The report from the 2002 PEAQ Comprehensive Evaluation noted that the College was a strong and stable institution, in good financial condition with a well-maintained physical plant. They found mission and heritage to be abundantly evident, strong academic programs, and successful initiation of extended site programming. Although no issues were identified that required Commission follow-up, a number concerns were identified for institutional follow-up:

**Communication.** While the governance structure of the institution is traditional with a Board of Trustees, president, six vice-presidents, division directors and department chairs, and a Faculty Assembly organization, the Self-Study Report identified an issue with effective communication within the College community. Part of the communication issue may relate to an inadequate academic organizational structure that does not clearly define roles and responsibilities for Division Chairs and Department Chairs. The institution has made many and repeated attempts to address the communication issue, though it seems to persist. It has plans to address the issues of academic organizational structure.

To address the structural issues that may have contributed to the persistent dissatisfaction with communication, the College reorganized Academic Affairs into schools in 2006, shifting responsibility and authority for many budgetary, faculty, student, and curricular matters from the Vice President for Academic Affairs to the new deans and department chairs who are closer to the issues and have the disciplinary expertise needed to guide some decisions. In addition, the President’s Leadership Group (PLG) was formed, in part to bridge communication gaps between the President and his executive team and the rest of the organization. The PLG consists of about 60 individuals: the President and his executive team, deans and selected academic department chairs and staff managers, and faculty and staff governance leaders. To further break down barriers to communication, the President's Staff periodically invites faculty governance leaders, staff organization leaders, and deans to share their concerns and work toward greater collaboration. Recognizing that some of the dissatisfaction with communication may be related to a faculty governance structure that was designed for a smaller institution, faculty governance leaders have formed a task force to study our faculty governance structures. The initiation of new programs has sometimes been a flash point around communication, and in 2011-2012 the existing procedures for program approval were clarified and additional notification steps were built into the process. For the last three years, the College has participated in a Mission/Values survey that includes several items related to communication; despite the efforts noted above, the proportion of positive responses related to communication has declined during this time period. The College continues to make good faith efforts on several fronts to address the concern. Evidence related to communication, structure, and governance is presented in the chapter related to Criterion One.
Diversity. The College of St. Scholastica professes to value diversity through its general education outcomes and has made efforts to improve student diversity with recruitment of international students and students of color. However, a greater attention to increasing diversity of the student body, faculty, and staff is needed to create an atmosphere that will encourage understanding of diverse cultures and a strengthening of diversity skills. While the institution made public statements about a commitment toward a diverse community, the institution is not diverse from an ethnic standpoint. There were some students who felt that while the institution made statements of support for diversity the institution did not follow through with action. There have been some recent administrative decisions that, in fact, did increase funding for the recruitment and retention of students of color. Given the ethnic homogeneity of the geographic region, great effort will be required on the part of the institution to become truly diverse.

The College has adopted a multi-pronged approach to addressing these concerns about diversity: we have strengthened the cultural diversity requirement within the general education program and greatly expanded study abroad opportunities; the compositional diversity of our student body, faculty and staff has increased in response to more intentional recruitment and retention strategies; and we are beginning the second year of a Multicultural Organizational Development process that looks beyond compositional diversity to take a systems approach to creating an inclusive organizational environment. As we have become more diverse, there have been points of friction and the College has experienced a small number of bias incidents that have required sensitive, transparent responses. The College continues to become a more diverse organization, and it is pursuing additional strategies to become truly inclusive in this diversity. Evidence related to diversity in the curriculum is presented in the chapter related to Criterion Four; evidence related to compositional diversity and inclusiveness is presented in the chapter related to Criterion One.

Library Resources. The team noted concern throughout the faculty about funding for the library. Not only does the operational budget of the library appear to be in need, the staffing level seems low for the expectations that are part of the librarian’s job description at the College (which includes some teaching and student follow up).

The College has increased library staffing in the past decade, from 3.5 to 6.5 full-time equivalent librarians and from 3.5 to 4.0 full-time equivalent paraprofessionals. Student work hours per week have also increased. Of the new librarians, 1.5 FTEs have explicit responsibilities for serving online and extended study programs. We have increased the materials budget and strategically shifted many of our new purchases from physical to digital formats. The College is currently the only Minnesota private college to have implemented Ebsco’s Discovery Service (which we named SOLAR), a service that allows “one-box” simultaneous searching of all library holdings. These improvements in staffing, holdings, and search capabilities have resolved the identified issues and have led to a high level of satisfaction with the library and its services. Evidence related to the library is presented in the chapter related to Criterion Three.

Science Laboratories and Educational Technology. While physical facilities are in excellent repair, science laboratories are in need of updating and the education department needs better access to computer labs and workspace in order to appropriately teach education students to integrate technology into instruction.
A 40,000-square-foot addition to the Science Center was completed in May 2012, creating new chemistry laboratories and classrooms, collaborative faculty-student research space, offices, conference rooms, and an atrium for general student use. The vacated chemistry laboratories will be renovated to meet needs in the other natural and health science disciplines. College-wide improvements in computer laboratories, laptop carts, wireless networking, and classroom technology mean that all students, including teacher education students, have far more access to technology today than they did a decade ago. In addition, interactive Smartboards and laptops are now available to teacher education students on the main campus and extended sites. In 2012 the undergraduate teacher education program purchased ipads and a mobile cart for student use in classes. These changes have resolved the identified issues. Evidence related to science laboratories and educational technology is presented in the chapters related to Criterion Two and Criterion Three.

**Faculty Credentials.** The credentials of the faculty indicate a low level of doctorally prepared faculty at 47%. In the liberal arts disciplines, 77% of faculty hold doctoral degrees. In the professional programs, however, the faculty holding doctoral degrees are only 28.7%. The institution noted this as a concern in its Self-Study and has taken measures to assist faculty in attaining the doctorate. Institutional funds are currently assisting 5 faculty in doctoral programs. Hiring of future faculty will place great importance on doctoral preparation, according to the Self-Study. The proportion of doctorally prepared ranked faculty at the College has increased from 47% in 2002 to 56% today. Within the professional programs (Schools of Business and Technology, Education, Health Science, and Nursing), the proportion has improved from 28.7% to 44.3%. Further increases are anticipated: an additional 10% of the faculty are currently enrolled in doctoral programs and the College continues to emphasize doctoral preparation when searching for new faculty. Thus, the issues identified in this concern are improved and the proportion of doctorally prepared faculty will likely be another 10% higher within five years. Evidence related to faculty credentials is presented in the chapter related to Criterion Three.

**Student Affairs Staff Credentials and Development.** There did not appear to be any staff members in student affairs who had graduated from a graduate program in student affairs work. In addition it appeared that opportunities for staff development at national or regional professional association conferences are not available for student affairs professionals. The College now employs several student affairs staff members who have graduate degrees in student affairs work. Of the 47 professional staff in student affairs, 33 have master’s degrees. The other 14 are in positions that don’t require them, such as food service staff and registered nurses. Of the 33 with master’s degrees, 5 have master’s degrees in student personnel work, 5 in educational counseling, 5 in social work, and 3 in education. The remaining master’s degrees are in a wide variety of disciplines including management, English, geology, recreation, exercise physiology, pastoral ministry, nursing, and Biblical languages.

Student affairs staff members regularly participate in a variety of national and regional conferences including NASPA (Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education), ASACCU (Association for Student Affairs at Catholic Colleges and Universities), NODA (National Orientation Directors Association), AUCCCD
The Student Affairs division has also increased its knowledge and application of student development principles through the use of internal staff development opportunities such as webinars on emerging issues and by benchmarking its activities against the principles of good practice promulgated by the NASPA (Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education) and ASACCU (Association for Student Affairs at Catholic Colleges and Universities).

The issues identified in this concern have been resolved; the student affairs staff are highly qualified and regularly participate in relevant staff development opportunities. Evidence related to student affairs staffing and development is provided in the chapter related to Criterion Three.

**Reinvestment for Academic Quality.** Financial practices do not permit routine reinvestment in quality issues, such as equipment replacement (except for computers) or for predictable and planned upgrades to academic programs. The Vice President for Academic Affairs has little discretion over funds to support academic quality.

The College’s strong financial performance during the last decade has permitted regular capital expenditures for academic equipment, particularly in the sciences, health sciences, and nursing. The CFO and the VPAA have a strong partnership and have discussed the possibility of including a routine lump sum in the capital budget for academic equipment replacement; the deans are in the process of developing a capital equipment inventory and replacement schedule so that we can determine an appropriate lump sum for inclusion in the budget each year. However, because our current financial performance has permitted regular reinvestment on an as-needed basis, the need for a routine reinvestment process does not seem as urgent as it once did. The VPAA and deans have a great deal of discretion in how the $30+ million Academic Affairs budget is spent; as the new academic structure matures, deans are becoming adept at reallocating funds to support quality initiatives in their areas. The annual budget process prioritizes new initiative requests against the College’s mission and strategic plan; in this process Academic Affairs receives an appropriate proportion of the dollars that are allocated to new initiatives. The issues identified in this concern have been resolved by the combination of strong financial performance of the College as a whole, a strong partnership between the CFO and the VPAA, and an academic structure that permits deans to reallocate funds to support quality initiatives within their units. Evidence related to budget and the budget process is provided in the chapter related to Criterion Two.

**Graduate Faculty Responsibilities.** Faculty serves both undergraduate and graduate programs, but no differentiation of load for graduate faculty responsibilities has been made.

Many faculty at the College continue to work in both undergraduate and graduate programs in their disciplines. As was the case at the last review, the faculty load for all ranked faculty, regardless of whether they teach in undergraduate or graduate programs, remains 24 credit hours for a full-time faculty member on a 9-month contract. As was the case in 2002, the promotion and tenure criteria do not differentiate between undergraduate and graduate faculty. However, our data show that faculty with substantial graduate teaching responsibilities have modestly greater records of scholarly activity than the faculty as a whole.
Although our policy has not changed, what has changed is that deans and department chairs have discretion to assign load appropriate to the level and complexity of the tasks within their unit, including tasks related to supervision and evaluation of research projects or research expectations of disciplinary accrediting bodies. This practice is consistent with the American Association of University Professors 2000 interpretive comments to its 1969 Statement on Faculty Workload. These interpretive comments indicate: “That [1969] statement recommended maximum and preferred teaching loads, and offered differing workload recommendations based on whether or not the instruction was offered at the undergraduate or the graduate level. We reaffirm the need to distinguish between maximum and preferred loads, but we believe that differences in workload should reflect the differing research and instructional expectations for faculty members at different kinds of academic institutions. We believe that institutional expectations concerning the amount of research a faculty member is required to conduct are a more useful determinant than whether instruction is offered at the undergraduate or the graduate level.” In keeping with this interpretation, we have addressed the issue with a change in practice within our current policy.

As is the case at many institutions, equitable assignment of faculty loads is difficult, some deans and department chairs appear to be more flexible in their interpretation of the load policy than others, and there are still faculty who are dissatisfied with our load expectations for graduate faculty. Evidence related to the appropriateness of graduate faculty loads is presented in the chapter related to Criterion Four.

**Faculty Scholarship.** Faculty levels of scholarship are limited with 76% of faculty not publishing within the last two years.

The College has a stronger culture of scholarship now than it did a decade ago: the higher proportion of faculty members holding doctoral degrees means that more faculty have the preparation and inclination to be scholars within their disciplines and to contribute to the scholarship of teaching and learning; the school structure has created a stronger sense of community within related disciplines and has led to thoughtful reflection on ways to increase the level and visibility of faculty scholarship within schools; and the academic plan recognizes the need to create a stronger culture of faculty/student collaborative scholarship. Today, the most common scholarly activities are formal presentations (44% of faculty at assistant, associate, and professor ranks), informal presentations (40%), professional development related to scholarship (38%), and publication (38% produced at least one publication; 23% produced at least one refereed publication).

The current level of faculty scholarship is an improvement from 2002, when only 24% of faculty had published within the last two years. Although we don't have good comparison data in other categories from 10 years ago, it appears that the percent of faculty members making presentations, and particularly formal refereed presentations, has increased as well. Although we believe the current level of scholarship and creative work is appropriate and meets the criterion, several schools and departments are working to increase their scholarly productivity in strategic ways that have an impact on their disciplines, that contribute to the education of our students, that build the College’s reputation, and that are consistent with our primary mission of teaching. Thus, the issues identified in this concern are improved and we now have the structures, personnel, and plans in place to address this as we move forward. Evidence related to faculty scholarship is presented in the chapter related to Criterion Four.
General Education. While outcomes for the general education program are well defined and consistent with the mission of the institution, the number of courses that fulfills the program outcomes makes it difficult to assess the achievement of those general education outcomes.

The general education program has improved in a number of ways during the past decade. A new set of College learning outcomes has been adopted—including an outcome specific to our Catholic Benedictine heritage. We are using the Collegiate Learning Assessment to measure our students’ improvement in critical thinking and analytical writing across their college career. A first-year student experience, Dignitas, has been added and a variety of models for senior capstone experiences have been piloted. The requirements for courses within the various “Pathways” (History, Philosophy, Cultural Diversity, Social Science, and so forth) are reviewed on a rotating basis, updated as needed, and courses within the pathway are revalidated or deleted. The general education program director is assigned a half-time load for this role and recent general education directors have served several years in the role, providing the continuity of leadership needed to effect change. The general education program will participate in the College’s Program Review process in fall 2012, and we look forward to the perspective that our internal self-review and the external program review consultant will bring. Although the number of courses that meet a given Pathway have been trimmed in some areas (notably Theology and Religious Studies and Philosophy), the number of courses remains large in several of the Pathways. While this specific concern related to general education has not been resolved, we have improved the program in many other ways and demonstrated our commitment to continued improvement in the design, implementation, and assessment of our general education program. Evidence related to general education is provided in the chapters related to Criterion Three and Criterion Four.

Outcomes Assessment. The faculty must continue to develop the plan for the assessment of general education and program outcomes. It will be important for the college community, including students and trustees, to become more familiar with the assessment process.

The College has made major changes to its outcomes assessment process during the past decade. First, we have added personnel to support the process—a full-time Director of Institutional Research and Assessment was added in 2005 and a second institutional research staff member was added in 2010. Second, we have invested in tools to support the outcomes assessment process—robust online survey software has been purchased, a College-wide assessment/continuous improvement aggregation software product (WEAVEonline) has been purchased and implementation is underway, and we are using our student information system’s (BANNER) Enterprise Data Warehouse to capture enterprise-level information related to enrollment and retention. Third, we have shifted responsibility for academic assessment from a faculty committee with limited authority to the school deans who have both the responsibility and authority to ensure that improvement in outcomes assessment occurs within their unit. Fourth, we have implemented a Program Review process that requires outcomes assessment and uses both peers and external evaluators to review the quality of our programs. These changes mean that we now have a great deal of data that can help us assess quality and make improvements; however, we sometimes struggle to make meaningful use of all the information that is collected. Although the level of assessment and the extent to which assessment results are used for program improvement still varies across units, we have both the infrastructure and the inclination to continue to build on the many improvements of the last decade. Evidence about outcomes assessment is provided in the chapter related to Criterion Three.
**Strategic Planning.** Strategic planning, discontinued as such in 1999 while the campus engaged in the self study process, needs renewed focus and energy based on self study findings. A commitment to the process on the part of all faculty, staff and students will be central to its success. While the planning processes are still being developed, careful attention needs to be given to its tie to assessment results and budget decisions.

The College has a concise strategic plan that is updated regularly and guides budgetary decisions. A Strategic Planning Cycle specifies quarterly activities of the Board of Trustees and the President’s Staff and ensures the plan is a dynamic entity that shapes actions and investments. Annual objectives within the plan are developed each year in an inclusive process with members of the President’s Leadership Group. The achievement of the plan is measured by a set of Key Performance Indicators that is updated regularly. An Academic Affairs Plan was developed recently with extensive faculty, staff, and student input; this plan is mapped to the College plan and Key Performance Indicators. The concern about discontinuation of the planning process has been resolved. Evidence about the planning process is provided in the chapter related to Criterion Two.

**Inaction Related to Complaints.** Some students expressed their perception that the institution had a tendency to sweep complaints about faculty under the carpet. The same individuals felt that there was a culture on the campus that kept negative things suppressed.

The College has done a number of things to change the way that we respond to complaints about faculty or to negative happenings related to campus. First, the school structure has created units in which the dean has a manageable span of control (in contrast to the previous structure in which all complaints would move from the department to the VPAA, who had an unmanageable number of direct reports). The complaint logs of the deans show that they respond with integrity to the various complaints that come to their level; the same is true of complaints that come to the level of the VPAA. Second, the College now has a Code of Conduct that makes our behavioral expectations of faculty and staff clearer than previously. As part of implementing the Code of Conduct, the College subscribes to a third-party ethics hotline that provides a mechanism for reporting concerns outside of the organizational hierarchy. Third, the President and his executive team have made a commitment to a high level of transparency such that various negative occurrences (for example, a racist incident on campus or student vandalism of a neighborhood park) are acknowledged publicly and acted on in ways that make our values of community, hospitality, and respect visible to all. We believe this concern has been resolved. Evidence related to the College’s integrity is presented in the chapter related to Criterion One.

We believe this self-study demonstrates that the College has made a good faith effort to address each issue, has resolved many of them, has made substantial progress toward resolving the rest, and can be trusted to continue to build on this progress as we move forward.