Executive Summary

The Self-Study Report 2012 of the College of St. Scholastica presents a wide array of evidence related to the ways in which the College meets the requirements for reaffirmation of its accreditation. Organized around the five Criteria and their Core Components, the Self-Study includes graphs, tables, charts, and examples. The document is 223 pages in length. It can be downloaded from the Community Blackboard site or from the Self-Study section of the College website.

This Executive Summary is drawn from the Self-Study. It presents the Conclusions related to each Core Component followed by the Summary of evidence and the Strengths and Challenges identified for each Criterion. It is a good way to get an overall picture of the state of the College. Because it mirrors the structure of the complete document, the reader who wants to see the evidence for particular sections or statements will be able to locate it easily in the larger document.

Comprehensive Review

A team of five reviewers selected by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association will be at the College from October 15 to 17, 2012. They have already received the Self-Study Report 2012 and some supporting documentation; they will arrive on campus with questions already in mind. While here, they will meet with members of the Board of Trustees, President’s Staff, various committees and groups of faculty and staff, student leaders and others. They may visit one of our Extended Sites or to “visit” an online course. They have responsibility for verifying that we are in compliance with a wide range of Federal regulations.

All members of the College community need to be well-informed about the findings of the Self-Study so that each of us is prepared to respond to any question or request from the reviewers. Please read this Executive Summary to gain a broad perspective, and then to read the sections of the Self-Study Report 2012 that are most directly related to your area of work. You are an important part of the success of our effort to maintain our accreditation.

Sister Edith Bogue  
Chair, Self-Study 2012  
Associate Professor of Sociology
CRITERION ONE: MISSION AND INTEGRITY.
THE COLLEGE OF ST. SCHOLASTICA OPERATES WITH INTEGRITY TO ENSURE THE
FULFILLMENT OF ITS MISSION THROUGH STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES THAT INVOLVE
THE BOARD, ADMINISTRATION, FACULTY, STAFF, AND STUDENTS.

CONCLUSIONS RELATED TO CORE COMPONENT 1A: THE COLLEGE OF ST. SCHOLASTICA'S
MISSION DOCUMENTS ARE CLEAR AND ARTICULATE PUBLICLY THE ORGANIZATION'S
COMMITMENTS.

The College of St. Scholastica has clearly stated mission, vision and value statements which guide and
inform the life of the college. The College has been very intentional about making its commitments
known; they are found in all the activities and publications of the college. This college, like many
others, continues to grapple to define the meaning of its Roman Catholic identity. The College takes
seriously the difficult process of upholding Church teachings and supporting diversity and open
inquiry, approaching this task in light of the Catholic intellectual tradition with its emphasis on
vigoroust debate in the search for truth.

CONCLUSIONS RELATED TO CORE COMPONENT 1B: IN ITS MISSION DOCUMENTS, THE COLLEGE
OF ST. SCHOLASTICA RECOGNIZES THE DIVERSITY OF ITS LEARNERS, OTHER CONSTITUENCIES,
AND THE GREATER SOCIETY IT SERVES.

The information presented here gives evidence of the College’s sustained commitment to increasing
the diversity of its student body, faculty and staff throughout the last decade. It faces significant
challenges because of the demographic profile of northeastern Minnesota. Not only does the low
racial and ethnic diversity in the region present a recruitment problem, it also contributes to a
reduced level of cultural competency among students, staff and faculty drawn from the region.

The College of St. Scholastica’s response is two-fold. It seeks to increase racial, ethnic, and other
types of diversity through enhanced recruitment and hiring practices. At the same time, the College
implements programs to assess and increase the cultural competence of its faculty and staff to make
the campus more attractive and welcoming to a diverse student body and workforce. The College of
St. Scholastica is proud of the progress it has made in the last decade, but recognizes the need for
continued commitment and further improvement.

CONCLUSIONS RELATED TO CORE COMPONENT 1C: UNDERSTANDING OF AND SUPPORT FOR THE
MISSION PERVADE THE COLLEGE OF ST. SCHOLASTICA

This section provides evidence of The College of St. Scholastica’s commitment to live out its Mission
in the Benedictine tradition with emphasis on the five core values of Community, Respect,
Hospitality, Stewardship and Love of Learning. Increased emphasis on mission fit, practices to
enhance the diversity of the College and the cultural competence of the St. Scholastica community
have an impact throughout the organization. The Duluth campus provides a wealth of co-curricular
activities and programs contributing to the College’s Social and Personal Responsibility Outcome. The
College faces new challenges in making its mission, vision and values similarly pervasive across all its
sites. The evidence presented here demonstrates its commitment and ability to meet the challenge.
CONCLUSIONS RELATED TO CORE COMPONENT 1D: THE COLLEGE OF ST. SCHOLASTICA’S GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURES PROMOTE EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP AND SUPPORT COLLABORATIVE PROCESSES THAT ENABLE THE ORGANIZATION TO FULFILL ITS MISSION.

This section presents ample evidence that the College of St. Scholastica has a well-defined structure of governance and authority. The Board of Trustees maintains a strong focus on the mission of the College in its decisions and direction-setting activities. The President and Vice Presidents work collaboratively to implement the directions set by the Board. Structures of faculty and student governance facilitate shared responsibility for the quality of academic programs across all sites and venues and for the well-being of the organization. In general, faculty, staff and administration give high ratings to the effectiveness of their departments and to the relationships of those who work within them. The College continues have difficulty in creating structures of communication across units that satisfy the needs and expectations of some groups, particularly faculty and hourly workers. This Self-Study underscores the importance of ongoing exploration into the sources of these difficulties while also continuing the actions already underway to ameliorate them.

CONCLUSIONS RELATED TO CORE COMPONENT 1E: THE COLLEGE OF ST. SCHOLASTICA UPHOLDS AND PROTECTS ITS INTEGRITY

The College of St. Scholastica demonstrates its deep regard for the integrity of its mission and values through the many processes and policies it uses to guard that integrity, and through its celebration of those who embody it at the highest levels. In the last decade, the College has strengthened protocols in Finance and Human Resources as the size of its student body, number of employees, and geographical range increased dramatically. In the last two years, it has enhanced cultural competence on campus and responded quickly and appropriately to bias incident reports and culturally sensitive situations. While it sees the avenues for further growth in these areas, the Offices and programs now in place are well-designed to accomplish it.

SUMMARY

Mission is central to every action and decision of The College of St. Scholastica. Faculty, administration, students and staff refer to the Benedictine values regularly in making decisions. In the last decade, mission has been more explicitly integrated into the governance structure; the College is intentionally addressing the meaning of its Roman Catholic identity in a multicultural society. The College is committed to being a diverse and inclusive community, but faces serious geographic challenges to increasing its racial and ethnic diversity. The structures of governance are clear and function well at the department level, but continue to generate dissatisfaction across larger units. The College takes care to guard its integrity and its mission. Perhaps the most compelling evidence of the centrality of mission at The College of St. Scholastica is the near unanimous rating the importance of mission receives on the Mission and Values Survey.
STRENGTHS

- The mission and vision of the College of St. Scholastica are prominent in publications, websites, marketing materials, and campus buildings.

- Faculty, staff, students, and alumni give evidence of a solid understanding of and appreciation for the mission and values of the College.

- The College as an organization and the individuals and units that comprise it place a strong value on diversity; they are working collaboratively to increase diversity and cultural competence at the College.

- The organizational structures at the College are regularly evaluated, and the results of those evaluations are used to make changes in policies, programming, and the day-to-day functioning of the institution as it encounters changing needs.

- The College operates with integrity, actively guards the integrity of its mission, and recognizes those who exhibit the fullness of its mission at a high level.

CHALLENGES

- While commitment to the mission and vision is strong among all its constituents, the College of St. Scholastica struggles to find the right balance of Catholic identity and welcoming ecumenism.

- Regional demographics continue to make it difficult for the College to enhance the racial and ethnic diversity of its student body, faculty and staff. Significant efforts have resulted in modest improvements which do not yet achieve the desired level of diversity and inclusiveness.

- Many of the ways in which the College community encounters its mission and values occur on the campus in Duluth; the College needs to creatively explore means for conveying the mission, vision and Benedictine values in its extended sites and online programs.

- While St. Scholastica has clearly defined structures of governance, responsibility and authority, members of the College community continue to experience frustration with processes of decision-making and communication within those structures. Sincere efforts to ameliorate this situation have not yet yielded measurable improvement; the President’s Staff and the leadership of governance bodies are working to find ways to improve this situation.
CRITERION TWO: PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE.
THE COLLEGE OF ST. SCHOLASTICA’S ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES AND ITS PROCESSES FOR EVALUATION AND PLANNING DEMONSTRATE ITS CAPACITY TO FULFILL ITS MISSION, IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF ITS EDUCATION, AND RESPOND TO FUTURE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES.

CONCLUSIONS RELATED TO CORE COMPONENT 2A: THE COLLEGE OF ST. SCHOLASTICA REALISTICALLY PREPARES FOR A FUTURE SHAPED BY MULTIPLE SOCIETAL AND ECONOMIC TRENDS.

The College of St. Scholastica realistically prepares for a future shaped by multiple societal and economic trends. College-level planning processes involve many stakeholders and the College plan is integrated into the activities and plans of a variety of units within the College. Budget processes also involve many stakeholders and are linked to the planning process. The College has a diversified portfolio of academic programs, locations, and formats. Enrollment has grown from about 2,200 to 4,000 in the last decade.

CONCLUSIONS RELATED TO CORE COMPONENT 2B: THE COLLEGE OF ST. SCHOLASTICA’S RESOURCE BASE SUPPORTS ITS EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND ITS PLANS FOR MAINTAINING AND STRENGTHENING THEIR QUALITY IN THE FUTURE.

Improved financial, physical and technology resources have allowed The College of St. Scholastica to remain strong in an increasingly competitive higher education market. A diversified portfolio of program offerings has positioned us well to enter the next ten years. The College continues to work on addressing its remaining needs for additional physical infrastructure (residence halls, student center, fine arts facilities), increased alumni giving, and additional revenue streams beyond tuition. Student:staff and student:faculty ratios are comparable to peer institutions and compensation for faculty and staff members is comparable to similar institutions in the region.

CONCLUSIONS RELATED TO CORE COMPONENT 2C: THE COLLEGE OF ST. SCHOLASTICA’S ONGOING EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT PROCESSES PROVIDE RELIABLE EVIDENCE OF INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS THAT CLEARLY INFORMS STRATEGIES FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT.

The College’s Office of Institutional Research and Assessment supports the organization in its efforts to develop evaluation and assessment processes that provide reliable evidence that is used to continually improve the institution. The work of the Institutional Reporting Committee demonstrates the College’s high-level commitment to a robust data infrastructure. Institution-level Key Performance Indicators are linked to the strategic plan and the budget, providing the institution with a snapshot of its effectiveness. Unit-level assessment, evaluation, and improvement occur regularly; on the academic side, these efforts are supplemented by a meaningful program review process. While The College of St. Scholastica has made major strides forward in the last decade towards creating a culture of assessment, further growth is still needed. While all departments now have assessment plans, there is variability across departments in the extent to which the plans are
implemented and acted on. At The College of St. Scholastica, the culture of assessment is most clearly visible in the spirit of "this was good, but next time it will be even better" that inhabits the campus. This attitude is not just about “closing the loop” of assessment, it is about “climbing the spiral” toward higher quality across the diverse activities of the College.

**CONCLUSIONS RELATED TO CORE COMPONENT 2D: ALL LEVELS OF PLANNING ALIGN WITH THE COLLEGE OF ST. SCHOLASTICA’S MISSION, THEREBY ENHANCING ITS CAPACITY TO FULFILL THAT MISSION.**

All levels of The College of St. Scholastica’s planning align with its mission, from development of the institutional strategic plan to unit plans. The planning processes at the College have evolved over the last ten years to be more responsive, to involve more constituents at all levels of the organization, and to be integrated into more areas of the College.

**SUMMARY**

The College of St. Scholastica’s allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. College-level planning and budget processes involve many stakeholders; the College plan is integrated into the activities and plans of units throughout the College. Improved financial, physical and technology resources allowed the College to remain strong in an increasingly competitive higher education market. The College has seen consistent growth in net revenues (from $29M in 2002 to $65M in 2011), endowment value ($16M in 2001 to $48M in 2011) and net assets (from $41M in 2002 to $75M in 2011) and has reported strong bottom lines (ranging from $2.1M to $4.4M during the last five years). Student:staff and student:faculty ratios are comparable to peer institutions and compensation for faculty and staff members is comparable to similar institutions in the region. A diversified portfolio of program offerings has positioned the College well to enter the next ten years. The College continues to work on addressing its remaining needs for additional physical infrastructure (residence halls, student center, fine arts facilities), increased alumni giving, and additional revenue streams beyond tuition.

Institution-level Key Performance Indicators are linked to the strategic plan and the budget, providing the institution with a snapshot of its effectiveness. While The College of St. Scholastica has made major strides forward in the last decade towards creating a culture of assessment, further growth is still needed. While all departments now have assessment plans, there is variability across departments in the extent to which the plans are implemented and acted on. The culture of assessment at the College is not just about “closing the loop” of assessment, it is about “climbing the spiral” toward higher quality across the College’s many diverse activities.

**STRENGTHS**

- College-level planning processes involve many stakeholders and the College plan is integrated into the activities and plans of a variety of units within the College.
- The College has made recent improvements to its physical infrastructure, including the addition of residence halls, athletic and recreational space, and academic space.
• The College has a diversified portfolio of academic programs, locations, and formats; enrollment has grown from about 2,200 to 4,000 in the last decade.
• The College produces strong bottom lines, enabling it to invest in needed programs and infrastructure and dramatically increase the size of its endowment.
• Salaries are competitive and employee turnover is low.
• The College has a robust data infrastructure and a commitment to data-driven decision making.

**CHALLENGES**

• The College is tuition dependent and the number of traditional college-aged students in Minnesota will decline for the next several years. This demographic fact of life is, in part, behind the College’s diversification of programming, extending its reach with programs that appeal to adult learners in different locations who appreciate accelerated and online formats.
• The College needs additional physical infrastructure including more residence halls, a student center, and improved fine arts facilities. If it can continue to produce solid bottom lines and enlarge its endowment, it will have additional bonding capacity within a few years that will enable it to make further investments in its physical infrastructure.
• Alumni giving rates are modest and it may be challenging to promote high levels of giving from alumni who have not participated in the full-time undergraduate environment. Having successfully completed the Science Initiative that built the Science Center expansion, College Advancement is ready to determine the new fund-raising priorities, which may include novel ways of reaching out to nontraditional alumni.
• Although the College has developed a strong data culture in the past decade, it sometimes struggles to use the data effectively for decision making. The College, through its Institutional Reporting Committee and its expanded Institutional Research and Assessment function, demonstrates a high-level commitment to continuing to advance data-driven decision-making.
CRITERION THREE: STUDENT LEARNING AND EFFECTIVE TEACHING.
THE COLLEGE OF ST. SCHOLASTICA PROVIDES EVIDENCE OF STUDENT LEARNING AND TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS THAT DEMONSTRATES IT IS FULFILLING ITS EDUCATIONAL MISSION.

CONCLUSIONS RELATED TO CORE COMPONENT 3A: THE COLLEGE OF ST. SCHOLASTICA’S GOALS FOR STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES ARE CLEARLY STATED FOR EACH EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND MAKE EFFECTIVE ASSESSMENT POSSIBLE.

The College has the infrastructure in place that enables it to assess its programs effectively, including an Institutional Research office, technology (WEAVEonline), faculty committee structures, and support from Extended Studies offices. An effective program review process leads to meaningful changes in programs. The College assesses undergraduate College outcomes with the Collegiate Learning Assessment, junior focus groups, and alumni surveys. Results of these assessments show that critical thinking and analytical writing skills have improved over the last several years and that changes in the curriculum and co-curriculum are needed to meet the College’s newly adopted Heritage Outcome related to its Catholic, Benedictine identity. Departments and programs implement their own assessment programs for undergraduate majors and graduate programs, using a wide range of approaches appropriate to each discipline. On one global measure of effectiveness for programs that prepare students for licensure or certification, most of the College’s programs compare well to state or national benchmarks. When assessment results do not meet expectations, departments and programs implement improvement programs that address the identified concerns. Although the College has a strong culture of outcomes assessment, there is room for improvement. The WEAVEonline implementation is in an early stage and does not yet fully aggregate assessment data across the College. In addition, one of the common recommendations from the program review process is to improve assessment programs, particularly for majors and programs that do not have external specialized accreditation.

CONCLUSIONS RELATED TO CORE COMPONENT 3B: THE COLLEGE OF ST. SCHOLASTICA VALUES AND SUPPORTS EFFECTIVE TEACHING.

This section shows that the College values and supports effective teaching. In the decade since the last comprehensive visit, the College has increased the proportion of its faculty prepared at the doctoral level; it expects this proportion to increase as current faculty complete doctoral degrees and as it hires additional faculty with doctoral degrees. In addition, the College has professionalized its student affairs staff, several of whom now hold graduate degrees in student affairs work and many of whom participate in relevant professional development opportunities specific to student affairs. The College has effective mechanisms to evaluate faculty performance related to teaching, including regular review by department chairs and regular use of end-of-course satisfaction surveys completed by students.

The College of St. Scholastica recognizes excellence in teaching by a long-standing College-level annual award for excellence in teaching; school-level awards and teaching support programs are also being implemented. The College has appropriate faculty governance processes in place that assure that faculty have an appropriate level of authority in program development and course content and pedagogy.
CONCLUSIONS RELATED TO CORE COMPONENT 3C: THE COLLEGE OF ST. SCHOLASTICA CREATES EFFECTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS.

The College of St. Scholastica has a long history of providing effective learning environments for its traditional undergraduate students on campus in Duluth. The evidence presented here demonstrates that the College continues to provide comprehensive and innovative programming. The academic planning process revealed contradictory opinions about the effectiveness of advising at the College, about the relative effectiveness of faculty or staff advisors, and the merits of having advisors within or outside the major from the start of the academic career. Learning environments differ for each student population (traditional, extended, on-line and graduate) and the college has been successful in identifying specific needs for these groups and implementing services/programming. One of the support areas particularly valued by graduate students, writing support, has recently been addressed with the addition of summer staffing for the Writing Center.

In the decade since the last comprehensive visit, the many programs and offices have strengthened the assessment of their programs with the addition of evaluation tools and reports. Standardized indicators of effective learning—NSSE, retention rates, and graduation rates—show that the College performs at the level of, or somewhat better than, peer institutions. While this has been used to validate the effectiveness of programs, the Office of Student Affairs realizes that the data could be used more productively in assigning priorities for programming; the new position of Dean of Students provides additional administrative infrastructure to support more effective use of data for decision making.

CONCLUSIONS RELATED TO CORE COMPONENT 3D: THE COLLEGE OF ST. SCHOLASTICA’S LEARNING RESOURCES SUPPORT STUDENT LEARNING AND EFFECTIVE TEACHING.

The College has an effective academic technology infrastructure supported by helpful, knowledgeable staff. Likewise, the Library has an effective technology infrastructure, an appropriate physical collection, and a highly regarded staff of professional librarians and paraprofessional staff. The opening of the Science Center expansion in fall 2012 provides the College with an attractive wing of modern chemistry classrooms, laboratories, and collaborative faculty-student research spaces, as well as much-needed informal gather spaces for students. Classrooms that can accommodate larger classes are in short supply and visual and performing arts spaces are minimally adequate to meet growing interest in instrumental and choral ensembles and the art major.

SUMMARY

Student learning and effective teaching take place both in the classroom and in co-curricular settings. Learning and teaching are the central focus of the faculty and staff at The College of St. Scholastica; the College tailors its learning environments for several distinct groups of students and listens to their concerns and needs. Student learning goals are clearly stated for each undergraduate and graduate program; they make assessment of student learning possible. Learning goals and assessment are also clearly stated for the departments in Student Affairs that support effective student learning. Data from a variety of sources demonstrate that students are achieving these goals. St. Scholastica has made excellent progress in the last 10 years in program review, disciplinary department assessment, assessment of undergraduate College outcomes, and in integrating the results of assessment into planning. Academic authority for all programs regardless of location or format now rests squarely
with the academic departments, who receive logistical support for extended and online programs from the Extended Studies unit. The College is weathering the stresses of rapid institutional growth and a challenging economic climate; it remains firmly committed to fostering quality teaching and co-curricular programming and providing the resources for effective student learning environments.

STRENGTHS

- The College has a strong assessment infrastructure that includes appropriate staff members, program review processes, and technology to support assessment.
- The program review process contributes to meaningful quality improvements for academic programs.
- Assessment data show that undergraduate students are achieving most of the College learning outcomes, are engaged in their learning, and show growth in college-level thinking, writing, and analysis skills.
- Assessment of undergraduate majors and graduate programs shows that programs are meeting many outcomes; they undertake improvement efforts in response to less satisfactory results. In particular, programs that prepare students for licensure or certification have strong pass rates that usually meet or exceed disciplinary benchmarks.
- Faculty are well qualified in their disciplinary areas, with an appropriate balance of doctorally prepared faculty and master’s prepared faculty with extensive experience in their profession. The proportion of faculty with doctoral degrees has improved since the College’s last comprehensive review; it is expected to climb higher as current faculty complete doctoral degrees and more emphasis is placed on doctoral preparation when hiring new faculty.
- Extensive academic support programs and co-curricular offerings contribute substantially to student learning and effective teaching.
- Technology and library resources meet student needs and are constantly improved.
- The Center for Excellence in Teaching, opening in fall 2012, will provide new resources to support instructional excellence.
- The Science Center expansion, opening in fall 2012, increases classroom, laboratory, research, office space, and informal space in support of student learning.

CHALLENGES

- Assessment data suggest that the undergraduate College learning outcomes related to the Catholic, Benedictine heritage and to second-language proficiency are not met as well as the outcomes in other areas. The work of the Catholic Signature Summit group, convened by the School of Arts and Letters, addresses the findings regarding the heritage outcome. Changes within the Global, Cultural, and Language Studies department, incorporating approaches that situate language within culture and that emphasize functional communication skills in another language, address the findings related to demonstrating linguistic proficiency in a second language for those students who take their second language courses at the College.
- Although the College’s assessment infrastructure and practices have improved dramatically in the past decade, the quality of assessment programs varies across units; it has not fully tapped into the potential of WEAVEonline for curriculum mapping and assessment aggregation. The College sometimes struggles to use data in meaningful ways to make decisions.
• The academic planning process revealed contradictory opinions about the effectiveness of advising at the College, about the relative effectiveness of faculty or staff advisors, and the merits of having advisors within or outside the major from the start of the academic career. Students—both undergraduate and graduate—rated this goal more important than did faculty and staff. Action toward this goal to date has focused on improving the initial orientation of traditional undergraduate students and investigating technology with the potential to improve advising (better degree audit software, and more interactive early alert system for traditional students, activity tracking in online courses).

• There is evidence that graduate students have less access to some support services, particularly during the summer. To get a handle on this concern, the Vice President for Student Affairs surveyed graduate students to learn which services they valued most highly. Writing support services were among the most highly valued services; the College initiated summer Writing Center hours for this first time in summer 2012. Initial results show that summer usage is higher than anticipated, validating the results of the survey and the decision to invest in the increased level of service.

• Rigorous assessment of the comparability of content in courses offered across several venues (accelerated, online, and traditional semester courses) is not yet complete. Direct assessment of the comparability of outcomes for students studying in diverse formats varies across programs, and is only rudimentary in general education courses.

• Even with the recent expansion of the Science Center, formal and informal learning space, including visual and performing arts space, is limited on the campus in Duluth. The planned opening of a Graduate Health Science campus in Duluth in 2014 will free up space and enable the College to address some of these needs. Longer-term space plans include a new Student Center that would enable it to address additional needs.
The College of St. Scholastica truly values a life of learning; this is evident in its mission and core values. The importance placed on a life of learning is enacted through support for and promotion of professional development for members of the Board of Trustees, College leadership, faculty, staff, and students. However, faculty development funding for conference attendance is not sufficient to meet the demand and adjunct faculty and assistant and associate professors are less satisfied with faculty development opportunities than instructors and professors. The creation of the Center for Teaching Excellence in fall 2012 represents a major investment by the College to improve faculty development opportunities related to teaching. The College offers a range of staff development opportunities that are meeting the needs of administrative and salaried staff, but do not appear to be meeting the needs of hourly staff. In 2011-2012, the College began to address this gap by offering computer training so that hourly staff would be able to take advantage of the College’s portal and to use the on-line performance management system effectively.

Faculty participate in a wide variety of scholarly and creative activities at a level consistent with the College’s commitment to teaching and to its promotion and tenure criteria, with graduate faculty having a modestly higher level of scholarly activity than the faculty as a whole. Current levels represent an increase in faculty scholarly productivity compared to a decade ago.

The College’s undergraduate curriculum has sufficient breadth, with a General Education Program, study abroad opportunities around the globe, and an Honors Program for selected students, to fulfill this Criterion. Evidence from students and alumni demonstrate that the students achieve the College outcomes, although not to the same extent. In response to findings that some students report little contact with the Catholic Intellectual Tradition, the College has convened a task force to explore ways in which this can be woven through the curriculum more clearly.

The College’s curriculum also has sufficient depth, with a wide array of undergraduate majors and minors and graduate programs offered by six academic schools. External accreditation gives evidence to the quality of majors and programs in education, health sciences, and nursing. The quality of the other majors and programs are evaluated within the College’s program review process.
CONCLUSIONS RELATED TO CORE COMPONENT 4C: THE COLLEGE OF ST. SCHOLASTICA ASSESSES THE USEFULNESS OF ITS CURRICULA TO STUDENTS WHO WILL LIVE AND WORK IN A GLOBAL, DIVERSE, AND TECHNOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

The College has several mechanisms that it uses to assess the usefulness of its curriculum to students who will live and work in a diverse, global, and technological society. These mechanisms include program review (with both internal and external review elements) and feedback from employers, alumni, and students. The College’s internal scale on "exposure to diverse cultures" is at a moderate level but has begun to increase, suggesting that its modest increases in compositional diversity and strengthening of the cultural diversity components in the curriculum and stronger Institutional Diversity staff, programs, and training, is beginning to have an impact. With respect to technology, assessment results show that students believe their experiences at the College contributed to their technological skills and that its students used technology in their education at a rate similar to, or in some cases higher than, comparison groups.

CONCLUSIONS RELATED TO CORE COMPONENT 4D: THE COLLEGE OF ST. SCHOLASTICA PROVIDES SUPPORT TO ENSURE THAT FACULTY, STUDENTS, AND STAFF ACQUIRE, DISCOVER, AND APPLY KNOWLEDGE RESPONSIBLY.

The College has a coherent and responsive framework of procedures to ensure intellectual integrity. Students, faculty and staff know what the College expects of them and that they will be held accountable for their actions. Its Institutional Review Board and online course design processes work effectively for the type and volume of research and online course development at the College. Its Intellectual Property and Copyright Policies are not always sufficient to address new and emerging issues and should be updated in the near future.

SUMMARY

The evidence demonstrates that the College of St. Scholastica lives out the Benedictine value of "love of learning" through a range of scholarly and artistic endeavors. Faculty and staff members regularly publish and contribute to professional societies. The general education curriculum has both breadth and depth; assessment data verify that students achieve the learning outcomes, although not all to the same extent. Efforts are underway to strengthen student engagement with the Catholic Intellectual Tradition and diverse cultures. Since the last comprehensive review, a robust Program Review process has been instituted. The College gathers data from employers to align the education provided to students with the needs of the marketplace. It is actively responding to the intellectual property and pedagogical challenges of emerging technologies and is well-positioned to continue to provide high-quality education.

STRENGTHS

- The College of St. Scholastica is a community of scholars who actively seek opportunities to grow in knowledge, to share their scholarly, professional and artistic abilities on campus and with the wider community, and to contribute to the development of a new generation of lifelong learners.
- The Board of Trustees meetings have overt educational elements that improve the members’ understanding of the mission and of critical issues facing higher education.
• Both faculty and staff have strong professional engagement outside the classroom; this plays an important role in the application of knowledge.

• Students participate in a wide variety of co-curricular programs that enhance their classroom learning. These occur on campus, in the city and region, and through a wealth of study abroad opportunities.

• The College has a commitment to responsible and ethical conduct in all of its academic endeavors, and has policies and procedures in place to assure that this happens.

**CHALLENGES**

• Faculty development funding for conference attendance is not sufficient to meet the demand; adjunct faculty and assistant and associate professors are less satisfied with faculty development opportunities than instructors and professors. The creation of the Center for Teaching Excellence in Fall 2012 represents a major investment by the College to improve faculty development opportunities related to teaching.

• The College offers a range of staff development opportunities that are meeting the needs of administrative and salaried staff, but do not appear to be meeting the needs of hourly staff. In 2011-2012, the College began to address this gap by offering computer training so that hourly staff would be able to take advantage of the College’s portal and to use the on-line performance management system effectively.

• Students have lower levels of participation in research, in leadership activities, and in other faculty-contact opportunities outside the classroom than at comparable institutions participating in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). These results led to the inclusion of a collaborative faculty/student research goal within the Academic Plan. Two recent developments will facilitate progress on this goal: first, the Science Center expansion includes small laboratories designed for collaborative student/faculty research and the newly hired dean of the School of Sciences has a great deal of expertise on undergraduate faculty research, both in the sciences and across the disciplines.

• Survey findings show lower student attainment on the College’s recently instituted Heritage outcome which is related to its mission. To respond to the data regarding the Benedictine heritage and Catholic Intellectual Tradition, the School of Arts and Letters has convened a "Catholic Signature Summit" to look at ways to invigorate the Catholic signature within the College’s curriculum. Two summit meetings were held in late 2011-2012; in 2012-2013 summit members expect to review proposals for in-depth faculty study of the Benedictine tradition and for the creation of a "community of scholars" program that would help an interdisciplinary group of faculty infuse principles from the Catholic Intellectual Tradition into one of their courses.

• Students in the School of Business and Technology indicated a relatively low level of preparation for future work. The school has addressed this by gathering information from employers to help the faculty identify those elements that are valued in the workplace and by making changes to the curriculum in response to the employer feedback, triangulated with results from Major Field Tests. The executive feedback combined with the Major Field Test results were then used to enhance the learning outcomes in January 2011. Starting in 2011, faculty members have been enhancing the core courses within the management major so that they better integrate accounting, finance, economics, human resources, information technology, and marketing knowledge across the curriculum.
CRITERION FIVE: ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE.
AS CALLED FOR BY ITS MISSION, THE COLLEGE OF ST. SCHOLASTICA IDENTIFIES ITS CONSTITUENCIES AND SERVES THEM IN WAYS BOTH VALUE.

CONCLUSIONS RELATED TO CORE COMPONENT 5A: THE COLLEGE OF ST. SCHOLASTICA LEARNS FROM THE CONSTITUENCIES IT SERVES AND ANALYZES ITS CAPACITY TO SERVE THEIR NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS.

The College draws on a rich array of sources to gather information about the needs of its many external constituents. The annual environmental scan is the most formal and all encompassing, supplemented by a variety of other sources. The College’s partners in educational programming help the College’s programs retain a strong connection between the skills taught at St. Scholastica and those required on the job. The College recognizes that some services are not readily available at the extended sites or on the Duluth Campus in the summer; it has already taken steps to provide the services students deemed most important. While the College is doing a good job of learning from its existing constituencies, a more formal marketing research program might uncover new constituencies or provide additional insights.

CONCLUSIONS RELATED TO CORE COMPONENT 5B: THE COLLEGE OF ST. SCHOLASTICA HAS THE CAPACITY AND THE COMMITMENT TO ENGAGE WITH ITS IDENTIFIED CONSTITUENCIES AND COMMUNITIES.

The College of St. Scholastica gives evidence of strong existing capacity and plans for increased capacity to meet the needs of its external and internal constituents. As in any organization, it struggles to meet the needs of all constituents equally. At present, focused efforts are in place to increase the capacity to serve transfer and summer term students and adjunct faculty. The plans now in place should improve the College’s ability to respond to the needs of these groups at a more equitable level.

CONCLUSIONS RELATED TO CORE COMPONENT 5C: THE COLLEGE OF ST. SCHOLASTICA DEMONSTRATES ITS RESPONSIVENESS TO THOSE CONSTITUENCIES THAT DEPEND ON IT FOR SERVICE.

The College of St. Scholastica not only learns from its constituencies and has the capacity to engage with them, it has demonstrated its responsiveness to external and internal constituencies through action directed to ameliorate problems or enhance well-being. The College’s impact is felt most strongly in the region around Duluth but it extends around the world. As noted in other chapters in this document, the College continues to work on enhancing its knowledge and response to the needs of its extended studies and online constituents, and to enhance the flow of communication across the College.
CONCLUSIONS RELATED TO CORE COMPONENT 5D: INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL CONSTITUENCIES VALUE THE SERVICES THE COLLEGE OF ST. SCHOLASTICA PROVIDES.

This short section presents the evidence, from a global perspective, that the external and internal constituents of the College of St. Scholastica place a high value on the services they have received, and would choose this College again.

SUMMARY

The evidence presented in this chapter demonstrates that The College of St. Scholastica actively engages with its internal and external constituencies to gather information about their needs. It shapes and designs programs to meet those needs, and gathers data to assess the success of its efforts. The College is recognized as providing a significant contribution to the intellectual and cultural life of its internal constituents, the Duluth metropolitan area and the wider community.

STRENGTHS

- The College is recognized for providing a well-rounded mixture of cultural, intellectual, and recreational services to its surrounding community.
- The academic programs of the College are well positioned to meet the needs of the region and of the students that it serves.
- In providing its academic programs, the College is attentive to the physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being of its students.
- The College provides opportunities for professional and personal growth to its employees, who recognize it as a special place to work.

CHALLENGES

- The expansion of the College into new program areas and geographical venues means that those sites, and the students who attend classes there, do not have the depth of integration with the surrounding communities. This is an expected aspect of programs for non-traditional student populations, but one which nonetheless calls for continuous attention and improvement.
- The adjunct faculty members, both on the campus in Duluth and in the extended and online programs, do not receive extensive support regarding the history and mission of the College or in the use of technology. The advent of the Center for Teaching Excellence is designed to address this problem.
- Faculty, staff and students continue to hope for a college that has greater ethnic and cultural diversity and is more welcoming to diverse populations. While the demographics of the region constrain the College’s ability to make rapid progress, it continues to dedicate significant resources to this effort.
- While the majority of the College’s employees, students and alumni express a high degree of satisfaction with its services, the College must also pay attention to the students who are not satisfied and even more so to those who leave the institution.
- Marketing efforts of a more focused nature might provide the College with specific information to help it better target its programs and services.