and the Committee on Assessment of Student Outcomes (CASO), the College applies a consistent standard of quality to its academic programs. Through the work of CASO, annual reports, college-wide forums, and faculty development events, the College has institutionalized a culture of assessment. Several faculty members spoke about how assessment data has reconfigured their thinking about their programs.

Institutional Effectiveness: The College faculty and leadership have made assessment of academic programs a priority in the last several years. In addition, as the new general education has emerged, assessment planning has been a natural part of the dialogue. In general, policies and procedures are in place, and implementation is yielding useful student outcomes. In the next few years, the College expects a more intentional focus on broader institutional outcomes and on using the data that has been collected to improve their students' college experiences.

Standard 5. Faculty

A collective bargaining agreement between the Rhode Island College chapter of the American Federation of Teachers and the Board of Governors specifies the duties associated with faculty positions at Rhode Island College. Adjunct faculty members have a separate collective bargaining agreement.

In FY 2011, Rhode Island College has 335 full-time faculty and 434 part-time faculty members (see self-study data for Standard 5). Of the full-time faculty 56 percent are female, and 44 percent are male. The proportion of female to male is the same among part-time faculty. Of the full-time faculty, 36 percent are full professors, 30 percent associate professors, and 36 percent assistant professors. In terms of the highest degree earned by the full-time faculty, 90 percent possess a terminal degree; 84 percent possess doctorates, 16 percent master's, and two faculty have bachelor's degrees. The majority of master's degree faculty are limited term faculty in Nursing, Library faculty (for whom the MLS is a terminal degree), and fine arts faculty who hold the MFA (also a terminal degree in field). The preparation and qualifications of faculty appear appropriate to the mission of the institution.

In addition to academic credentials, the commitment and enthusiasm of the faculty for the institution -- its mission, administration, and students -- and their strong participation in governance are invaluable assets. Many faculty to whom we spoke were excited about Rhode Island College's future and happy that they would be part of it. Staff members, too, spoke repeatedly of the faculty's energy and dedication to students.

Over half (58%) of full professors are male, while 42 percent of associate professors and 30 percent of assistant professors are male. With more male faculty in the higher ranks, there is a relationship between gender and salary, with male faculty receiving higher levels of compensation than females. One-third of male faculty have salaries below \$50K compared to 62 percent of female faculty.

The self-study notes that while student headcount and FTE enrollment have increased, the number of full-time faculty remains relatively constant. FTE enrollment per FTE instructor was 22.0 at Rhode Island College and 18.3 at peer institutions. By design, graduate classes are smaller (10-15 students) than undergraduate classes (which average around 30 students). Adjunct faculty deliver approximately 38 percent of total instruction and have a growing role at the college. For that reason, the administration has taken steps to fully integrate them into the life of the college. Not only budgets, but also administrative constraints limit the number of full-time faculty. The General Assembly imposes an FTE limit on every state agency, even if funding exists to hire more employees. That said, the General Assembly approved an increase in FTE cap for the College, with 17 new positions approved in June 2011.

Teaching and Advising: Full-time faculty are evaluated on teaching effectiveness and professional competence, the latter including research and creative activity, advising, college and professional service, and professional development. Professional competence, including scholarly productivity, is tied directly to the teaching mission of the college. The evaluation of adjunct faculty is based entirely on teaching.

Rhode Island College recently introduced a universal advising system in which students must see an advisor prior to registering. Due to the limit of 30 advisees per faculty member, there are insufficient faculty to serve as advisors in some departments. Despite heavy advising loads in some departments, the results from the 2009 NSSE survey reveal that 72 percent of first year students rate their experience as "good" or "excellent," as did 63 percent of seniors.

Processes for faculty hiring are clear and specific and delineated in the Search Committee Guide for Faculty Hiring. Though there was little discussion of it during the campus visit, the self-study notes that developing a diverse faculty is a high priority. In 2010-2011, 11.9 percent of faculty were racial/ethnic minorities.

Many faculty development opportunities and traditions exist, and numerous workshops throughout the year focus on teaching and scholarship. In January 2011, with funding from a Davis Foundation grant, the College established a Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning (FCTL) housed in the library and staffed by a .67 FTE director and a full-time academic technologist. Priorities for the FCTL are based on input from a faculty advisory council and on results of surveys such as NSSE. It is anticipated that results from students' learning outcome assessments will inform future FCTL workshops.

Scholarship, Research, and Creative Activity: Faculty are productive and engaged, especially given number of credits taught. The College has collected considerable data about the scholarly productivity of faculty since 2000 that document a moderate level of activity across all schools and the Adams Library in refereed publications, non-refereed publications, juried creative work, and grants. The latter is supported by the Office of Research and Grants administration and by compliance committees with human subjects (institutional review board), animal care, and biohazards.

The self study indicates that the College provides at least \$50,000 per year to the Faculty Development Fund, which is used to support travel and professional activities. In 2009, 69 awards (to 20% of full-time faculty) were made, for a total of \$62,000. The Faculty Research Fund similarly awarded \$50,000 to support research activities. The academic deans noted that their budgets provide additional support for faculty development and research. While the College's support of faculty development and scholarship is good, and the faculty appreciate that support, they hope for additional funding for scholarly work, especially given the renewed emphasis on graduate programs.

Faculty and staff have been increasingly active in sponsored research, receiving approximately \$10 million each year over the past several years. An additional \$3.5 million grant, awarded over three years, was announced during the team's visit to campus. The funded projects provide opportunities for faculty to extend their scholarship and creative activities while yielding indirect costs that academic leadership has been re-investing in faculty support. A portion of the indirect costs also returns to the principal investigator, which multiplies the grant's impact on the PI's professional development.

Institutional Effectiveness: As noted in the self study, the 12 hour workload, rising expectations for faculty scholarship, increased faculty responsibilities for advising, and the strong role of faculty in assessment and program review have converged to make faculty life challenging. Faculty satisfaction has been evaluated periodically using the Great Colleges to Work For survey. Areas of weakness revealed in the first year of the survey were addressed intentionally in the second year, leading to improvements. The sufficiency of the faculty numbers is an area of concern that is addressed through requests to the legislature for increases in the FTE cap so that the proportion of part-time faculty does not grow beyond its current level. Annual faculty evaluations, including evaluation of teaching with student opinion surveys, track the effectiveness of faculty in their assigned roles.

Standard 6: Students

Admissions: For several years the College was expected to meet enrollment targets established by the Board of Governors. Thus, enrollment growth over the last decade went from 8,513 in 2000 to 9,260 in 2009, an increase of 8.8 % in headcount and 17.9% in FTE. During the past year, the College was able to reduce its new student enrollment, as physical and human resources were no longer adequate to handle the volume of students seeking admission.

The process of establishing criteria for admission begins with the work of an Admissions Advisory Committee. This group meets annually to establish admissions criteria and guidelines that are forwarded to the campus Council for review. The President receives these recommendations for final approval. In developing the admissions criteria, the committee utilizes appropriate information about the populations they wish to serve, including relevant test scores, recommendations, and high school records. As necessary, the Admissions Office may interview students who seek admission to PEP and Bridges programs (programs designed for students who do not meet regular entrance requirements). The outcome of this admissions process has resulted in a more diverse student population, with 19.5% of the last first-year class (2010) representing minority students. The number of non-traditional students accepted was 10% of the entering class, while almost 57% of the current total undergraduate part-time student population is over the age of 24.

To address issues related to enrollment planning, the College redefined the position of Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs to “focus on enrollment management, with the responsibility for overseeing and integrating the services of Admissions, Office of Academic Support and Information Services (OASIS), Records and Financial Aid.” In addition, the AVPAA is charged with “developing strategies and techniques to measure, project and improve the college’s enrollment, retention, and graduation rates.” Through interviews with staff in these areas, it is clear that the College is thinking carefully about future enrollment goals given the economic pressures facing the state. Staff is aware that a well-crafted plan will help the College make more informed decisions regarding financial aid, program development, and resource allocation.

In December of 2010, Rhode Island College created an Undergraduate Enrollment Management Plan, “the first of its kind at the college.” There is evidence that enrollment

goals are being developed to reflect the mission of the College. There is a focus on recruiting both traditional and transfer students (many transfers are coming from community college). The College also provides two programs to assist under-served students who show potential for success but do not meet regular entrance requirements. The Preparatory Enrollment Program (PEP) admits graduates of Rhode Island high schools (approximately forty each year depending on funding) with preference given to low-income, first generation students and students with disabilities. The Bridges Program admits students (approximately sixty students) who are not eligible for PEP but who also show academic promise.

Five programs at the College require a secondary admissions process. Thus, students initially admitted to Social Work, Nursing, Education, Chemical Dependency/Addiction Studies and Medical Imaging are informed that they must meet additional entrance requirements before entering these majors. Until such time, these students are considered "intended majors." One of the challenges facing the College will be how to best advise students who are not able to gain entry into these programs. With the new Universal Advising system, students should have ample opportunity to explore alternate majors and career choices. At least one brochure has been developed describing various options in the health professions that may be of interest to students.

The College offers a variety of programs to assist those students admitted with special needs or those requiring academic support services. The Office of Disability Services offers students the opportunity for special learning accommodations based on documented need. The PEP program includes special summer courses in math and writing designed to prepare students for required general education courses in these areas. Student athletes take College 101: The College Experience and are expected to regularly attend the department's Academic Success Center. The College's Honors Program serves those students with exceptionally strong academic credentials. Finally, there is a Performance Based Admissions program that admits adult students who do not meet traditional freshmen requirements. These students must have fewer than twelve attempted college credits.

Retention and Graduation: Both retention and graduation rates are tracked at the College and provide important input data for decision making. Information about retention and the College's graduation policy are well defined and available on the web-site and other printed material such as the catalogue and admissions/program material. Although second-year retention figures are relatively strong at the College (77% for first-year, full-time students), graduation rates (six year graduation rate data starting in 2003) are low, ranging from 45% for all first-time, full-time freshmen to a low of 31% for Hispanic students. However, six year graduation rates for students in the Honors Program are 64% and for athletes (n=28 first time freshmen athletes in 2003) the rate stood at 92%.

The disparities between retention and graduation rates are being carefully analyzed by staff with several initiatives under way to increase percentages in both areas. Staffing has been increased in the Unity Center, which provides a range of multicultural programs and activities. As a result, minority six-year graduation rates have increased from 24% in 1998 to 36% in 2010.

Learning communities in the STEM areas, nursing, and the arts have been established along with campus wide academic initiatives such as the *Open Books Open Minds* first-year reading program; both programs are designed to engage students and help them connect. A Universal Advising system has been adopted and will provide important advisement services to undeclared and “intended” majors as they attempt to select appropriate majors. Efforts are under way to create a new Freshmen Year Experience, a joint project that brings together a variety of faculty and staff across disciplines. A new position has been created to coordinate the work of the Math Learning Center.

There is good use of survey data, including careful analysis of NSSE and the home-grown Student Census Survey. Both instruments provide useful data on student perceptions of their experience, and there is evidence that this information is used to improve programming across campus. Examples include enhanced strategic planning and enrollment management, faculty professional development, and the general education revision. In each case, these enhancements relied, in part, on information obtained from the administration of NSSE and other instruments.

The absence of a full-time Institutional Research director on campus has made it difficult to obtain other related data beyond retention and graduation information. Specialized reports dealing with academic majors, transfer students (in and out of the college), and undeclared and intended majors are needed to more accurately assess program demand. The College is attempting to fill this position as of the campus visit. Data relative to graduate student retention and graduation rates have not been collected centrally with each of the forty-one different programs maintaining this information independently. In order to capture this information, the College plans to have the Interim Dean of Graduate Studies develop a common online application. By using PeopleSoft software graduate student persistence, average time to complete and the percentage of students graduating from the various programs will be tracked and analyzed for the purpose of planning and enrollment management.

It should be noted that renewed attention to the upgrading and renovation of facilities is viewed by staff as essential to long-term efforts to increase retention. The new Bloomberg Finance Lab was opened in Fall of 2011, planning is under way for a new Art Center, the Recreation Center is being renovated with an expected opening date of February of 2012, a feasibility study has been completed for a proposed addition to the current Student Union, and many infrastructure upgrades have been completed along with the continuing upgrading of classrooms and technology.

Student Services: Student services, both academic and general student support, are offered through offices located in Academic and Student Affairs. The College diagnoses the learning needs of students and, as appropriate, will place students in developmental courses (typically math and/or writing courses) or provide special learning accommodations through the Office of Disability Services. New students may also be asked to take College 101: The College Experience, which concentrates on transitioning to campus life, and/or College 125: College Learning Strategies, which focuses on organization, study skills, and reading strategies.

General academic support is available to students through the Office of Academic Support and Information Services (OASIS). These services are targeted for undeclared and those students not yet admitted to education programs. The Department offers tutoring services in reading, time management and test taking, basic writing and mathematics, help for ESL students, and peer tutoring.

The Student Support area includes Student Activities, the Career Development Center, Dining Services, Disability Services, the Counseling Center, International Student Services, the Recreation Center, Health Services, Residential Life and Housing, the Unity Center, and the Women's Center. Upward Bound programs for high school students are also coordinated through the Office of Student Affairs.

Student Affairs staff expressed a strong "student centered" philosophy that provided a foundation for many of the programs and activities offered through the Division. There was evidence that departments are reaching out to students and, in more than one instance, had expanded hours of service to meet the needs of non-traditional and part-time students. The staff also reflected satisfaction with the number of growing collaborative projects with Academic Affairs, including freshmen year programming, career development programs in academic departments, and joint efforts in Open House and Orientation programs.

Both the Counseling Center and Health Services report increasing numbers of students seeking these services. Each area offers an array of services, including physical exams, management of illness and injuries, women's health care, routine lab services, and mental health referral. The Counseling Center provides free and confidential mental health services, including individual counseling and short-term psychotherapy for personal, career, and educational problems. Financial Aid services play an important role in the lives of students, with many more students seeking an array of financial assistance.

In several meetings with students, the team heard evidence of great support from both faculty and staff. Members of the Student Community Government (SCG) spoke of how valuable their Rhode Island College experience was, with special emphasis on leadership opportunities and the number of student clubs and organizations available to the general student population. Across the board, students expressed great satisfaction with the College staff and the programs available to them through Student Affairs. Many referred to the excellent value the College offered students, speaking directly to access and affordability. Numerous students remarked that the new President had brought to campus a sense of openness, transparency, and visibility.

Students also spoke about the challenges that come with having both residential and commuter students on campus. From a student perspective, there is a sense that more programming is needed to bring these different groups together. The senior management staff also recognizes this as an issue and is promoting programs and other activities designed to break down these artificial "walls." There is a sense of excitement on the campus about the relatively new administration and the changes that may lie ahead for the campus.

Other challenges include increasing demand on current services, particularly in Counseling, Health Service, and Student Disabilities. Some additional staff have been added, and this has gone far to alleviate some of the pressure that had been building due to surging enrollments over the years. NSSE data supports some student perceptions that the quality of interactions with several of the offices in the enrollment management area needs attention. Steps to enhance communication with students include making college e-mail the official channel of communication with students, a completely revamped website, and an ever expanding use of Blackboard as a learning tool.

Institutional Effectiveness: While the Division of Student Affairs and other student service areas administer student satisfaction surveys such as NSSE and other instruments to obtain information about students, there appears to be no systematic or comprehensive plan to assess the impact and/or the effectiveness of student support services. This information could be used to facilitate the improvement and strengthening of these services over the next several years.

Standard 7. Library and Other Information Resources

The Library has an extensive collection of both print and electronic resources that is adequate for the size of the institution and the programs it supports. A wide variety of subject areas are covered by the electronic journals and databases that support the curriculum and are made accessible to the campus community members from on and off site. The Library currently offers a growing collection of streaming videos and electronic books for research and recreation. The Library offers a mix of traditional and 21st century resources and services and houses a Curriculum Library with PK-grade12 books, kits, games, and online resources that adequately supports the pre-service teachers in training. The Library's Special Collections and Archives includes RI Normal School records, the Cape Verdean Collection, and historic slides that represent and celebrate the unique history of the institution.

Also provided are in-house laptop loans (30) and projectors, inter-library loans through a document delivery system, 20 stationary PCs, and network printing, photocopying, and scanning. A 2010 student satisfaction survey revealed that 48% of students use electronic devices to access library resources and that there is general satisfaction with access; the students requested extended exam hours (which has been addressed with arrangements for 24/7 extended hours during exam week) and upgraded printing and wireless coverage. Wireless access is now provided throughout the Library building, and there are various plug and play locations for students to study and gather in groups. A color printing option is being considered. Library services are available in the building 80 hours per week.

Since 2008, the Library has been under the leadership of a new Director, and use of the library has steadily increased. The gate count was 458,775 annually, and in FY 2011 the gate count had risen to 549,725. Heavy usage of the library is also reflected in routine annual activities, such as staff fielding 17,000 reference questions, processing over 300 items on course reserve, lending and borrowing over 7,000 items from other institutions, and receiving over 500,000 hits on the web site. The campus community takes advantage of the wide variety of resources available through the HELIN Consortium membership: research needs

of students and faculty are adequately met by the ability to access materials directly from libraries within the consortium, which consists of Rhode Island's public higher education institutions, private institutions such as Brown University, and twelve hospital libraries.

Staff members agree that the Library has become a more vibrant and inviting location where students want to study or be with friends. The Library seems to be moving in a new direction, and the new electronic classroom and other upgrades make it a destination place. In addition to research materials, events such as book sales, a lecture series, and campus-wide holiday fairs have become regular activities in which students, staff, faculty, and local community members participate. To keep the campus informed, the Library's public relations committee was reformed in 2008 and created a newsletter that highlights achievements and provides information on lectures, exhibits, and library sponsored events.

Providing excellent public service is a priority of the Director and his staff, and a recent survey resulted in 70% student participation, with over 1000 students rating the Library as the #1 place to go on campus. Library staff members are proud of their ability to serve the varied needs of a diverse student population, to provide a mix of traditional and electronic resources, and to create a welcoming environment. In addition, the Library leadership is responsive to student feedback, and many of the new offerings are the results of student requests, such as the addition of a new café area. The Library has received gifts and private donations that were used for furniture and electrical upgrades in study areas. The Director reused campus furniture to upgrade the café and recently purchased a microfilm scanner that digitizes the thousands of units of documents on microfilm and transfers the images to a thumb drive. Improvements have been made to the physical space, including the addition of comfortable seating, vending machines, a video viewing area, meeting space, and a faculty center for teaching and learning. In addition, a new Bloomberg workstation for stock exchange information has been installed and mirrors the equipment available in the School of Management lab. These improvements were made to the building after it was rated "fair" in the college's Master Plan 2010. The Library Director's approach to challenges has allowed him to be responsive to student requests in creative and manageable ways.

Library staff members oversee the Digital Commons repository, including theses, dissertations, honors theses, archival materials, and department research. The Library is viewed as a teaching and learning resource for the College and a gathering place for both campus and local community members. Reference staff are available to assist library patrons when the building is open and they provide an "ask the Librarian" email service and instant messaging options for those who need assistance from off-site. The Blackboard course management system is used for approximately 90% of the College's courses, and a reference librarian is available to be embedded in online or hybrid course sites and serve as research coach.

There appears to be a collegial and collaborative relationship between the Library and the User Services Support (USS) group. USS assisted the library with setting up a microfilm digitizer, provided software for images, maintains the laptops loaned to students, assists in the technology lab, and works on a pay for print one card system. USS provides faculty with instruction in using technology in the classroom, general phone support, desk top support,

hardware and software support, and various in-house, video, and Skype training workshops for faculty and staff. The USS Blackboard administrator created a course for students on how to use Blackboard and created a First-Year orientation video for using technology.

USS staff mentors a large group of student assistants in help desk support and in 2004 initiated a tracking system for service requests. Although the IT groups have 41 FTE staff, only 14 are full-time in USS. They are responsible for servicing faculty and student requests, troubleshooting and maintaining 163 electronic classrooms and labs with 550 desktops and other hardware that is refreshed every two years. They maintain an assistive technology lab and four group study areas, and a faculty development area. USS staff support the Blackboard course management system, which is used heavily by 90% of the faculty, with 35,000 course registrations. At Rhode Island College, 87% of students have at least one course on Blackboard. The Library and USS collaborate on assisting students and faculty with Blackboard, linking services on course sites, mounting e-reserves, and providing copyright informational links and policies. USS staff are responsive to faculty requests and are willing to work with faculty on incorporating the use of new technologies such as IPADS and document cameras into their classes, smartboard training for STEM education, and training requests from the center for teaching and learning. They formed a Committee on Online Learning that meets monthly to discuss best practices. They also teach applications such as Powerpoint and Excel to students and faculty. The USS web site provides faculty with information on services in the "faculty toolbox" and provides a back end secure page of information and videos on how to use classroom equipment and digital media in the 14 new Science, Technology and Math (STEM) rooms. USS staff members are proud of their role as supervisors and mentors to student assistants.

Despite financial difficulties, the Library and IT services are proud to have met their goals in Plan 2010. A library fee assessed students is intended to cover the costs of purchasing books, periodical subscriptions, and non-print materials, and a similar technology fee covers the cost of equipment and software for student use. The Library's budget over the past 5 years saw an overall decline of 4% or \$31,000. To compensate, the College reallocated funds and sought external funds. The Library has received a grant of \$20,000 to participate in the "Big Read" project and \$10,000 to digitize the Special Collection of 8,000 images. In addition, the Library receives funds through the "Give to the Library" link on the web page and through the fundraising of the Friends of the Library group. The library's current operational budget of \$752,219 will cover the cost of book purchases, over 70 database subscriptions, the addition of electronic reference books, and some streaming video databases.

Librarians serve faculty in each of the 40 academic departments as subject liaisons for collection development and information on new resources. With a library position vacant since 2007 and the expected retirement and medical leave of key staff members, the number of full-time librarians will be reduced from 10 to 6. The concern is for enough staffing continuity to support the increasing usage of the Library by the 9,000 FTE student body, faculty, and other patrons. As continued growth of the Library is in the College's Vision 2015, associated financial planning will be required for the Library and IT to reach optimum staffing levels; maintain on-going commitments to resources, services, equipment, and infrastructure; support initiatives; and meet long-range goals.

Information and Technological Literacy: Research literacy is supported by librarians teaching almost 300 classes to over 3300 students annually and by having each librarian assigned to serve as liaison to departments to tailor resources and needs. This has resulted in an increase in requests for Bibliographic Instruction classes and an increase in the production of subject-specific libguides. On the weekends, tutoring is provided for students in the OASIS department, and research instruction is included. Next steps include using IPAD applications for research instruction.

The collaboration between VPs overseeing the academic and technical sides of campus should ensure that technology is integrated into the curriculum and supported in both areas. The new General Education model includes research fluency outcomes as part of the new curriculum. Librarians participated in this process, and their expertise will be needed to continue to provide research instruction to achieve the required competencies. Further, a systematic approach to collecting data to determine what students gained through research instruction is currently being discussed by faculty and staff. Librarians are not as clear as faculty about their role with respect to the new General Education student learning outcomes, and both Library and USS staff feel they are “under the gun” with increasing demands. Teaching students 21st century skills that will allow them to be academically successful and lifelong learners will involve further collaboration among faculty, library staff, and user services support staff. As the campus Academic Technology Advisory Committee looks into the issues of technology for teaching and learning, the focus on pedagogy may be spearheaded by the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning. The Library and USS staff hope to contribute to this dialogue and to creative, collaborative efforts. Given the established pattern of collaboration between the Library and IT staff and the cooperation with faculty using Blackboard and other technologies, this should be a process that easily becomes part of the fabric of the teaching and learning experience and seamless to students.

Institutional Effectiveness: Surveys and feedback routinely are incorporated into Library and Information Resources planning. The College is committed to information and technology literacy, to instruction in research, and to regular improvement of facilities and technology.

Standard 8: Physical and Technological Resources

A mix of long-time employees, new employees, and contract staff serve in various roles in facilities and information technology/telecommunications. The President’s Cabinet, the campus Council, and Department Heads make policymaking and financial decisions. The President and the Board of Governors have the final decision on most policies and financial allocations.

Physical Resources: Since 2008, the college has seen an increase of state support and access to funding for capital projects and asset protection. The total funding committed by the College and the state is approximately \$31 million of the \$70 million in need identified by the Facilities Master Plan (FMP). This has coincided with the adoption of a FMP tied to Vision 2015, the increased advocacy of the Board of Governors and President, and the

availability of ARRA funds for fire safety projects. The College adopted the latest FMP in 2010. The plan consists of priorities, estimated cost, and campus condition assessments. The College has completed 524,000 square feet of renovations over the last ten years.

The capital planning process involves the use of the FMP as the base document. The operational documents, which flow from the FMP, are the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP – 5 year plan) and the Asset Protection Plan (APP-annual). The CIP looks at bond-funded projects with a long-term useful life, such as the planned renovation of the Art Center, the planned new construction of a Nursing Building, and the recently completed renovation of Alger Hall classroom building. The APP is developed on a yearly basis to spend the \$3 to \$5 million allocated for asset protection, such as HVAC repairs and upgrades, roof replacements, and fire and public safety upgrades.

Currently, debt service is shared by the College with the State of Rhode Island. The current debt service is split 66% (College) and 33% (state). All future debt will be designated either revenue bond (College) or general obligation bond (state) based on state rules and regulations associated with the primary use of the building being constructed or renovated.

The College is actively managing its infrastructure needs and aligning them with strategic goals as demonstrated in its use of formal planning and day-to-day management of maintenance issues. The Facilities Department is using these inputs to validate concerns, plan for resolution, and actively advocate for funding from multiple sources (state, College, and donors). The College is well aware of the past deterioration of facilities, and it is partnering with the state to effectively address a multiple decade situation of low maintenance. Such issues include safety concerns such as mold or asbestos or HVAC deficiencies.

The College would benefit from more formally addressing ADA compliance in its planning by completing an ADA Compliance Plan. This plan would assist the College and any architects on the campus with identifying ADA issues early in the study phase of a project. A formal survey of hazardous materials on campus, specifically asbestos, also would be significant, though some work in this regard has been done. This would allow the Facilities Department to have a better understanding of the issues in each of its buildings prior to facilities workers undertaking work orders, and architects would understand the needs for remediation early. Finally, the College should increase its ability to respond and plan for environmental issues on campus. Currently, the Director of Public Safety acts in this capacity, but a coordinated College-wide effort to address ongoing training and the tracking of hazardous materials and conditions was not apparent.

Technological Resources: Nearly 100% of the classrooms on campus have at least presentation and instructional technology. The campus attempts to renew hardware on a three to five year cycle. The funding for infrastructure, hardware, and software upgrades is not formally included in the operating budget. The College has been able to fund information technology needs, but funding is based on financial opportunity rather than planned and programmed annual funding. The operating budget for the information technology department is for payroll, annual licenses, and maintenance contracts.

The College is part of the OSHEAN consortium, which allows for pooled resources among higher education institutions in Rhode Island. Some disaster recovery and redundancy are offered through the consortium; but some concern was expressed that not enough was in place to avoid failures of some systems if the campus were down at any point.

User support services (USS) are seen as strong by staff, faculty, and students. The Information Technology Department sees USS as the face of the department and takes pride in the strong service provided. There is some concern about staffing and the slowness to fill vacant positions. The current situation is very good in the short term, but some concern was expressed that if vacancies and positions are not addressed, service quality could suffer in the long term.

Institutional Effectiveness: The College has been proactive in planning and moving forward with regard to physical and technological resources. A campus master plan has led to other plans that are being achieved, there is regular reassessment of priorities, and the campus is well aware of the need to update physical facilities as a result of decades of insufficient maintenance.

Standard 9: Financial Resources

Since 2008, the College has had its State appropriation decreased by 16%, from \$45M to \$37.7M. This shortfall has been made up by primarily increases in tuition and fees, increases in enrollment, and more aggressive pursuit of grants, although enrollment is trending flat moving forward, primarily based on the future reduction of the high school senior population. The long term financial position of the college is also affected by the current unemployment rate of 10.4 % in the state, with the national rate closer to 9%.

To respond to these pressures, the College convened a Budget Review Committee in 2009 and included financial planning and goals in Vision 2015. An outcome was the decentralizing of the budget development process. In this process, the budget office solicits information from the department chairs/directors. Any new initiatives must be tied to Vision 2015 and fully reviewed by the President's Cabinet. The overall funding of the budget of approximately \$125M is set based on information from the Board and the Department of Administration (a state agency). The state requires that public higher education institutions balance budgets on a yearly basis, so the College must allocate all operating revenue for expenditure. If the College does not spend all of its tuition and fees and state appropriation, then the state appropriation is reduced by the amount unspent in the following state budget cycle. Shortfalls and emergencies are funded through supplemental and emergency appropriations from the legislature.

The college has both appropriated and non-appropriated funds. Appropriated funds make up 38% of the operating revenue, while non-appropriated funds make up 62%. Reductions in appropriated funds have decreased the availability of reserves within the budget over the last three years, which compromises the College's ability to respond to emergency or unknown

expenses. Future years will see competition for resources from other parts of the state based in operating and capital requests.

Non-appropriated funding comes from five sources, the Rhode Island College Foundation, the Rhode Island College Alumni Association, grants, auxiliary enterprises, and tuition and fees. The Foundation and Alumni Association are stand-alone 501c3 corporations with their own governance and financial planning process. The College communicates with these organizations through the Vision 2015 Plan and the College Advancement Plan (revised annually and approved by the President and the Vice President of Advancement). The 501c3 funds have been used for athletic department needs, operating budget needs, student scholarships, institutional financial aid, and presidential discretionary spending. The balance of sources is used to fund the auxiliary enterprises operations (bookstore, dining, and housing), operating budget needs, and institutional financial aid (currently 12% of the unrestricted operating budget).

The Board of Governors acts as an advocacy group as well as governance for the Rhode Island public higher education system. The Board members approve the strategic plan and are kept informed of the status of the financial health of the College. The Board also approves the College's budget request prior to presentation to the legislature.

Institutional Effectiveness: Overall, the College is responding to the issues presented by the events of 2008 in a proactive manner. The finances are able to support current programs and levels of enrollment. The leadership team is dedicated to integrated planning and annual review of priorities and data. The financial planning process is inclusive and transparent, based on document review as well as ongoing discussion with faculty, staff, and students.

Standard 10: Public Disclosure

Numerous print and electronic publications are widely disseminated throughout the on- and off-campus community through the efforts of the Office of News and Public Relations (ONPR) and the office of Web Communications and publishing services. The ONPR department is the face and voice of the College. The College homepage has recently undergone its third redesign to ensure that information for the campus community and prospective students via the College Portrait is up to date, accessible, and easy to navigate.

Over the past 10 years all major College publications have been made available online. The College also provides phone and email contact information for campus departments and individuals, a portal for the public to view all policies and procedures, and two mechanisms for communicating with campus officials: the AskRIC link allows for questions to be emailed to the College, and the Idea Box solicits ideas from the campus community. The college catalog had been distributed in print and has been reduced to 500 desk copies for faculty to use for advising. In 2010, the undergrad Curriculum Committee reviewed the catalog and removed courses not offered for 3 consecutive years. Two web design revisions have taken place since 2008 to maximize ease of use and public accessibility to information. However, the College's system of updating the web page has been the sole responsibility of the web communications department, and consideration is being given to a Content

Management System that will allow authorized individuals to edit their own content. Google analytics is used for analysis of usage, and feedback on the effectiveness of content is solicited. Social media have been used for outreach and for sending cancellation notices; efforts to incorporate Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn for outreach will expand in the near future. The office of publishing services produces admissions materials, promotional flyers, performing arts materials, and media press releases, but the College web page is the gateway and primary dissemination point for information. The College has an established policy that the email system is an official means of communicating with students, and the College is reviewing all existing policies for updates and revision. The Campus Security office submits the annual crime report to be mounted on the college web page and is responsible for initiating emergency information for mass notifications.

The Human Resources office has refreshed policies and procedures and considers the HR website the “one stop shop” for general policies that include information on affirmative action, hiring, and any employment information for faculty and staff.

An annual Fact Book produced by the office of Institutional Research and Planning presents admission and retention information and other statistical data on enrollment, degrees, demographics, finances, and more. Marketing materials such as the Freshmen Viewbook, transfer-student brochure, financial aid guide, student support materials, and the catalog are reviewed for currency by the newly established (in 2010) 14-member Web Advisory Committee made up of faculty, staff, students, and administrators.

The Resource Guide to Experts on campus highlights the expertise and specialties of faculty and staff for availability for lectures, consultation, and promotion of the College. In addition, the College publicizes the achievements, awards, and success of faculty, staff, students, and alumni on the alumni magazine, “What’s News” (now online and updated with photos and features to tell their story) and on the I AM RIC print and TV ad campaign; the Voluntary System of Accountability provides information on undergraduate success rates and student learning outcomes. The Peoplesoft system is used by staff to collect data on enrollment and on graduation and retention rates, and data from a student census survey is taken every two years and collected in this system as well.

The “Great Colleges to Work For” survey indicated a desire from the campus for the public to be better informed about the college’s unique role and value to the community and to establish proactive, comprehensive, and effective communications with internal and external communities. Professionally trained PR staff will continue to promote the unique story of the college and support marketing efforts to get the good work of the College out to the public in various multi-media formats.

Institutional Effectiveness: The College has engaged in regular review of its materials and uses the information to increase accessibility, working to make information widely available to internal and external constituencies. The evaluation team believes that the College's reputation is growing. The team agrees that the College has an excellent story to tell and would benefit from increased emphasis on making the wider public more aware of its quality and successes.

Standard 11: Integrity

Rhode Island College has traditionally maintained a high level of commitment to integrity both in dealings with the campus community and external stakeholders. The College adheres to all of the principles, laws and governing documents found in the General Laws of the State of Rhode Island, regulations of the Board of Governors, the Charter and By-Laws of the Council of Rhode Island College, and the College Handbook. In all web-based and print material, there is clear mention of how the campus takes seriously its responsibility to meet all of the lawful requirements and expectations of these governing groups.

The College has recently adopted a new Policy on Administrative Policies that creates a more uniform procedure for the development, approval, implementation, and periodic revision of administrative policies. Several members of senior staff and management groups expressed optimism about this new process, which will also evaluate policies to reflect evolving ethical and legal standards related to prospective and new students, faculty, staff, the Board, external agencies, and the public. Drafts of proposed policy reviews and/or changes will be shared with the campus community prior to adoption. Suggestions will be sought from campus constituencies and incorporated into the policies as appropriate.

Policies dealing with ethics and integrity as well as those that reflect state and federal laws are available for review on the College's website. Plans are under way for a special portal that will make it easier for the public and the campus community to access these documents. Communications staff say there is a renewed commitment to transparency, with special attention being given to the dissemination of information about campus policies to all stakeholders.

In a meeting with the Assistant Vice President for Human Resources, it became clear that all policies related to employment at the college, including Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action plans, non-discrimination policies, grievance procedures, and union contracts are being made available to a wide audience, specifically through web based sites, e-mail communication, and print material.

Numerous documents and procedures protect the rights of students, academic freedom, academic honesty, freedom of expression, and lawful activity. Other policies deal with possession of dangerous weapons, alcohol and drug use, gambling, romantic and/or sexual relationships in the workplace where a professional power differential exists, and student disciplinary procedures (Board of College Discipline). Policies exist to deal with grievances from students, faculty and staff, some of which are covered under collective bargaining agreements. Students report that they have open access to the administration, faculty, and staff, and believe their voices are heard when issues arise. NCAA standards for Division III are taken seriously for student athletes and handled straightforwardly.

The College has created an Institutional Review Board (IRB) for issues associated with human participants in research. The IRB is chaired by a faculty member. Membership

includes several external members, and new software has been adopted to help the group comply with federal regulations.

The College, through its Unity Center, the Women's Center, the Women's Studies program and the Office of Disability Services, offers a multitude of programs to foster cultural diversity on campus. Students reported how a difficult issue was resolved in 2008 when the campus became concerned with homophobic and anti-Semitic graffiti. Students came together with staff to discuss the matter, and the Student Community Government invested funds in specialized training in how to deal with intolerance. Students also spoke very positively about the work of the Unity Center in dealing with matters openly and directly.

Institutional Effectiveness: There is a sense of renewal at Rhode Island College, which is reflected in the many comments about the openness and transparency over the last several years. Colleagues are working together across divisional boundaries on committees designed to improve operations, programs, and services. Students report a sense of empowerment and engagement with faculty and staff. This commitment to open communication should provide the College with a framework that will support high ethical standards and a continuing commitment to institutional integrity.

Institutional Effectiveness Summary

Rhode Island College has developed a culture of assessment. The evaluation team was impressed by the thorough and thoughtful way the College systematically collects information and uses it for improvement. Some processes, such as academic program reviews, are well incorporated into campus policies and involve many faculty and staff members. Others processes have been more recently instituted and are only now beginning to yield data. As Institutional Research becomes more fully developed, that office, too, will support and supplement on-going campus assessments.

The College is committed to ongoing assessment of its mission and strategic plan, campus policies, programs, and more; to transparency in the conduct of the campus's affairs; and to discussion and communication with appropriate constituencies. These seem foundational to the positive campus culture.

Affirmation of Compliance Summary

Members of the evaluation team reviewed the Affirmation of Compliance with Federal Regulations Relating to Title IV, signed by President Carriuolo as CEO. As noted earlier, Rhode Island College provides public disclosure of credit transfer policies and articulation agreements. The public was notified of an evaluation visit both online and in print, through venues from the homepage to the student newspaper, alumni magazine, and *The Providence Journal*. Policies on students' rights and responsibilities are clear and available. As discussed in the Integrity of Award of Academic Credit section in Standard 4: The Academic Program, policies and procedures for determining credit hours and more are available online.

Summative List of Institutional Strengths and Concerns

The evaluation team believes that Rhode Island College is accomplishing its mission, offering programs and services appropriate to that mission, and serving well the state of Rhode Island. The campus leaders are energetic and highly respected as a team; the members of the Board of Governors, although many are recently appointed, are active and involved; and the faculty and staff are well qualified and committed to students and to the campus community. Morale is repeatedly described as high, and students, faculty, and staff confirm that creativity, ideas, and discussion are valued.

Faculty and staff members repeatedly discussed the positive changes that have occurred in recent years. The campus leadership, a significant number of whom have moved into their current positions within the past several years, have been proactive and brought the campus into discussion of important issues from strategic planning to program assessment. The campus has responded with a remarkable level of involvement in governance and problem-solving.

The results are impressive: a revised mission, a strategic plan, related plans for facilities and for advancement, a new General Education program, a Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning, and increased grant funding and scholarship. Even in this difficult economy, the campus and Board made a case to the voters of Rhode Island for a bond issue for \$17 million to renovate the Art Center, and it was approved. Amid the excitement of recent initiatives are concerns about staffing, as dedicated people are doing more without additional positions (which are limited by the state, although the College received an increase last June). The administration will want to continue to be mindful of these concerns. Nonetheless, the evaluation team's primary impression is of a campus that is engaged in the right discussions and moving forward in a focused and collaborative way on established priorities.

Our summary of strengths and concerns follows.

Strengths

- The "new" president and leadership team, who are bringing transformational change. People on campus find the administration -- not only the president but also others in leadership positions -- open to new ideas, transparent, and excellent at communication. We heard such praise again and again, from students, faculty members, staff members, alumni, union leadership, and governors.
- A vital and positive campus culture achieving results. This is true from the Art Center bond issue to curriculum revision. We see it in the General Education revision, for example, a powerful change in curriculum. People are asking good questions about learning and spending time and energy in useful ways, which is a healthy sign.
- Strategic planning. We commend Rhode Island College on its planning: a mission revision, strategic plan, facilities master plan, enrollment management plan,

fundraising plan, and all are integrated. Planning is participatory and ongoing, done with self-awareness, using data for real assessment and improvement, and with a range of faculty and staff participation that is excellent.

- Shared governance. There is a sense of renewal and reinvigoration of strong and participatory faculty governance. People are working through policies, reviving committees, and developing good ideas for the College.
- A productive and committed faculty and staff who are engaged with students and the College mission. They have increased their emphasis on scholarship (and are doing well in attracting research grants, given the College's size), on graduate education, and on community service and partnerships, all appropriate to the mission. There is a can-do spirit. As one faculty member said, on campus the attitude once was "No, there is no money" and now is "Good idea. Let's see how," which encourages creativity.
- A focus on student success extending well beyond the words. We see that focus in faculty and staff comments about affordability for students, in small classes, and in time spent with students. Rhode Island College is genuinely student-centered. And the student leaders we met were impressive, aware of the campus commitment and grateful for it.

Concerns

- Funding. Although Rhode Island College is creative and has been successful within a difficult context, the next few years will be a difficult time for the state. Rhode Island College has an energetic and supportive Board of Governors willing to advocate for the College, but Rhode Island College will need to continue to make its case among the three different institutions the Board represents and with the state.
- External messaging /public relations. The campus people are doing good work, and Rhode Island College has much expanded its messaging in recent years, but the College will need even more focus on this area in upcoming years to better make others aware of what is a very good story.
- Facilities. Rhode Island College has many 50-yr-old buildings, and for whatever reasons, maintenance was deferred too long: those buildings need renovation. The campus is actively working, but the issues are long-standing, from mold to asbestos and HVAC deficiencies. In some cases, these may be safety issues; in others, renovation will enable greater student success, as appropriate facilities make a difference in what students can accomplish.