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St. Norbert College

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# INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

## Assessment News

March 26, 2012

Volume 11, Issue 3

### Final Accreditation Report Received from the Higher Learning Commission

On February 20, 2012, the Higher Learning Commission granted St. Norbert College continued accreditation through 2021-2022. The draft report of the four consultant-evaluators, who visited St. Norbert College on October 31-November 2, was approved and the College was moved into the new “Open Pathways” accreditation process. The complete final *Report of a Comprehensive Evaluation Visit* has been posted on the OIE and Accreditation web sites. A summary of that report appears on the next several pages.

The report written by the on-site visit team includes three sections. The “Federal Compliance” section addresses institutional compliance with a variety of federal rules governing things like record keeping, credit assignment, federal aid distribution, student default rates, and research misconduct. St. Norbert College was found to be in full compliance with all items in this section. The “Advancement” section offers an opportunity for consultant/evaluators to share their expertise or make personal suggestions. In this report, the “Advancement” section essentially repeats three recommendations discussed in the “Assurance” section.

The most important and most detailed section of the report is the “Assurance” section. It is in this section that the team determines (based on the self-study and observation/interviews) whether  
(Continued on Page 2)

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### Satisfaction and Retention: Findings from the 2011 Current Student Survey

By: Dr. John A. Williamsen  
OIE Data Analyst

The 2011 *Current Student Survey* is recent history, with the results from 957 respondents now available for analysis. This report highlights findings from just a small portion of the numerous questions on the *Survey*, namely, the relationship between satisfaction with various dimensions of the St. Norbert experience and the decision to graduate (or not) from the College.

Thirty students—all either freshmen or sophomores—who completed the *Survey* indicated they did not plan to graduate from St. Norbert. The clear majority (73%) of this group of 1st and 2nd year students was comprised of freshmen, an unsurprising finding, given the well-established fact that the largest losses through attrition come from first year cohorts. Gender ratio, by the way, was similar for the group of first and second year students planning to leave and those intending to graduate (76% women for “leavers” vs. 71% for “grads”). These gender ratios reflect the repeatable phenomenon that more women respond to voluntary surveys than male students. For the entire sample of respondents to the 2011 *Current Student Survey*, 67% were women, 33% men—an exaggeration of the actual gender ratio favoring women in the entire cohort of 2011 enrolled students.  
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#### Conference Opportunities

**HLC Annual Conference: Quality in Higher Education, March 30—April 3, 2012, Hyatt Regency, Chicago, IL.**

**AAC&U Institute on General Education and Assessment, June 2-6, 2012, The Hotel at Turf Valley, Ellicott City, MD.**

**HERI Summer 2012 Training Institutes: Retention & Persistence Institute, July 10-11, 2012, Hotel Polomar, Los Angeles, CA.**



**Assessment Resource**

Office of Institutional Effectiveness  
Main Hall, Room 100  
(Phone: 403-3855) FAX: 403-4096  
Web site: [www.snc.edu/oie/](http://www.snc.edu/oie/)

## Final Accreditation Report Received from the Higher Learning Commission

(Continued from Page 1)

St. Norbert College is in compliance with the 130 criterion, core components, and examples of evidence in HLC accreditation standards. The “Assurance” section is organized according to the five major criteria, with the team’s conclusions placed into four categories. The categories suggest varying degrees of future follow-up.

1. Evidence the core components are met
2. Evidence that one or more core components need organizational attention
3. Evidence that one or more core components require Commission follow-up
4. Evidence that one or more of the core components are not met and require Commission sanction.

An optimal report would have most of the team’s observations in category 1 and nothing in category 3 or 4. Happily, this describes our report. The analysis of our institutional self-study and on-site visit produced no Commission follow-ups and no sanctions. In addition to citing considerable positive evidence of compliance with the five criteria, the report highlights a few areas (category 2) where the Commission recommends institutional follow-up.

Each of us will come to our own conclusions about how effectively the HLC team captured the current state of St. Norbert College. Summarizing a report that covers 130 different standards is difficult, but a few things stand out. First, we have a lot to be proud of. Inevitably a visit team compares the host institution with their own college, as well as other colleges they’ve attended, visited, or with which they’ve collaborated. As you will see, the evidence and description offered under category 1 throughout indicates that we compare favorably. Secondly, in the current report, HLC praises the College for processes and achievements in areas (e.g. fiscal stability, fund-raising, budgeting, assessment, strategic planning) that only a short time ago received substantial criticism from the Commission and resulted in a Focused Visit. The College has made important strides in all these areas and needs to maintain its momentum as we move into HLC’s new “Open Pathways” accreditation process. Assessment of student learning, strategic planning, mission focus, and forging collaborative relationships all remain central foci in the re-articulated standards under “Pathways”. Third, the team found an extraordinary level of consistency between the self-study document and their interviews with representatives of every internal and external constituency. They commented on this repeatedly in their oral exit report and in the evidence under category 1 throughout. This consistency manifested itself both in the Community’s understanding of and attempts to live the College mission as well as its understanding of our shared challenges. None of the issues identified by the HLC team were surprises. Our attempts to understand and live our mission, own our challenges, and work on them collectively were clearly evident to the visiting team. That is *communio*.

### An Abridged Version of the HLC Team’s Findings

**CRITERION ONE: MISSION AND INTEGRITY.** The organization operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students.

#### 1. Evidence that Core Components are met

- The mission of St. Norbert is well defined and articulates the intentional focus of the College. From the evidence provided in the Self-Study, supporting documents and interviews, it is clear that these entities support and affirm the mission. (Criterion 1a)
- Communication of the mission is done with openness and the intent to truly define the institution. (Criterion 1a)
- St. Norbert has a clear and well defined understanding of its internal and external constituencies. (Criterion 1b)
- Building an increasingly diverse educational community is a priority for the institution. The focus of St. Norbert is to provide a Catholic, Norbertine, liberal education for all persons. Within the vision statement as well as the strategic plan, diversity is a key aspect. (Criterion 1b)
- Appreciation of diversity is seen as learning outcome that all students should achieve. The curriculum reflects a focus on preparation of student for life in a diverse multicultural world and to value the diversity. (Criterion 1b)
- The College has engaged in regular review and revision of its mission documents. (Criterion 1c)

(Continued on Page 3)

**CRITERION ONE: MISSION AND INTEGRITY.****1. Evidence that Core Components are met** (Continued from Page 2)

- The concept of “*communio*” is an integral aspect of the mission that is not only well known throughout the community, but students, faculty, and staff articulate the concept—clearly showing their knowledge of the mission. (Criterion 1c)
- The academic and administrative subgroups within the College have clear missions that carry forward the over-arching mission of the institution. (Criterion 1c)
- The mission documents convey the vision to be an institution characterized by its pursuit of academic excellence. This commitment to excellence within the Catholic intellectual and liberal arts traditions permeate the focus of the institution. (Criterion 1d)
- The mission documents as well as the St. Norbert College *Faculty Handbook* clearly define the institution’s goal to provide academic and artistic freedom as well as an environment for open inquiry that is characteristic of the liberal arts tradition. (Criterion 1d)
- The mission is a key component of decision making. (Criterion 1d)
- There are clear and well-articulated by-laws and governance structures that have provided for strong leadership of the institution. There is true sense of shared governance that is balanced by the understanding of who is ultimately responsible for making specific decisions. (Criterion 1d)
- The institution has appropriate policies and procedures as well as leadership goals that have guided the selection of administrative leadership and faculty. Members of the Board of Trustees, administration, and faculty, have been hired not only for their skill but also for their fit within the mission and community of St. Norbert. (Criterion 1d)
- Responsibility for the curriculum is an issue of faculty governance. Guidelines for curriculum decision making and the role of faculty are stated in the *Faculty Handbook*. (Criterion 1d)
- St. Norbert seeks to uphold and protect its integrity by offering a form of education shaped by its mission and relationship to the Abbot’s Council of St. Norbert Abbey. It provides a well-defined learning experience for its students, a consistent governance system, and operates in accordance with local, state and federal regulations. (Criterion 1e)
- The curriculum and extra-curricular activities are structured as means to accomplish the mission. The mission and expectations of students are communicated in the recruiting publications, the *Undergraduate Catalog*, and the student handbook. (Criterion 1e)
- The governance system and related policies are stated in the *Articles of Incorporation*, *Faculty Handbook*, *Staff Handbook*, and *The Citizen* (the student handbook). Included in these publications are honor codes, hiring guidelines, as well as due processes for students, faculty, and staff. Annual procedures such as the financial audit have been completed to assure honesty and integrity in its financial transactions. In addition, the institution has met incorporation reporting requirements of local, state, and federal laws. Clear procedures are in place to ensure effective communication to all constituencies. The Office of Communication is guided by well-stated policies. Effective procedures are in place to ensure timely response to complaints at all levels of the institution. The procedures are communicated in such documents as the student handbook, *The Citizen*. (Criterion 1e)

**2. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention**

- Building an increasingly diverse educational community is a priority for the institution; however, it is clear that actual diversification is a significant challenge for the institution within the student body, faculty and staff. The institution has taken impressive steps to assure that diversity and the dignity of all persons are valued. Enrollment management efforts reflect intentional effort to recruit and retain a diverse student population. Comprehensive evaluations of the campus community and its related policies in regard to diversity have been completed and serve as the basis for positions such as the Senior Advisor to the President for Diversity and Inclusion, an Ombudsperson, and the Director of Multicultural Student Services. Furthermore, the Committee on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (CEDI) was formed in 2007 to support the diversity efforts on campus. Even though these efforts are lauded, they have yet to significantly impact diversification. These efforts and the administrative support of diversity must continue and result in the development of diverse characteristics within St. Norbert. (Criterion 1b)

(Continued on Page 4)

**An Abridged Version of the HLC Team's Findings** (Continued from Page 3)

**CRITERION TWO: PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE.** The organization'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.

**1. Evidence that Core Components are met**

- The College has strengthened its financial position by adding \$26 million to its endowment pool since 2001, locking in long-term debt at favorable interest rates, increasing lines of credit, developing short-term investment policies, and creating a conservative annual operational budget. These moves will further insulate the College from future economic shocks. (Criteria 2a)
- St. Norbert College has significantly strengthened its physical resources since the last commission visit. In the last three years alone, the College has added five new buildings and one major remodel, including the Mulva library, the Gries Residence Hall, the Wehr Hall remodel, the Schneider Athletic complex, the Ariens Family welcome Center, and the Michels Commons. Current and past budgets show the amount allocated to deferred maintenance on existing facilities has increased \$50,000 per year and is only \$50,000 short of the stated goal of \$600,000. (Criteria 2a)
- Appropriate teaching and research technology is in place to facilitate excellence in the outcomes of both the academic process and staff support services. A consistent pattern of technology investment provides convincing evidence that the College provides its faculty, staff, and students with both the infrastructure and support to complete its mission. (Criteria 2b)
- Academically, College records indicate that more than 90% of the full-time faculty hold the terminal degree in their field. To support these faculty members, more than 50% of the College's new \$90 million development campaign will directly impact academic programming and student experience on campus. (Criteria 2b)
- The College's new President and Vice President for Development have helped the College's endowment pool climb from \$47 million (2001) to ~\$73 million (2011) as evidenced by financial statements and interviews. (Criteria 2b)
- As a tuition-driven institution, the College wisely uses a conservative annual operational budgeting policy which allots resources based on an expected enrollment figure which is approximately 5% less than actual. Even with this conservative policy in place, more than 98% of internal operational units surveyed replied that they were able to provide quality education and services with the resources allotted. (Criteria 2b)
- The College possesses an assessment system at multiple levels to gather evidence of university effectiveness and uses that information to develop action plans for future strategic priorities. Clear and convincing evidence was found in the President's open office hours, the establishment of a Senior Advisor to the President for Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion, a systematic pattern of academic assessment flowing from established academic assessment plans, the permanent establishment of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, the Student affairs annual report, the Mission & Heritage annual program review, the Business Affairs annual audit, annual personnel review of faculty and staff members, and the Enrollment Management annual plan. After reviewing the above evidence, as well as interviewing multiple members of the faculty, staff, and administration, it is clear that the College fully embraces the principle of continuous quality improvement and that assessment is firmly embedded in the institutional culture. (Criteria 2c)
- As evidenced by interviews with board members, faculty, staff, and administration, a review of planning documents, a review of budgeting documents, and a review of the minutes of the President's cabinet, the Stewardship Committee, the Master Planning committee, and the Enrollment Management Committee, it is clear that St. Norbert utilizes an inclusive strategic planning process that is closely aligned with the university's mission statement. (Criteria 2d)

**2. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention**

- Upon speaking with the faculty, a significant problem was discovered regarding the information technology function of the College. Faculty members were nearly unanimous in their comments that network access and application software did not work in the classroom or was problematic. Many anecdotal comments revealed that some faculty members have been forced to cancel classes when technology did not operate as expected and IT support could not solve the problem. A conversation with the Director of Information Technology revealed that the source of the problem stems from the Summer 2011 implementation of the CITRIX network system. The scope of the problem was not revealed (Continued on Page 5)

**CRITERION TWO: PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE.****2. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention**

(Continued from page 4)

- until the heavy use of the traditional semester began in September 2011. While the software vendor remains engaged with the College, a permanent solution remains elusive. A conversation with the President of the College revealed that the College administration is acutely aware of the problem and that additional resources, both financial and human, are being allocated to solve the problem. (Criteria 2b)

**CRITERION THREE: STUDENT LEARNING AND EFFECTIVE TEACHING.** The organization provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.

**1. Evidence that Core Components are met**

- Assessment is owned by many constituencies—Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Mission and Heritage-- with coordination and communication taken on by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE). Each area has articulated expected learning outcomes, has developed curriculum and programming to support the outcomes, has used and continues to use strategies to determine actual outcomes, and makes improvements based on the findings. This information is collected and compiled by OIE for easy web access. (Criterion 3a)
- Saint Norbert College values effective teaching. According to the Self-Study and verified by the *Faculty Handbook* and discussions with faculty, the College's promotion and tenure processes are clearly written with the requirement to provide evidence of sustained teaching effectiveness, scholarship, competent advising, and service to the College and the larger community. (Criterion 3b)
- Saint Norbert College provides support for its new faculty through the New Faculty Orientation and a mentoring system. (Criterion 3b)
- Saint Norbert College creates effective learning environments. The various classrooms provide an array of learning environments ranging from large lecture auditoriums in the science buildings to small seminar rooms in the humanities building. Most of the spaces are equipped with computers and projectors. (Criterion 3c)
- The College's resources are used to support teaching and learning. Academic Support Services provides ADA accommodations and tutoring for students; the library supports learning outside of the classroom and assistance with information literacy both in the library and in the classroom, and the Director of Academic Advisement works to make sure students register for the appropriate courses to lead to graduation. The College provides space, software, and hardware to support technology that supports student learning, such as Moodle, smart boards, audio-visual systems, and computer labs. (Criterion 3d)
- With the building of the new library, the former library was converted to a one-stop area for students to register, pay their bills, be advised, and purchase their books, providing evidence of a creative learning environment outside of the classroom. The addition of the library, where a portion is opened 24 hours a day, has also allowed the College to provide an array of study and reflection spaces on campus, including the library, the former library, the academic buildings, and the residence halls. (Criterion 3c)

**2. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention**

- A random sample of 16 faculty personnel files in the Dean's office showed half without official transcripts and 8 of 13 (fall 2011 hires excluded) without the evaluations stipulated by College policy (Self-Study p. 82).
  - St. Norbert's Writing Center (WC) and Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) share the same director, and they have had four directors in the last decade. The Writing Center is in a strong position, with 18 writing center tutors in place, and with an approved academic course offered each year to help the WC tutors understand and do their job well. However, the WAC program has suffered from the high administrative turnover, with most of the writing intensive courses now taught offered only from the English department and the humanities. The current Director of WAC is working to include more participation across campus. He has created a WAC Advising Committee, made up of faculty from various departments. He has "office hours" in different academic buildings each week, making it easy for faculty to stop by to ask questions or to discuss writing. He has offered an array of workshops for faculty, some better attended than others. These tactics are making an impact, but it will be important for St. Norbert to continue to support this program, particularly because it supports both the current and proposed general education programs. (Criterion 3d)
- (Continued on Page 6)

**CRITERION FOUR: ACQUISITION, DISCOVERY, AND APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE.** The organization promotes a life of learning for its faculty, administration, staff, and students by fostering and supporting inquiry, creativity, practice, and social responsibility in ways consistent with its mission. (Continued from Page 5)

### 1. Evidence that Core Components are met

- Through a number of important documents (the treatise “Academic and Artistic Freedom,” the *Faculty Handbook*, *The Citizen*, and the College’s Mission Statement), Saint Norbert College proclaims its deep support of academic freedom, thus enabling its constituents to pursue freely an unobstructed and clear path toward lifelong learning. (Criterion 4a)
  - Noteworthy at Saint Norbert College is its Office of Faculty Development (OFD) that supports an exceptionally rich Faculty Development Program, which includes a sabbatical program, teaching and learning workshops, a year-long new faculty orientation series, six “Spotlight on Scholarship” presentations annually, and travel and research grants for faculty. Including sabbaticals, some \$125,000 (Self-Study, pp. 80-81) supports the pursuit and acquisition of knowledge by faculty, thus helping to fulfill the mission goals of seeking truth and cultivating lifelong learning. (Criterion 4a)
  - It is evident from annual reports of the OFD that ongoing discussions and workshops explore the meaning and extent of scholarship at Saint Norbert (including a recent presidential address titled “How One College President Defines Research, Scholarship and Creative Work”) and keep scholarship in the forefront at Saint Norbert. Such inclusive discussions encourage a diverse array of scholarly activities. (Criterion 4a)
  - A variety of programs (a Student-Faculty Development Endowment Fund, academic travel awards, student teams attending the National Council of Undergraduate Research conferences, summer research institutes, the Office of Admissions research fellows, and McNair Fellows) with an annual budget of \$117,572 (amount supplied by Faculty Development Chair), support and encourage student research and make it possible for students from all walks of life to engage in the pursuit of new knowledge. Further evidence that Saint Norbert supports and encourages student-faculty research collaborations is shown by the Center for Undergraduate Research, now in its third year, which coordinates and highlights these programs for students. (Criterion 4a)
  - Programs from the 2006-2011 afternoons “Celebrating Student and Faculty/Staff collaborations” give clear evidence that student/faculty research collaborations at Saint Norbert are productive and highly valued. Further, faculty curriculum vitae and program reviews from the academic departments show a wealth of faculty scholarly activities. (Criterion 4a)
  - Ongoing discussions concerning the General Education curriculum are evidence that a crucial aim at Saint Norbert is to ensure that students develop the breadth of knowledge and skills they need to live a fulfilling, useful life in a rapidly changing world. (Criterion 4b)
  - Saint Norbert seeks ways to help to prepare students to live in a global society. The College’s well designed study abroad program engages and supports approximately 32% of the student body, a laudable achievement in introducing students to diverse cultures. Active recruitment of international students by the Office of Admission, an Office of International Programming, and the Human Relations Program in Teacher Education are additional ways that Saint Norbert students are able to develop appropriate skills for interacting with a world of diverse cultures. (Criterion 4b)
  - The College’s TRIPS (Turning Responsibility into Powerful Service) program, organized and overseen jointly by the Leadership, Service and Engagement (LSE) and Campus Ministry has been very successful in introducing an average of 136 students/year to a myriad of service opportunities that develop and enhance important life skills. (Criterion 4b)
  - Saint Norbert is to be applauded for its conscientious and regular schedule of program reviews. Further, the in-depth and thoughtful reviews are critiqued thoroughly by the Curriculum and Educational Policy Committee (CEPC) in a timely manner that enables improvement in curriculum, instruction, advising and other program features. Evidence in the reviews illustrates numerous ways in which teaching and learning have been enhanced by the assessment process. (Criterion 4c)
  - Evidenced by conversations with the CEPC, Saint Norbert recognizes that the first cycle of Program Reviews were somewhat backward-looking and necessarily emphasized data collection. The second cycle exhibits more forward-looking reports. A very recent revision and streamlining of the Program Review process (“Program Review Reimagined,” CEPC 04-13-11) highlight process and vision, which practices should make program reviews less burdensome while ensuring that the reviews continue to enhance teaching and learning. (Criterion 4c)
  - Program reviews, the *2010 Mission Effectiveness Report*, embedded course assessment in General Education courses, and other documents, such as *An Analysis of Student Writing at St. Norbert College* (2006) and the *Three Ships Service Program Evaluation of 2009*, all give ample evidence that the College assesses student learning and mission outcomes in order to ascertain and improve the usefulness of its curriculum and co-curricular programs to students. (Criterion 4c)
- (Continued on Page 7)

**CRITERION FOUR: ACQUISITION, DISCOVERY, AND APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE.****1. Evidence that Core Components are met** (Continued from Page 6)

- Numerous documents (e. g., *Faculty Handbook*, *The Citizen*, *Interim Research Misconduct Policy*, *AAUP Statement on Professional Ethics*, *the Honor Code*, *Academic Dishonesty Policy*, *Policy on Intellectual Property*) and entities (e. g., Institutional Review Board, Academic Court, the Writing Center, an information literacy and instruction librarian, and Technology Support Services) attest to the fact that Saint Norbert expects its constituents to behave ethically and responsibly. (Criterion 4d)
- The *2010-2011 CCSL Annual Report* describes two recent national awards (one from the Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement and the second, being placed on the President's Higher Education Service Honor Roll with Distinction) that give strong evidence that Saint Norbert College is successfully achieving and living a number of mission goals that "link the responsible use of knowledge to practicing social responsibility" (Self-Study, p. 146). (Criterion 4d)
- The aging science hall, even if dated in appearance and lacking in modern HVAC, contains a wealth of quality instruments and creatively designed interim spaces that currently enable solid programs in biology, physics, chemistry, and geology. Plans (in their second iteration) for a new wing and a renovation of the old building will remedy the old air-handling system and create new spaces that will enhance collaborations between students and faculty. The renovation plans include an atrium from which the community can view St. Joseph's Church, a highly imaginative way to connect the sciences with the mission of the institution. (Criterion 4d)

**2. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention**

- Although a range of staff development opportunities are offered at Saint Norbert and expenditures on faculty and staff development appear very similar (Self-study, pp. 112-114), a recent climate survey (Self-Study, p. 39) and conversations with staff indicated that some hourly and salaried staff perceived inequities between faculty and staff development programs as well as between staff development programs in different areas of the College. Learning opportunities are particularly important when they involve campus safety issues. Whether the problem is actual inequality or a problem only of perception, resolution is needed for the sake of maintaining good employee morale and transparency. (Criterion 4a)

**CRITERION FIVE: ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE.** As called for by its mission, the organization identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways both value.

**1. Evidence that Core Components are met**

- The College supports the intellectual needs of its faculty and staff and dependents. As mentioned in the Self-Study and through conversations with the Director of Human Resources, St. Norbert provides staff development opportunities through its Human Resources office, sabbatical opportunities for faculty, and tuition exchange grants for dependents of eligible employees. In addition, St. Norbert celebrates excellence in teaching, service, and scholarships through the awards it gives each year. (Criterion 5a)
- The position of Senior Advisor for Equity and Diversity was created to make sure a focus on diversity issues exist. A faculty member with one course release (out of three) each semester serves in this role where she chairs the Committee on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (CEDI). In the last 18 months since starting in this role, she has reviewed the prior recommendations made by CEDI to document the results of the recommendations and to push forward the appropriate recommendations that had not yet been acted upon. This year she has been working through sub-committees to find ways to improve the College campus climate as it relates to diversity issues. As the Director and CEDI work toward being proactive in this area so the College can be welcoming and supportive of everyone, the director also works to deal with any issues that arise related to diversity and climate. (Criterion 5a)
- St. Norbert College expects community service from both its students and faculty. The Center for Community Service and Learning (CCSI) partners with Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Mission and Heritage to coordinate the many initiatives. According to the Co-Curricular Service Project Summary, in the 2008-2009 academic year, St. Norbert students provided over 18,000 hours of service to the community, helping over 60 Brown County organizations. (Criterion 5b)
- St. Norbert has created academic and other partnerships to expand the options the students have academically. One of these partnerships, with Bellin College of Nursing, provides the ability for students to reside at Saint Norbert College for four years while completing degree requirements for both institutions. Marquette University and Saint Norbert College (Continued on Page 8)



**CRITERION FIVE: ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE.****1. Evidence that Core Components are met** (Continued from Page 7)

- Have forged a partnership in the area of economics so St. Norbert students can complete all requirements in five years for a bachelor's degree from St. Norbert with a major in economics and a master's degree in applied economics from Marquette University. Students interested in pursuing engineering degrees may attend St. Norbert for two years, followed by course work between their sophomore and junior year, followed by course work at Michigan Technology University. St. Norbert is continuing to work on articulation agreements to expand the options of its students, as noted in the Enrollment Management Report. (Criterion 5c)
- Saint Norbert College takes great care in discovering the impact its opportunities have had on its constituents. It solicits satisfaction information from first-year students after ten weeks on campus, from its seniors through its College Senior Survey, from its faculty through the HERI faculty survey, and from its graduates through its nine-month-out survey and alumni survey. These materials are reviewed by appropriate constituencies on campus and analyzed and made available through OIE. (Criterion 5d)
- Saint Norbert College provides many opportunities for the community members' cultural enrichment. These include, but are not limited to, lecture series, theatrical and musical performances, art exhibitions, some conferences, Black History month events, and academic research materials for Norbertine studies. To help community members feel comfortable in being a part of the school, each year the College opens all its doors to the public for St. Norbert Day, a one-day event where students, faculty, staff, family members, and community members are invited to participate. (Criterion 5b)
- According to community members and St. Norbert administrators, the College administration works well with the De Pere community to be mutually supportive. Concerns raised by De Pere residents regarding the College are shared with St. Norbert officials, who, according to the De Pere mayor, are quite responsive in resolving any issues. (Criterion 5c)
- As discovered through conversations with them at the Community open meeting, Green Bay school system officials value the services provided by the St. Norbert students in working with K-12 students through tutoring, being pen pals, student teaching, immersing in diverse school districts, and choosing to accept teaching jobs in the Green Bay area after graduation. (Criterion 5d)

**2. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention.**

- None

**From the Office of Grant Development. . .**

Grant opportunities are available in every field in a range of dollar amounts. Many funders are particularly interested in funding early career faculty or faculty at Primarily Undergraduate Institutions (PUIs). A funder at a government agency recently shared with me that while the funding rates for two major programs are 1 in 12 and 1 in 14 they fund approximately 30-40% of the proposals they receive from early career faculty. There are a plethora of funding opportunities available in the natural and social sciences for research with students. Some opportunities currently available are:

**Wisconsin Humanities Council** offers grants up to \$10,000 to support public humanities programs: [wisconsinhumanities.org/grants\\_supguide.html](http://wisconsinhumanities.org/grants_supguide.html)

**Greater Green Bay Community Foundation** offers grants up to \$15,000 for programs that improve the quality of life in the community: [ggbcf.org/ggbcf/Grants/tabid/72/Default.aspx](http://ggbcf.org/ggbcf/Grants/tabid/72/Default.aspx)

**National Science Foundation Transforming Undergraduate Education in STEM fields** offers grants up to \$200,000 for innovative multi-year programs that transform the quality of STEM education for undergrads: <http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2010/nsf10544/nsf10544.pdf>

**National Endowment for the Humanities** offers fellowships to support 6-12 months of full-time work in humanities fields: <http://www.neh.gov/grants/guidelines/fellowships.html>

The Director of Grant Development would be happy to discuss these opportunities further with interested faculty and staff. She can be reached at x3019. She can also help develop proposal ideas, identify potential funding sources, help plan proposals, assist with proposal writing and editing, develop grant budgets and help with proposal submission.

## Satisfaction and Retention: Findings from the 2011 Current Student Survey

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Retention studies conducted at St. Norbert and elsewhere indicate that the decision to leave before graduation is multi-determined; the “mix” of factors affecting retention includes student variables (e.g., academic ability, financial resources, motivation, career goals) as well as characteristics of the institution itself (e.g., availability of support services, academic rigor, opportunities for social activities, size of the student body). This report, however, focuses on only one piece of the retention puzzle, namely, *level of satisfaction* with a variety of institutional characteristics.

Satisfaction with fifteen dimensions of the St. Norbert experience is assessed on the Current Student Survey. Response options range from “Very Dissatisfied” through “Dissatisfied” and on to “Satisfied” and “Very Satisfied” (the very small minority of “Not Sure” responses are eliminated in this analysis).

Previous OIE research has found that the shades of difference between “Very” responses and those lacking that intensifier are both useful and meaningful—students selecting “Very Satisfied” or its obverse are correspondingly more likely to stay or leave than peers who are just “satisfied” or “dissatisfied.” The tables that follow, therefore, focus on the percentages of “leavers” or “stayers” who are either “Very Dissatisfied” or “Very Satisfied.”

A standard, but necessary, caveat: the fact that there is an association between level of satisfaction with the College and the reported decision to graduate from SNC is not proof that there is a causal relationship between the two. Although it is tempting to assume that students are first enchanted (or not) with SNC and then decide to stay or leave, the mere fact of association is insufficient to establish causality. It is possible, for example, that the bond between a student and College is weakened by one or more other factors—personal and/or institutional—with the result that a student makes a decision not to remain. Subsequently, he or she views experiences at SNC more critically, leading to lower levels of reported satisfaction. In this scenario, the decision to leave triggers reduced satisfaction, just the reverse of the assumption that reduced satisfaction encourages departures before graduation.

We don’t need to settle the “causality question” to find something useful in the satisfaction results tabled below, however. These results show that only four of the 14 satisfaction items were very clearly associated with the intention to leave. Since the *Current Student Survey* is administered after (new) students have been here only for a little over two months, these four satisfaction items contribute to our understanding of what institutional characteristics stand out in the minds and hearts of first year students in particular.

### Satisfaction with the “Sense of Community on Campus”

Respondent Group:	Very Dissatisfied	Very Satisfied
<b>Intend to Graduate</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>48%</b>
<b>Do not Intend to Graduate</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>18%</b>

### Satisfaction with “My Interactions with other Students”

Respondent Group:	Very Dissatisfied	Very Satisfied
<b>Intend to Graduate</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>52%</b>
<b>Do not Intend to Graduate</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>28%</b>

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#### Satisfaction with “*Opportunities to learn things that interest me*”

Respondent Group:	Very Dissatisfied	Very Satisfied
Intend to Graduate	<1%	51%
Do not Intend to Graduate	7%	25%

#### Satisfaction with “*Experiences that challenge me to grow and improve*”

Respondent Group:	Very Dissatisfied	Very Satisfied
Intend to Graduate	<1%	54%
Do not Intend to Graduate	3%	27%

The differences shown in the tables above have high statistical reliability. Thus, it is unlikely they represent random fluctuations in responses between those who intend to graduate and those without such plans. The differences are more noticeable when comparing “Very Satisfied” response rates, where the “gap” hovers around 25 percentage points. “Very Dissatisfied” differences are much smaller.

Although not shown in the tables above, “Satisfied” and “Very Satisfied” combined responses are around 95% for those intending to graduate and around 75% for those not intending to graduate. These findings support the view that “satisfaction is not everything” when it comes to retention. A majority of students planning to leave, for example, report they are (at least) satisfied, but still intend to leave. And a small minority of those intending to stay are dissatisfied, a few very much so.

One of the more satisfying conclusions from the tables is the continued support they provide for the OIE retention research finding mentioned above. Being “Very Satisfied” with selected aspects of the College is a helpful predictor of intent to stay; just being “satisfied” doesn’t provide much differentiation between leavers and stayers. Wouldn’t it be valuable to know what contributes to being very satisfied?

Perhaps the most important conclusion from these tables has to do with the nature of the satisfactions reported in them. The first two tables reflect the importance of peer relationships, the second two emphasize the importance of the match between an individual student’s particular desires for intellectual and personal development and the opportunities for new learning provided by the College. If the need to belong and the need to grow yield little satisfaction early in a student’s career at St. Norbert, she or he is more likely to look at other educational options.

The College has amassed considerable evidence to show that experiences in the first semester have a significant impact on an SNC student’s subsequent retention. Much of this evidence is related to the level of success in formal academic matters (e.g., GPA, credits completed). The information supplied by the tables above broadens the evidence pool to include the interpersonal and career and life goal realms. These variables are perhaps more challenging to incorporate into retention improvement strategies than such “visible” factors as amount of educational loan or number of courses with midterms, but they are nevertheless important. To deal with them effectively requires that those in a position to help (academic advisors, diversity mentors, residence hall staff, and so on) need to be very alert to signs of dissatisfaction and, perhaps, include questions regarding the variables tabled above in their conversations with students.

One last note. Not every student who comes to St. Norbert needs to—or should—remain through graduation. Not every decision is perfect, or can be completely predictive of future life events and personal changes. The institutional goal of improving retention really means helping every student who wishes to stay to have that option and to serve the remainder by supporting a smooth transition to a more suitable alternative. (Continued on Page 11)

**Satisfaction and Retention: Findings from the 2011 Current Student Survey** (Continued from Page 10)

**Appendix:**  
**2011 Current Student Survey Satisfaction Variables not clearly associated  
 with intent to graduate in freshmen and sophomore respondents**

**Group 1: Possible associated satisfactions with intent to graduate (marginal statistical reliability):**

- Satisfaction with living in College residences
- Satisfaction with the diversity of the student body
- Satisfaction with access to services that meet my needs
- Satisfaction with College-sponsored activities

**Group 2: Unlikely to be associated with intent to graduate (low statistical reliability):**

- Satisfaction with level of academic challenge
- Satisfaction with courses in the General Education program
- Satisfaction with the seriousness academics are taken by students
- Satisfaction with the responsiveness of SNC administrators to student concerns
- Satisfaction with opportunities to work with faculty in independent study or research
- Satisfaction with my interactions with faculty
- Satisfaction with places to study in the library

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**Selected Comments from the 2011 SNC Current Student Survey**

**What would be the single most important thing St. Norbert College could do to improve your education and/or overall experience at the College?**

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase diversity here on campus and hold more events supporting it, and learning about it.</li> <li>• More classes available in all departments.</li> <li>• Provide more scholarship opportunities/information to students.</li> <li>• Additional study space would improve my education.</li> <li>• We need to learn practical conversation skills in classes to understand the appropriate way to learn from each others differences, whether it is religious, cultural, ethnic, or just different opinions from our own.</li> <li>• We need more professors to keep class size down, and to allow students to have more options for classes.</li> <li>• I think there should be more emphasis on alcohol education because students don't always realize how harmful it can be.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It would help if the tutors would have taken a class with the professor the student seeking help for.</li> <li>• I like the greenhouse idea and alternative energy idea.</li> <li>• St. Norbert College should incorporate women's and gender studies into the general education program because it increases awareness of the importance of respecting and understanding not only people of a different sex, gender, or sexual orientation, but of all people that are different from yourself.</li> <li>• Encourage faculty and students to really employ the notion of communio more to outsiders and students.</li> <li>• I think that the college needs to spend more time and money on creating alternative activity opportunities for students on weekends.</li> <li>• It would be nice if the library were open later than 1 am.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have more class time options for upperclassmen courses (300 and 400 level). There are always a ton of possibilities for required courses as a freshman and sophomore, but that becomes limited as the course levels get higher, making it impossible to fit everything you need into your schedule.</li> <li>• The campus also needs to be more aware of the scheduling conflicts that rise from improper advising (there isn't enough advising as freshman and sophomores, a time that really impacts the junior and senior years).</li> <li>• I wish the College offered online classes.</li> <li>• Increase discussion and critical thinking in courses.</li> <li>• Offer more classes that do not require prerequisites.</li> <li>• (Continued on Page 12)</li> </ul> |
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### Selected Comments from the 2011 SNC Current Student Survey

#### What would be the single most important thing St. Norbert College could do to improve your education and/or overall experience at the College? (Continued from Page 11)

- More recycling bins- more education on environmental issues so students learn good habits now before living in homes of their own— environmentally friendly house.
- Provide more learning environments that are almost parallel to real world work experiences.
- When music students are honored with being able to perform at conventions or other events, I feel that the college should take pride in this, and help to do whatever is needed for the students to represent the college in a positive way.
- Recognize those who are doing more than just their education and still doing well in school.
- Hear more specific programming ideas that enrich, but not have so much programming that students become immune to it all.
- St. Norbert College needs more classes offered at different times of the day. I found difficulty scheduling because there would only be one class offered at one time.
- To get more “big name” speakers on campus would greatly improve the name of school in a number ways.
- Make it easier for students living off-campus to access databases and participate in events.
- I would suggest more programs that bring the school together as a whole.
- Make the difficulty of majors more equal.
- The Community Service Dean’s List. That would be awesome.
- Improve the non-athlete workout facilities.
- I am applying for graduate school and once I approached my professors about applications they were very helpful but I wish there would have been more focus given to graduate school discussion in my classes.
- Offer a special education major and courses.
- Form organized study groups for all classes.
- Study skill workshops, or something to help with learning how to study for St. Norbert classes.
- Fix the parking situation. I have internship during the day and I have to go back and forth between classes and it is absolutely ridiculous trying to find an open spot.
- Encourage students to be aware of and avoid overscheduling and overworking.
- I really enjoyed the activities that go on during the week of welcome. I would enjoy more activities that help you meet new people during your first year.
- I think the single most important thing SNC can do to improve my overall experience at the college would be to create opportunities for Social Change.
- We should have volunteer opportunities not for or directed at the students looking to go into a major, but by the students that have experiences these things and know how other parties may feel.
- A better way of letting student that are off campus know what is going on campus.
- Start more graduate programs.
- It would be nice to have more dining options late at night.
- We should have one calendar that has every event on it instead of multiple calendars.
- More flexibility within major areas to take interesting classes.
- Holding a group study session before a big exam.
- There should be some type of group for all of the independent students, so they can get to know one another and feel a bit less isolated from the majority of the campus.
- Focus more on the abuse and sexual assaults that occur on campus.
- Be more willing/available to help students that are not doing as well in a particular class.
- Help more with the financial situation for some students who have difficulty paying for tuition but would love to stay at St. Norbert.
- Drop a minimum GPA for scholarships for the first year since freshman are still getting used to the college experience and it might take some time for them to fully adjust and feel comfortable with the way college differs from high school.
- An increase in programs like the Trips program.
- Challenge the kids to learn and let them learn on their own outside of the classroom.
- More openness about diverse viewpoints and experiences through facilitation of study abroad programs and community serve.
- Implement more green environmentally friendly practices.