



# CEDAR CREST COLLEGE

Middle States Commission on Higher Education

Self-Study

2022-2023

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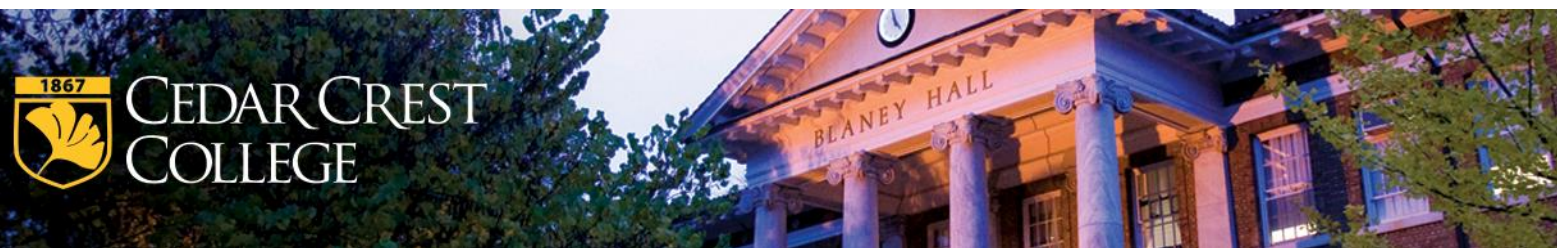
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### **Acknowledgements**

The Self-Study Co-Chairs acknowledge the hard work of the Steering Committee, Working Group Co-Chairs, Working Group Members, the Director of Institutional Research, and especially Rebecca A. Seaman, Ed.D. who served as Self-Study Co-Chair throughout most of the self-study process. The Self-Study Committee is grateful to her for her leadership.



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**List of Abbreviations**

4YG	Four Year Guarantee
AAR	Annual Assessment Report
APE	Academic Program Evaluation
BAC	Budget Advisory Committee
CDI	Center for Diversity and Inclusion
CDGE	Center for Diversity and Global Engagement
CTA SYE	Carmen Twillie Ambar Sophomore Year Expedition
CUE	Committee for Undergraduate Education
FAC	Faculty Council
FPC	Faculty Personnel Committee
GPPC	Graduate Programs and Policy Committee
ISTC	Information Services and Technology Committee
LAC	Liberal Arts Curriculum
PPR	Periodic Program Review



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## **Executive Summary**

Cedar Crest College views the Self-Study process as a Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) requirement, but also a chance to review current policies, procedures, and processes, highlighting accomplishments and determining areas of innovation. The findings of the Working Groups demonstrate the work of the College community since the 2014 Self-Study and note areas for continued efforts to meet the mission, goals, and institutional priorities outlined in this report. The College's mission, vision, and institutional priorities align with the MSCHE Standards and Requirements of Affiliation.

The College has a mission statement that defines its purpose as an institution of higher learning. Guided by its mission, the College's faculty, staff, students, and alumnae launched the 2017 Strategic Plan, *The Aspiration of Others*, to position the College to become the institution defined by its vision statement. The College's 2017 Strategic Plan has five clearly defined goals in the vision statement, visually represented in the four pillars of the Strategy Map. The four pillars are Academic Excellence, Transformational Student Experience, Investment in Tomorrow's Education, and a College of Greater Impact. In a collaborative endeavor, the campus community participated in the development of this Strategic Plan and as the planning cycle closes, the College has instituted 18 of the 22 initiatives. These include the establishment of a Student Success Center, ten new graduate degree programs, the Center for Diversity and Global Engagement (CDGE), and the FalconPlex. Highlighted within the Self-Study are the completed initiatives from the 2017 Strategic Plan. With assessment of the 2017 Strategic Plan complete, work on the development of the next Strategic Plan begins.

In this Self-Study, the College demonstrates that ethics and integrity are a crucial part of its identity. The College complies with all federal, state, and MSCHE policies as evidenced by completion of the Institutional Federal Compliance Report found in both the Requirements of Affiliation and Standard II evidence inventory. The Compliance Committee comprised of representatives from various campus constituencies oversee campus conformity with federal, state, and MSCHE regulations. The College assesses compliance via risk register and the Institutional Federal Compliance Report. The College has policies, procedures, and processes in place that address faculty, staff, and student grievances. The College posts the student complaint process, licensure pass rates, and professional licensure information on the Student Right to Know page as required by federal, state, and MSCHE regulations. The College maintains documented policies for faculty, staff, and students in their corresponding handbooks.

Since the 2014 Self-Study, the College enacted a plan to address institutional racism and a guide to hiring more diverse faculty. This work included faculty development around hiring practices and unconscious bias with the creation of Diversity Advocates and Interfolio as an integral component of the hiring process. More recently, the College hired a new Executive Director of Diversity and Inclusion and elevated this position to the level of the President's Cabinet in 2021. Faculty have committed to a plan to assess the incorporation of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in the curriculum. While work in this area continues, the College has made strides in its DEI initiatives.

Academic excellence is a hallmark of the College. The design of new undergraduate and graduate programs follows a review process that requires faculty and administration to examine proposals based on rigor, modality, employment trends, finances, as well as alignment to the College's mission and goals. The approval process for new degree programs includes faculty



committees, the Provost, the full faculty, and the Board of Trustees in accordance with the model of shared governance. Course delivery by qualified faculty is critical to student success. As such, the size and qualifications of the faculty are sufficient to support the design and delivery of the student experience. In fall 2021, the College employed 75 full-time and 125 part-time faculty with master's degrees or higher. Eighty-one percent of full-time faculty hold a terminal degree in their discipline. Additionally, the College has the technological infrastructure to support multiple course delivery modalities.

The COVID-19 pandemic and state mandated shutdown in March 2020 presented the College with several challenges, specifically related to instructional delivery. The sudden pivot to fully remote instruction was an adjustment to the campus community. During the spring 2020 semester, the College surveyed faculty, staff, and students for feedback related to the shift to remote learning and instruction with feedback from these surveys informing the work of the Board of Trustees-led COVID-19 Task Force. This task force was integral in the development of a health and safety plan for the safe return to campus in fall 2020. Policies and processes in accordance with the health and safety plan as well as the HyFlex model of instruction were significant components of executing the task force recommendations. In preparation for the transition to campus, faculty engaged in professional development on the HyFlex model with a core group of faculty familiar with online teaching and this instructional modality serving as mentors. The College's true mission-centered efforts shone during this challenging period.

During the pandemic campus closure the College continued to support students. The College worked diligently to provide students with a distinctive Cedar Crest experience while maintaining strict health and safety protocols. The College found ways to support students with internet access and laptops to continue their coursework. Upon returning to campus in fall 2020, the health and safety plan proved successful in keeping cases at manageable levels and provided the campus community with information and resources to deal with the virus. In the 2021-2022 Academic Year, the campus hosted vaccination clinics in collaboration with Lehigh Valley Health Network (LVHN), a local healthcare system and continue to do so on an ongoing basis.

Student support from the point-of-contact as an admissions applicant to graduation remains a distinctive trait of the College. Secure maintenance of student records as well as accurate and comprehensive information on student expenses comply with federal, state, and MSCHE policies. The provision of services to varied student populations is vital, specifically students of minoritized populations. As such, student services provide academic, social, economic, and wellness support fostering student success with improvements in the retention rate and 6-year graduation rate actualized since the last MSCHE Self-Study. The College demonstrates progress and ongoing work around diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI).

Collectively, the Working Groups acknowledge the College's continued work related to DEI initiatives since the 2014 MSCHE visit. The College's increasingly diverse student population led to the development of various student-focused initiatives, including Closing the Gap to increase students' sense of belonging and improve retention and graduation rates. The College's efforts around DEI and education of the whole student align with its mission and goals.

Since the last MSCHE visit, assessment of student learning and achievement using College-wide direct and indirect methods is integral to the work of the College and demonstrates a commitment to the continuous improvement of student learning and educational effectiveness. As such, the College uses assessment to inform decision-making and measurement of student





learning outcomes. Assessment occurs in the form of external student surveys such as the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) Diverse Learning Environment (DLE). Internally, General Education Assessment and Periodic and Annual Program Review (PPR/AAR) cycles provide the College with data on student learning and the opportunity to review current practices and apply findings to guide change on a regular basis. Improvements directly aligned to this assessment work include creation of the Carmen Twillie Ambar Sophomore Year Expedition (CTA SYE) to provide a global learning experience to undergraduate students, LibGuides a content specific library resources to all students, and renovations to residence halls to create more collaborative study spaces. These internal assessment methods align with the College's current Strategic Plan, and revisions to the PPR/AAR process will occur upon the development and implementation of the new Strategic Plan.

Planning, resources, and institutional improvement remain an important aspect of daily College operations. The College has maintained a balanced budget since its last MSCHE accreditation in 2014. The Chief Financial Officer/Chief Operating Officer (CFO/COO) and Treasurer oversees budgeting procedures, maintenance contracts, as well as facility improvements and management in collaboration with College constituencies. The Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) meets on a regular basis throughout the academic year to receive budget and enrollment updates from the CFO/COO/Treasurer and Vice President of Enrollment Management and Marketing. As a tuition-driven institution enrollment is an integral part of the College's finances and planning. When the College experienced a slight decrease in adult undergraduate enrollment, new graduate programs as part of the 2017 Strategic Plan became a focus. The College added six new graduate programs from these planning initiatives as well.

The Finance Office complies with federal, state, and Middle States policies including audits by external agencies. The College's clearly defines the budget process and new chairs/deans/directors receive training from the Finance Office. This area of the College experienced direct impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and worked with government agencies to secure monies to aid the College and students with the adverse effects of the state-mandated campus closure in March 2020.

The College maintains an organizational structure that supports the day-to-day operations of the institution and all areas related to the delivery of academic programs and student services. College Bylaws outline the College's governance structure and qualifications of its leaders. As such, the President and Cabinet possess qualifications for their respective positions and report to the Board of Trustees on a regular basis. The Board of Trustees evaluates the President annually related to institutional goals. The President and Cabinet communicate with the College community regularly through town halls, email correspondence, faculty, and administrative council meetings, as well as weekly email communication and monthly newsletters to the campus community.

Cedar Crest College takes pride in its accomplishments since the 2014 Self-Study. This work allows the College to examine its progress and boldly look to the future. The College recognizes the needs of the undergraduate student population have changed since the last Self-Study. The College continues to respond to changing demographics and degree requirements, especially in the healthcare professions with the addition of new graduate programs motivating the College to commit to ongoing goals and priorities that further its mission. The College also



recognizes the changing landscape of higher education and great strides it has made in instructional and student support service efforts. However, work must continue to provide undergraduate and graduate students with learning opportunities to support students in today's environment and beyond engaging them in experiences that foster continued development and the ability to assume leadership roles in alignment with the mission and goals.



## **Introduction**

Since our most recent Middle States reaccreditation in 2014, Cedar Crest College has evolved dramatically to serve the contemporary needs of our students and community. The College has launched its first doctorate practitioner programs, for advanced nurse practitioners and occupational therapists. A portfolio of master's degree programs has grown from five to thirteen. A Student Success Center and Early Intervention Advising Model has brought a sustained 9% average improvement to first-year retention, while increasing our six-year graduate rate on average by 13%. The Center for Diversity and Global Engagement provides support for an increasingly diverse student body. The Carmen Twillie Ambar Sophomore Expedition provides a study-abroad experience to traditional students at no additional cost, other than a passport, and thus delivers on the College's mission to educate leaders for life in a global community. Student affairs initiatives—such as Closing the Gap, emergency aid, and the resource pantry—help meet the actual costs of college that our students face. Twenty-million dollars in ambitious campus renovations, funded primarily through operational surpluses, have enhanced our learning, living, and athletic facilities for our students, including the creation of the FalconPlex (turf athletic field).

From its beginnings as Allentown Female College, Cedar Crest has always been at the forefront of women's education. The College's success in educating women has meant different things at various points in our history. In 1867, it meant imparting a college education equivalent to programs accessible to men while also preparing students for roles as wives and mothers. Later, it was integrating the liberal arts with the nation's need for wartime professional workers, including trained medical technologists and nurses. In the 1960s and 1970s, the College provided a forum for discussion around issues of gender inequality raised by the women's movement, and with the dawn of the era of technology Cedar Crest equipped students for success in their fields and disciplines. Today, Cedar Crest College is engaged in ways to institute change for the better in diversity, equity, and inclusion by involving members of the campus community from the Board of Trustees, alumnae, faculty, staff, and students.

Throughout the decades, Cedar Crest has remained an independent, liberal-arts college for women, while advancing adult continuing education since 1968 and graduate education since 2003. This commitment to women's education among traditional-age college students has not wavered, and neither has the commitment to being flexible and responsive to the needs of the community. In 2011, the College launched the School of Adult and Graduate Education (SAGE) to streamline opportunities for co-educational, adult students seeking career advancement. This led to additional course offerings in the evenings, weekends, and the online delivery of instruction.

As of spring 2022, Cedar Crest offers 38 bachelor's degree programs, 13 master's degree programs, four practitioner doctorate programs, 32 undergraduate minors, seven undergraduate certificates, and 11 graduate certificates. The College also has several disciplinary-accredited programs including Nursing, Nurse Anesthesia, Business, Social Work, Nutrition, Occupational Therapy, and Forensic Science (Source: Institutional Research).



*Highest Enrolled Undergraduate Majors*

<b>Major</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Nursing	28%
Biology	10%
Psychology	10%
Business and Accounting	8%
Forensic Science and Chemistry	8%

*Highest Enrolled Graduate Fields*

<b>Graduate Field</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Nursing	24%
Education	19%
Nutrition	16%
Health Sciences	14%

In accordance with the College’s mission and goals, Cedar Crest provides undergraduate and graduate programs to students from diverse backgrounds. The College seeks to provide students with the ability to afford a college education and robust educational opportunities who otherwise may not have such opportunities. In January 2021, *Washington Monthly* ranked Cedar Crest College 17<sup>th</sup> among colleges and universities in the Northeastern United States as the Best Bang for the Buck in 2020. The basis of this ranking was how well institutions assist non-wealthy students in attaining a marketable degree at an affordable price. This is a hallmark of the College’s philosophy of providing higher education to all those who seek to learn and is in alignment with the College’s mission and goals.

The Self-Study examines the financial, instructional, environmental, and psychosocial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the College. For a private institution granting opportunities in higher education to underserved populations, the health and financial impacts of the pandemic were disproportionate to those of other institutions. In spring 2020, the College experienced an unprecedented shutdown of face-to-face operations, with learning and student support service moving fully remote. This included all experiential learning experiences, such as nursing clinical rotations and student teaching. In May and June of 2020, a Task Force assembled to create a plan for the return to campus, with a team comprised of trustees, the President’s cabinet, faculty, senior staff members, and a student. This plan needed to account for the health and safety of students, faculty, and staff while maintaining fiscally sound practices. Based on this plan, students returned to campus in August 2020 with instruction delivered in multiple modalities that accounted for social distancing and the need for our community to stay home if they were symptomatic, while maintaining access to their education. The HyFlex model of instruction emerged as the primary modality for course delivery offering students and faculty a flexible method of instruction. Thus, faculty spent the summer of 2020 immersed in professional development for online and hybrid models of instruction.

Shifting enrollment among our student populations is another environmental factor for which the College has strategically prepared, as with enrolling a higher percentage of graduate students in recent years and anticipating the approaching 2025 decrease in the number of college-aged people in the United States . Critical to responding to these shifts have been Cedar Crest’s



development of new growth areas in academic programs, especially among graduate-degree fields. We have also created distinctive new learning experiences and support services, such as the Sophomore Experience and the Center for Diversity and Global Engagement. All facets of College operations including admissions, finance and budgeting, financial aid, and academic affairs embrace key environmental issues strategizing new recruitment and retention efforts.

Entering the 2022-2023 academic year, Cedar Crest has thus increased its graduate enrollment to 27%, as compared to 12% of the student population at the time of the last Middle State reaccreditation. A crucial factor in this shift has been the addition of practitioner doctorate programs, especially in Nurse Anesthesia and Occupational Therapy, as well as the expansion of master-degree offerings. At the same time, total undergraduate enrollment will have fallen by one third since 2014, most acutely among continuing-education adults, with another anticipated undergraduate decline going into fall 2022.

The College has been managing the coming year's enrollment shift, while meeting our self-directed mandate of a balanced budget, through a variety of approaches that have included prioritizing international enrollment, an expansion of our Nurse Anesthetist student cohort limit, and targeted marketing for a renewed focus on women's leadership in our MBA program. Cost containment measures have furthermore included budgetary reductions, except for in admissions and marketing, as well as the strategic replacement or deferral of open faculty and staff positions. Enrollment management is under the leadership of an interim vice president entering the academic year, who has prioritized changes in admissions strategy and operations with new training for admissions staff regarding sales tactics, our academic programs, advising, and financial-aid resources. A national search for a permanent vice president of enrollment management is underway with an anticipated hiring date of January 2023.

While Cedar Crest College has been proactive in managing enrollment shifts and preparing for the projected enrollment decline, the College could not have predicted the intensity and duration of the global pandemic on institutional operations. Cedar Crest has worked diligently to counter the impacts of the pandemic by incorporating new instructional methodologies and fiscally sound strategies to innovate and position the College for continued success moving forward. Cedar Crest College views the Middle States Self-Study as an opportunity to review the strengths, limitations, and prospects for the institution.

The Self-Study affords the College a chance to review the current Strategic Plan, *The Aspiration of Others*, as it prepares to initiate the process of creating our next plan. For its Self-Study, the College identified three Institutional Priorities to inform its lines of inquiry: 1) Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; 2) Resources for College Innovation; and 3) Academic Excellence as a Comprehensive College with Undergraduate and Graduate Programs in the Liberal and Practitioner Arts. The Self-Study evaluated all areas of college operations in terms of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) Standards and Requirements of Affiliation, along with their alignment to the Mission, Vision, and Principles of the College.

## **Readers' Guide to the Self-Study Document**

### **Standards Criteria and Requirements of Affiliation**

The criteria and sub-criteria for each Standard and the Requirements of Affiliation appear in the narrative parenthetically. The notation contains the number of the criterion and if the





criterion has an associated sub-criterion. The table below demonstrates alignment of the institutional priorities and Requirements of Affiliation to the Standards.

Standards of Accreditation	Priorities		
	Diversity, Equity & Inclusion	Resources for College Innovation	Academic Excellence as a Comprehensive College with Undergraduate and Graduate Programs in the Liberal and Practitioner Arts
I. Mission and Goals	X	X	X
II. Ethics and Integrity	X	X	X
III. Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience	X	X	X
IV. Support of the Student Experience	X	X	
V. Educational Effectiveness Assessment	X		X
VI. Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement		X	
VII. Governance, Leadership, and Administration	X	X	X
Requirements of Affiliation	5, 6, 7, 10, 15	2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 13, 14	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, 15

### Evidence Inventory

To assist the reader in locating the evidence used for this Self-Study, each Working Group's evidence utilizes a consistent identification process. The evidence inventory and five URLs are in the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) portal. The five URLs provided in the Middle States portal are the: 1) link to the College's Undergraduate Catalog; 2) link to the College's Graduate Catalog; 3) link to the Information for Faculty webpage; 4) link to the Student Right to Know webpage; 5) a link to the College's intranet portal, my.cedarcrest. While the reader cannot access the portal without a secured log in,





inclusion of the portal informs the reader of its existence. The my.cedarcrest intranet portal is the main repository of College information for faculty, staff, and students.

In the Self-Study, the Faculty Handbooks identifier names the book, article, and section of the handbook. Faculty Handbook II contains the Faculty Bylaws. An example of a Faculty Handbook citation is Faculty Handbook II.B.3, referring the reader to Book II, Article B, Section 3, which describes the functions of the faculty. The Faculty Handbooks are in the Evidence Inventory. Evidence Inventory items have a unique identifier. The description of the identification of evidence items is below.

Identified with a code, evidence uploaded to the MSCHE portal directs the reader to the location of the evidence by standard and in order of appearance in the narrative of the chapter dedicated to that standard. All evidence items coded with the initials 'EI' first designate that they are part of the Evidence Inventory. An example of an evidence identifier is EI.VII.3; this evidence document is in the inventory for Standard VII and is third in the narrative for that chapter. This example is the Board of Trustees Self-Assessment Tool labeled with this title in both the document and the portal. Note that some evidence provides documentation for multiple standards. One example of this is the Faculty Action Plan to Address Institutional Racism, coded as EI.I.3. While found in the portal with the evidence for Standard I, this document cited in multiple standards.



## Standard I: Mission and Goals

Requirements of Affiliation: 7 and 10

Institutional Priorities: *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Resources for College Innovation, and Academic Excellence as a Comprehensive College with Undergraduate and Graduate Programs in the Liberal and Practitioner Arts*





## **Standard I: Mission and Goals**

*The institution's mission defines its purpose within the context of higher education, the students it serves, and what it intends to accomplish. The institution's stated goals are clearly linked to its mission and specify how the institution fulfills its mission.*

### **The Strategic Planning Process**

Upon the completion of the strategic plan, *Educating the Next Generation of Leaders*, in 2017, the College launched its current strategic plan, *The Aspiration of Others* (2017-2022), which created institutional goals organized into four core pillars of our mission and guiding principles. These institutional pillars included: (a) Academic Excellence; (b) Transformational Student Experience; (c) Investment in Tomorrow's Education; and (d) a College of Greater Impact. The institutional pillars align with the vision statement and serve as a beacon of inspiration and thought as new initiatives launched in support of these guiding principles (Vision Statement, p. 27). Of 22 strategic initiatives, the 18 initiatives completed and implemented, created new revenue sources, fostered enrollment, and increased faculty positions (Cedar Crest College Strategic Plan Map, p. 17) (Criterion 2 and Requirement of Affiliation 10).

The development of the mission statement and institutional goals of Cedar Crest College was a collaborative, interactive, and inclusive process. The 2010 strategic planning process created the redefined mission statement (Criterion 1a). Ongoing planning meetings in various groups such as student government, faculty, staff, alumnae, department chairs/deans, and Board of Trustees provided input. The President, her Cabinet, and Faculty Council (FAC) participated in the development and approval process (Criterion 1c).

The 2017 Strategic Plan was a 13-step planning process that was inclusive and interactive. A Committee of the President's Cabinet, Board of Trustees, expert faculty and staff, and the campus community (faculty, staff, students, and community members) were responsible for creating the instructional goals. Brainstorming and strategic planning through campus community meetings, town halls, a strategic map, and discussions led to drafting a strategy map and initiatives. Teams of four to seven members evaluated themes and selected the top two to five to recommend to the planning committee. A visual map of the Strategic Plan presented to the staff, faculty, and campus community provided a vision of the plan and its pillars. Implementation of the College's new initiatives started in October 2016 (Criteria 1 a-c and 2 and Requirement of Affiliation 7 and 10).





**STRATEGY MAP**

With the previous strategic plan's broad principles as the foundation — represented at the base of each column — and the new plan's themes to guide our work — represented at the top — a series of initiatives will be launched that will enhance Academic Excellence, foster a Transformational Student Experience, and make an Investment in Tomorrow's Education that will ultimately position Cedar Crest as a College of Greater Impact.



**Figure 1 Strategic Plan Map**

**Alignment of the College’s Mission and Goals with the Institutional Priorities**

The Cedar Crest College mission, devoted to increasing the equity of educational opportunities since its founding in 1867, provided women in the Lehigh Valley with a quality education at a time when other schools in the region were only admitting men. Cedar Crest’s current mission statement continues a commitment “to the education of the next generation of leaders” for life in a global community “by educating the whole student at all stages of life and experience.” The College has expanded its vision to aspire “to be the intersection at which people of an infinite diversity of ethnicity, national origin, faith, sexual orientation, and identity come together to learn.” (Cedar Crest College Vision Statement, p. 27). Cedar Crest College has been the most diverse private college in the Lehigh Valley by student population for the last ten years. Currently, 37% of the student population identifies as Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC). In the 2022 U.S. News and World Report's Best College Rankings, the school





ranked 11th in social mobility in the U.S. News and World Report's Best College Rankings 2022. In 2019, 98% of our first time, traditional undergraduate students received institutional grants and scholarships providing them with the opportunity to attend a four-year college. The full College mission statement is below.

Cedar Crest College is a liberal-arts college, primarily for women, dedicated to the education of the next generation of leaders. Cedar Crest College prepares students for life in a global community by educating the whole student at all stages of life and experience (Requirement of Affiliation 7).

The mission and five guiding principles of the College: (a) Scholarship, Liberal Arts; and Creativity; (b) Women's Leadership; (c) Global Connectivity; (d) Civic Engagement; and (e) Health and Wellness, further the institutional priorities as evidenced in data presented in this chapter. Undergraduates prepare for life and career by completing both the undergraduate liberal arts requirements as well as major or program requirements. This, in combination with activities that foster leadership, community engagement, and study-abroad opportunities, provide students with experiences that enhance and further their academic pursuits (Criterion 1b).

The College supports graduate students in their career interests and educational endeavors through professional development. In accordance with its mission, the School of Adult and Graduate Education (SAGE) offers educational opportunities to foster "expertise, judgement, vision, and inspiration to participate actively and responsibly within diverse communities and dynamic professional networks" to serve as leaders within the community (E.I.1 SAGE Mission Statement, 2021).

Since our last MSCHE Self-Study, Cedar Crest College added seven undergraduate majors, eight master's programs, four doctoral programs, and nine graduate certificates. Each new major or program completed a proposal process, as outlined in Standard III. The proposal form provided campus entities with an overview of the new undergraduate major, graduate-degree, or certificate program, with examination of alignment to the College's mission and goals. The Provost, faculty committees, the full faculty, and the Board of Trustees approve new degree programs.

The College demonstrates alignment of its mission and goals with the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) standards throughout the preceding narrative and remaining chapter discussions of Standards II-VII. During development of the Self-Study, the College community identified three institutional priorities: 1) Academic Excellence as a Comprehensive College with Undergraduate and Graduate Programs in the Liberal and Practitioner Arts; 2) Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; and 3) Resources for Innovation. The College community chose these priorities to recognize the commitment to ongoing work in these areas with the following standard narratives demonstrating this work.

### **Academic Excellence as a Comprehensive College with Undergraduate and Graduate Programs in the Liberal and Practitioner Arts**

In 2020, 22% of our undergraduate students earned the distinction of Latin honors at our Commencement Ceremony, with 42 students inducted into the College's Delphi Honor Society. In 2020, Reisterednursing.org ranked the School of Nursing as the number five nursing school in



Pennsylvania. Data solicited and collected from undergraduate students through the completion of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) provides evidence of academic excellence at the undergraduate level. Since the last MSCHE Self-Study, Cedar Crest College participated in the NSSE surveys in 2015, 2017, 2019, and 2020. NSSE allows the College to examine undergraduate students’ perspectives on key areas and compare results to NSSE peer institutions. NSSE data below provides a snapshot of students’ perspectives on academic rigor at the College. While the College has broadened its graduate program offerings, data below show that academic rigor at the undergraduate level remains a focus for the Institution. More NSSE data on student learning outcomes is in Standard V.

**Table 1.1**

*NSSE Question 10: During the current school year, to what extent have your courses challenged you to do your best work? (Scale 1-7)*

NSSE Year	Cedar Crest Mean- First Years	NSSE Mean*	Cedar Crest Mean- Seniors	NSSE Mean*
2015	5.6	5.6	6.3	5.7
2017	5.7	5.4	5.9	5.6
2019	5.6	5.4	5.9	5.6
2020	5.3	5.3	6.0	5.7

\*All other institutions participating in the NSSE. First Year mean for CC were comparable to the NSSE mean. Senior mean for CC was slightly higher ( $p < .05$ ) than the mean for NSSE completers at other institutions.

**Table 1.2**

*NSSE Question 14a: How much does your institution emphasize spending significant amounts of time studying and on academic work? (Scale 1-4)*

NSSE Year	Cedar Crest Mean-First Years	NSSE Mean*	Cedar Crest Mean- Seniors	NSSE Mean*
2015	3.6	3.2	3.5	3.2
2017	3.4	3.1	3.1	3.1
2019	3.2	3.1	3.1	3.1
2020	3.2	3.1	3.4	3.2

\*All other institutions in the NSSE. In 2015, 2017, and 2019, the First Year Mean for Cedar Crest were significantly higher than the mean for other NSSE First Year completers ( $p < .05$ ). In 2015 and 2020, the CC mean for seniors was significantly higher than other NSSE senior completers ( $p < .05$ ).

The College also assesses undergraduate general education learning outcomes using a five-year assessment plan (EI.V.1- General Education Assessment Plan). The College collects and analyzes data according to the following criteria: critical reasoning, creative reasoning, oral communication, written communication, quantitative literacy, ethical reasoning, information



literacy, global learning, and technological competency utilizing the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) rubrics. The Office of the Provost presents aggregate general education data to the Board of Trustees annually in October (E.I.2 Academic Affairs Dashboard). Initiatives generated from this process and its connection to our mission and Strategic Plan were LibGuides to assist students in finding sources for research assignments through the Cressman Library and the ALEKS Math placement testing/adaptive learning tools to assure student success in quantitative literacy (Criterion 3).

The College evaluates academic undergraduate majors and graduate programs using a Periodic Program Review (PPR) process. The College's Assessment Committee reviews all academic majors/programs on a five-year cycle. The PPR Guidelines (E.I.V.2) fully describe this process with details in Standard V. The College utilizes PPR and Annual Assessment Reports (AAR) data to monitor program learning outcomes, determine effective use of resources (human, physical space, scheduling, etc.), and identify areas of improvement. The PPR/AAR templates align with all the strategic plan initiatives (Criteria 1d and 1g).

The College utilizes the PPR process to determine strengths and areas of growth in academic support, student support, and student affairs. The Committee for Undergraduate Education (CUE) uses the general education assessment data and NSSE data related to reading, writing, as well as other general education criteria to monitor student learning (Criterion 3).

As part of the 2017 Strategic Plan pillar of academic excellence and subsequent initiative of distinctive graduate programs, the College added approximately two graduate programs per year to its academic portfolio. As such, the College continues to review current employment data trends and research degree completion trends using the U.S. Department of Labor and National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) data in the decision-making process for new program creation. The College also relies on faculty, as content experts, to inform the administration about evolving areas for advanced degrees in professional programs, especially the health sciences.

OnlineMastersDegrees.org named Cedar Crest College one of the best colleges for online master's degree programs in March 2022, with only six percent of post-secondary institutions earning a ranking position. The online Master of Nutrition, online Master of Science in Nursing, and online Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing programs earned recognition.

### **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

The College President and her Cabinet have been strong leaders in the implementation of the Strategic Plan and its many diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives. Written as part of the 2015-2016 President's Diversity and Inclusion Task Force, the diversity statement has elevated the College's focus on DEI matters through the implementation of committees, climate surveys, and task forces that address diversity, transgender issues, and racial equity on campus. The President has also issued public statements and a community message pledging solidarity and a commitment to the DEI work ahead. The data below is from the 2020 NSSE Topical Module on Inclusion and Diversity. The table shows students' perspective on the College's commitment to DEI.





**Table 1.3**

*NSSE Inclusiveness and Engagement with Diversity- Question 2: How much does your institution emphasize a commitment to diversity? (Scale 1-4)*

NSSE 2020	CC Mean- First Years	NSSE Mean*	CC Mean-Seniors	NSSE Mean*
	3.2	2.9	3.2	2.9

\*All other institutions participating in the NSSE. The mean scores for both First Years and seniors were significantly higher than the mean scores for other NSSE completers ( $p < .05$ ).

## **Transformational Student Experience**

### ***Center for Diversity and Inclusion***

The College’s commitment to transformational student experiences led to the creation of the Center for Diversity and Global Engagement (CDGE) in the Allen House, an important historic Cedar Crest College building. Established in 2016, The Center for Diversity and Inclusion (CDI) is part of the CDGE with an executive director to lead the Center and its initiatives. The Center has had a high impact on campus life. It functions as a safe space for minoritized students to encourage and support collaborative work. Student Inclusion Advocates create relevant programming such as talking circles, Black History Month events, Black Lives Matter Week, a Juneteenth Celebration, and a Monthly Cultural Resource email, among others. The creation and funding of Inclusion Advocates (IAs) have also had a large part in the development and support of student clubs that foster DEI initiatives, such as the LatinX Club, the Asian Club, and the Black Student Union, among others.

### ***The Carmen Twillie Ambar Sophomore Year Experience (CTA SYE)***

As our mission provides, Cedar Crest College prepares students for a life in a global society by educating the whole student in all stages of life and experience. The Carmen Twillie Ambar Sophomore Year Expedition (CTA SYE) provides a fully funded study tour opportunity for all eligible sophomore students for the mere cost of a passport. Students prepare to travel through an accompanying course specific to the destination. This fully immersive experience exposes students to international travel and fosters a global perspective. The Office of Global Initiatives and International Programs provides additional opportunities for long- and short-term study tours and offers comprehensive support for study abroad and global experiences. The Liberal Arts Curriculum (LAC) includes a global study designated course as a curriculum requirement (Criterion 1e).

This aligns with the College’s belief that to change the world, a student must see the world. To date, 530 students have traveled abroad. According to the Office of Global Initiatives, 33.6% of students who self-identify their race as other than white participated in the CTA SYE in 2020. Funding for the program occurs through operational dollars and donor support. This investment gives students a global connection across all areas of life and experience tied to our mission and guiding principles with trips to Brazil, Greece, England, Costa Rica, and Morocco completed.

In 2019 and 2020, Cedar Crest administered the NSSE Topical module titled, Global Learning as a measure of student learning in the areas of human rights, international relations, world health, climate, etc. The 2019 NSSE results show data from pre-CTA SYE students and





the 2020 NSSE results reflect students who participated in the CTA SYE trip to Brazil. The table below shows that by senior year over half of students (NSSE 2020) had taken at least one course on this subject (for most students, the course associated with the CTA SYE). This reflects the College’s commitment to the education of students in a global society.

**Table 1.4**

*NSSE Global Learning- Question 2a: Which of the following have you done, or do you plan to do before you graduate? Complete a course that focuses on global trends or issues (human rights, international relations, world health, climate, etc.).*

	First Year Students	Seniors
NSSE 2019	13%	39%
NSSE 2020	21%	56%

**Engagement across a Diverse Population**

The College has taken numerous measures to improve “engagement across [the] diverse population” (Cedar Crest College Strategic Plan Map, p. 17), reduce bias in the culture, and ensure a safe environment for everyone. In the summer of 2017, the establishment of gender-neutral bathrooms across campus secured a safe environment for transgender and transitioning students. In the fall of 2017, the College’s Trustees adopted a revised admissions policy, recommended by the Transgender Task Force (2015-2016) to welcome individuals who identify as women and those who have transitioned while at Cedar Crest College. In 2020, the College began offering gender-inclusive housing in the residence halls. During this time, modification of data-recording processes allowed transgender students to include their preferred names on college identification documents (IDs), communications, and course rosters. Additionally, establishment of a bias response policy enabled students, faculty, and staff to submit a bias incident report to the Bias Response Team. In fall 2020, the Department of Athletics developed an action plan for Anti-Racism and Inclusion to review their curriculum, rules, recruiting processes, and professional development for bias. They were the recipient of the 2020 September National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division III Diversity Spotlight Initiative (Criterion 1d).

To further improve campus climate, faculty and staff have organized to provide needed DEI training and resources. Under the leadership of the Director of Diversity and Inclusion, development of a series of diversity modules for all staff and faculty took place as part of the 2017 Strategic Plan. These modules include: Our Cedar Crest College Diversity Community, Exploring Conscious & Unconscious Bias, Cross-Cultural Communication, and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) 101 & How to Support Transgender Students. Eighty-five percent of faculty and staff completed at least one Diversity Training Module, with 66% completing all four modules. New modules are under development such as one devoted to accessibility projected for spring 2022. There has been additional training in engaging international students, Allyship, providing Safe Zones, and facilitating difficult intergroup conversations. To facilitate these varied efforts, the Faculty Advocates for Diversity and Change offer resources through an Anti-Racism Faculty/Staff Canvas Course and through numerous research guides on the Cressman Library website. In spring 2021, in collaboration with the



Education Department, the Library also established #WeRead360, an extensive teaching collection of diverse young adult and children’s books, to encourage future educators and the Education Department faculty to bring diverse voices into their classrooms. Additionally, the faculty/staff Different Perspectives Book Club, started in 2018, regularly reads and discusses books that address race, class, gender, and diverse perspectives (Criterion 1d).

In the Cedar Crest Faculty Action Plan to Address Institutionalized Racism (E.I.I.3-Faculty Action Plan), faculty pledged to revise the curriculum to engage more systematically with DEI, undergo professional development on culturally responsive teaching methods, and support efforts to hire and retain diverse faculty. As a part of this plan, they have established a diversity rubric to assess course inclusiveness, added a diversity statement to the school-wide syllabus template, and organized a discussion series on racism and teaching. Five faculty members have received funding through the Innovative Diversity Efforts Award established in congruence with the College’s diversity statement from 2017-2020. These faculty attended conferences centered on diversity and equity issues. They have also developed creative projects that engage with race and diversity through theatre, dance, and art. In addition, six faculty and staff participated in the AAC&U Truth and Racial Healing Transformation Institute (TRHT) 2021 workshop to conduct racial-healing circles and create action plans to break down racial hierarchies (Criterion 1d).

In addressing the College’s desire to have a greater impact on the community we serve, with respect to a growing number of students of color (27% in 2013 versus 34% in 2021) the College acknowledged the homogeneity of faculty and staff and initiated goals to foster greater inclusivity. In 2019, diversity-hiring guidelines established required search committees to include Diversity Advocates and implement a broad search to attract a more diverse pool of candidates. To standardize and monitor the equity of the hiring process, the College invested in Interfolio, and all job postings now mention the importance of diversity for Cedar Crest in addition to an equal opportunity statement.

**Table 1.5**  
*Full-time Faculty and Staff Ethnicity 2013-2021*

FT Faculty + Staff	Grand total	American Indian or Alaska Native total	Asian total	Black or African American total	Hispanic or Latino total	Native Hawaiian /Pacific Islander total	White total	Two or more races total	Race/ ethnicity unknown total	Nonresident alien total	# employees of color	% employees of color
2013	216	0	3	6	2	0	200	0	5	0	11	5%
2015	218	0	3	6	4	0	199	1	5	0	14	7%
2016	221	0	3	3	4	0	206	1	4	0	11	5%
2017	227	0	5	1	4	0	211	1	5	0	11	5%
2018	248	0	4	4	4	0	228	2	6	0	14	6%
2019	251	0	6	4	6	0	223	5	7	0	21	9%
2020	216	0	4	3	9	0	192	4	4	0	20	9%
2021	213	0	4	5	9	0	186	5	4	0	23	11%

The College continues to support new hires through mentoring and the creation of affinity groups. In fall 2019, creation of the faculty and staff Gender and Sexuality Diverse group took place and in summer 2020, the Faculty Staff of Color group began. Demonstrating Cedar



Crest's commitment to a future inclusive of a more diverse administrative body, five staff of color participated in the 2021/2022 Lehigh Valley Association of Independent Colleges (LVAIC) Higher Education Leadership Institute. The Institute, developed in collaboration with the six participating regional higher education institutions, provides mentoring and networking opportunities as well as in-depth training in higher education leadership.

## **Resources for Innovation**

### **Investing in Tomorrow's Education**

Investment in tomorrow's education is more than exceptional academic and student experiences. As the world changes around us, we must continue to provide state-of-the-art facilities that support the student beyond the classroom. Since 2014, the College has made over \$20 million in campus improvements. Renovations to student and academic spaces took priority. These renovations include, among other areas, the Tompkins College Center (dining hall, conference areas, theater, and meeting rooms), creation of the FalconPlex (a turf athletic facility), science labs, creation of the Student Success Center, renovation of Steinbright and Curtis residence halls, renovation of the Nursing Simulation Center and student spaces, creation of Occupational Therapy lab spaces, and the creation of the CDGE. Careful assessment of each investment ensured funds supported strategic initiatives, grounded in the College's mission, and aligned with our guiding principles (Criterion 1d).

As a part of the plan to develop accessible spaces and the context for transformative experiences the newly created Student Success Center fosters engagement and academic excellence. The Center brings together key academic services such as the Library Reference Desk, Information Technology help desk, Writing Center, tutoring services, disability resources, and academic advising into one space to facilitate physical access and reduce the educational gaps between students by normalizing help-seeking behaviors.

### **A College of Greater Impact**

The focus on becoming a college of greater impact opened doors to the community. We carefully developed unique approaches to meet the changing needs of our communities while simultaneously enhancing the leadership and community engagement skills of our student body. One example is in the Center for Police Innovation and Community Engagement. The work done through the Center allows police departments, local governments, and community organizations to better understand and assess the impact of its practices on the community. Our students and faculty received funding to work on issues related to crime prevention, mental-health crisis response, community outreach, and jail recidivism. The desire for organizations to learn about the impact its practices have on the community is progressive and the first step in making meaningful changes within the College's local communities. To date, the Center has received funding for six different projects all within its first year and has numerous collaborative projects and new engagements under development (Criterion 1b).

Student engagement in community-based projects and activities is another hallmark of a college that understands its place within the community. The College engages students in these endeavors through various initiatives that have service learning as a foundational component of a Cedar Crest education. Students engage in service-learning experiences as part of Ethical Life,





which fulfills the ethics designation of the LAC, as well as participation in the CTA SYE (Criterion 3).

**Table 1.6**

*NSSE Question 12: How many of your courses at this institution have included some community-based project (service learning)? (Senior responses only, scale 1-4)*

NSSE Year	Cedar Crest Mean	NSSE Mean*
2015	2.0	1.7
2017	2.1	1.7
2019	1.9	1.8
2020	2.1	2.0

\*All other institutions participating in the NSSE. In 2015, 2017, and 2019, the CCC mean score was significantly higher than the mean for NSSE completers at other institutions ( $p < .05$ ).

Cedar Crest nEXt is a programming, repository, and communications initiative that guides students through a set of shared curricular and co-curricular experiences personalized to reflect an individual student’s goals and ambitions. The acronyms EXperience, EXpedition, EXemplify, EXposure, and EXcel highlight these opportunities.

Additionally, creation of the CDI amplified efforts to address the needs of the diverse student population at Cedar Crest. To build an equitable, diverse, and inclusive learning environment for all students, this initiative provides training modules for all employees focusing on cross-cultural communication, LGBTQ+ support, and the diverse Cedar Crest College community.

### **The Impact of COVID-19**

As Cedar Crest makes strides towards its future, we are keenly aware of aspects of the current environment that have placed a strain on operations. In March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic affected the College and state of Pennsylvania. By mid-March, the Governor closed all non-essential businesses for in-person activity, including colleges and universities. Essential operations within the College continued with those individuals deemed necessary maintaining operations on campus, while supporting a small number of resident students who could not return home. Immediately, the College knew the impact would be sharp and swift, with the need to return student-housing funds to students who could no longer reside on campus. Investments in our ability to shift to online platforms for education occurred immediately, and within two days, all classes were functioning remotely. All rental and facility revenues ceased due to cancellations or postponements. The College was facing the reality of a sharp decline in revenue for the remaining three months of the fiscal year, with the Board requirement of a balanced budget.

Guided by the Chair of the Board of Trustees and with the full support of the President, the College embarked on a Board-Designated Task Force. Including membership of the Board, administration, faculty, staff, and students, the group evaluated all aspects of the College over a five-week period and presented recommendations to the Board of Trustees for review and potential implementation. The Board Chair and former Board Chair led this work and charged



each of the working groups to do the following: identify ways to generate revenue, reduce expenditures and find ways to operate more efficiently. The five working groups were: 1) Academic Year 2020/21 Planning, 2) Academic Operations, 3) Business Operations, 4) Revenue and 5) Investments. Each working group followed the same charge but aligned the work to their specific areas to determine if there were additional opportunities for revenue generation, expenditure reduction, or improving operations. The Board was clear that investments needed to accomplish some of the recommendations, which thus required the Task Force to think creatively. Ultimately, the Board received over 50 recommendations that provided immediate revenue or expense reduction. In total, the College was able to reduce expenditures by \$3 million and make improvements to operations. Despite the reduced revenue, the College allocated funds to nine investment group recommendations that would provide a significant benefit to students, reduce workload requirements, and improve efficiency (EI.VI.2-COVID-19 Task Force Final Report).

Throughout the pandemic, the College has responded with creative, forward-thinking planning. Due to the Payroll Protection Program, the College was able to retain employees without reduction in pay or the furloughing of positions. Balanced by making decisions to improve overall operations, budgets presented to the Board of Trustees did not rely on the use of reserve or contingency funds. The shared governance structure allowed for a collaborative process engaging all members of the College community in decision-making. Despite having to make challenging decisions and reductions in other areas, the College forged ahead with the design, renovation, construction, and investment in new initiatives.

Future innovation will be critical to the College's long-term success. As the College engages in new strategic planning, it must continue to make investments in programs that will generate net positive revenue, foster enrollment, and restore auxiliary revenue to provide the College with the financial strength to meet its mission and goals.

### **Assessment of the 2017 Strategic Plan, *The Aspiration of Others***

The mission and institutional goals of Cedar Crest College are realistic and appropriate to an institution of higher education as evidenced in the following data (Criterion 2). The mission of the College is the blueprint that guides all decisions related to the work of the College. The mission is present in daily conversations, organized and informal meetings, and various communications with internal and external community members. It is vital to the institution and influences every factor and function of the College. The mission is a living testament of Cedar Crest College (Criterion 1d).

The mission of Cedar Crest College identifies the institution as a liberal arts college primarily for women. Undergraduate programming offers a variety of majors and minors, as well as co-curricular activities, grounded in the liberal arts. Central to the curriculum, a core of liberal arts offerings integrated into the undergraduate requirements supports many undergraduate students in their declaration of minors and secondary majors. Graduate programming offers educational experiences to support career interests and the professional development of both men and women.

Dedication to educating the whole student at all stages of life and experience is the mission of the Institution. The number of adult students enrolled in graduate programs at the College has steadily increased while the number of adult SAGE undergraduate students has



slightly decreased. Students at all stages of life and experience benefit from the educational experiences available at Cedar Crest. The mission highlights the liberal arts focus, education of leaders, and preparation for a global society for all the students at Cedar Crest College. These attributes are realistic, appropriate, and achievable goals for an institution of higher education (Criterion 2).

The 2017 Strategic Plan provides tangible examples of initiatives implemented towards achievement of institutional goals that focus on the College's mission. The first institutional goal, Academic Excellence, focused heavily on the creation of distinctive graduate programs that have elevated the College's breadth and depth of academic offerings all while providing growth in graduate enrollments and revenue. Since the last Self-Study, the College added eight graduate programs, six of which were part of the 2017 Strategic Plan initiatives. The School of Nursing added three doctoral programs in 2018, Health Sciences a master's program in 2019 and doctoral program in 2021, and Business added two master's programs in 2020 and Criminal Justice also added a master's program in 2020, respectively.

Actualized in many strong initiatives from the 2017 Strategic Plan including the CTA SYE, the Student Employment Center (which guarantees on-campus employment for every student), the CDGE, and more student-designated spaces across campus are part of the second institutional goal of a Transformational Student Experience. Additionally, initiatives completed to enhance the attractiveness of spaces with a focus on function supporting collaborative student efforts included student input.

Closing the Gap is another mission-driven initiative designed to provide essential necessities such as food, clothing, and textbooks to students who are experiencing these types of insecurities. Examples of initiatives include the annual winter clothing drive, meals over breaks, pop-up food events, revision of housing policies, book vouchers, and completion grants (Criterion 3).

The third institutional goal, Investment in Tomorrow's Education, included infrastructure initiatives such as the creation of the FalconPlex, a state-of-the-art athletic facility that has resulted in the ability to recruit student athletes more effectively, host tournaments, and increase the visibility of the College in the community through rental to local athletic organizations. The College has furthermore focused on accessibility and ensuring access to the entire campus for students with varying needs to provide an inclusive and welcoming educational experience. Additionally, faculty and staff have received educational training in inclusive best practices such as Universal Design within the teaching environment. Adaptive learning technology, such as adaptive math placement assessments, and the incorporation of the Portfolium integrative learning e-portfolio were also initiatives that demonstrate the College's Investment in Tomorrow's Education. The fourth institutional goal, A College of Greater Impact, includes Cedar Crest nEXt, the Center for Police Innovation and Community Engagement and the Center for Diversity and Inclusion, to highlight a few initiatives detailed previously (Criterion 1d).

The five institutional goals, as identified through the Vision Statement of the 2017 Strategic Plan, support the College's mission. The Vision Statement focuses on "Becoming the Aspiration of Others" as cited below.

Cedar Crest will be at the forefront of creating innovative academic programs in a wide variety of formats to meet the needs of today's students.





Cedar Crest will be known as the center for next practice in higher education in the Lehigh Valley, and nationally.

Cedar Crest will be the intersection at which people of an infinite diversity of ethnicity, national origin, faith, sexual orientation, and identity come together to learn.

Cedar Crest will support students in every way in their quest for success.

Cedar Crest's planning and building will center around having the maximum impact on critical student experiences (Vision Statement- Requirement of Affiliation 7).

These goals are realistic, attainable, and appropriate for an institution of higher education. Through specific implemented initiatives, highlighted in this section, the College has demonstrated commitment to the mission (Criterion 2). This section provides evidence of the assessment of the 2017 Strategic Plan related to the Institution's mission and goals (Criteria 1g and 4) and the College's use of assessment of current goals to plan for the next Strategic Plan (Requirement of Affiliation 10).

### **Effective Communication of the College's Mission and Goals**

The evidence presented demonstrated effective communication and publication of the College's mission and institutional goals to internal and external constituencies. The College's website is a primary means of communication with internal and external constituencies. The mission and institutional goals, vision, and current strategic plan are easily accessible one click from the College's main landing page. Hyperlinks connect the institutional goals to specific initiatives and provide tangible examples of achievement of the delineated goals (Criterion 1f).

Tracking progress occurred on each institutional goal with implementation launch timelines and accompanying press releases, photographs, and promotion video materials. The public website is engaging and comprehensive, providing internal and external community members insight into the mission, vision, and institutional goals of Cedar Crest College. The Strategic Plan and strategy map provide the framework for the institutional goals and the College's guiding principles. The strategy map pictograph of the pillars of Blaney Hall provides an effective visual linking *The Aspiration of Others* to the institutional goals and each initiative.

The College utilizes social media (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) to inform students, alumnae, staff, faculty, and the public of campus news and upcoming events as well as to celebrate campus community achievements throughout the academic year. Individual departments, athletic teams, and student clubs manage social-media posts that highlight the College's achievement of the mission and institutional goals. Dissemination to the public also occurs through the landing page of the College's website, which houses a banner, "Featured News & Events," the "Newsroom," and a variety of Cedar Crest stories. These featured media pieces highlight living, real-time examples as an embodiment of the College's commitment to the mission and institutional goals (Criteria 1e and 3).

The President delivers an annual State of the College address to a wide audience of internal and external constituents, which include students, alumnae, staff, and faculty. During this address, the President highlights the initiatives and successes that have advanced the College's mission and institutional goals throughout the year. Offices close and all employees



and students attend the State of the College address, typically delivered in Alumnae Hall or virtually during the pandemic.

The Cedar Crest College Alumnae Association, 13,400 members strong, receives information about activities on the College's campus in several ways. *TouchPoints* is an Alumnae Newsletter published by the Office of Alumnae Affairs biannually. Its purpose is to provide information from the Office of Institutional Advancement, as well as interviews with current students and faculty members to highlight the programs and majors offered at the College. Through the collection of columns by each class correspondent, a *Class Notes* publication shares news about reunions and encourages/celebrates annual giving to the college.

The Alumnae Association meets four times a year. In addition to the business meeting, three "special events" maintain lines of communication between the campus and alumnae. In September, members of the Association organize an Alumnae Council to bring class correspondents, class agents, and reunion chairpersons to campus to keep them informed of their responsibilities. In March, the Association Board members enjoys lunch with student leaders, connecting them to the current student body and offering information about programs offered on campus.

The Annual Meeting of the Alumnae Association takes place each Saturday of Reunion Weekend. At that meeting, the President of the College presents the annual State of the College address to those assembled. The board officers report on annual giving, scholarships, and awards presented to students, faculty, and alumnae and the year-end budget that culminates with the annual gift to the College.

Each of these planned events support the Alumnae Association's mission, which is to:

- Advocate alumnae engagement with the College
- Support the College in realizing its mission, programs, and student affairs
- Promote financial support for the College
- Assist the Office of Alumnae Affairs in effectively serving alumnae and encourage alumnae spirit of service.

One additional method of alumnae engagement and communication is the launch of the 2018 nationwide Presidential tour in the inaugural year of President Meade's leadership. The Presidential Tour touched corners of the country not visited in many years. This outreach provides a key platform to engage alumnae and connects them to the vision of our new President as well as learn of the successes and growth underway at the College. The tour is the perfect opportunity to spur engagement and cultivate alumnae relationships to inspire alumnae to annual donors over time. The 2018-2020 National Presidential Alumnae Tour reached 221 guests (162 alumnae) at 32 destination cities in sixteen states. During the tour, four additional personal visits took place. Of the 162 alumnae, 112 or 69.1% made gifts in the 2019 fiscal year. Giving among all alumnae who attended a National Tour event or were seen on a personal visit during the Tour totaled \$206,402.78.

There is widespread agreement among the Cedar Crest community that the College consistently makes decisions congruent and in support of the College's mission. References to the mission and institutional goals occur regularly during campus meetings and in faculty governance. Discussions and deliberations center on the mission and institutional goals. The inclusion of these elements is traditional, and part of the fabric cultivated across the campus.



### **Key Findings**

- Academic excellence is a point of pride for undergraduate and graduate programs of study at Cedar Crest College.
- The College will continue to establish realistic and appropriate goals for an institution of higher education as part of the new strategic planning process.
- Improve access to the mission and strategic plan on the website. Highlight more prominently.





## **Standard II: Ethics and Integrity**

Requirements of Affiliation: 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, and 14

Institutional Priorities: *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Resources for College Innovation, and Academic Excellence as a Comprehensive College with Undergraduate and Graduate Programs in the Liberal and Practitioner Arts*





## **Standard II: Ethics and Integrity**

*Ethics and integrity are central, indispensable, and defining hallmarks of effective higher education institutions. In all activities, whether internal or external, an institution must be faithful to its mission, honor its contracts and commitments, adhere to its policies, and represent itself truthfully.*

### **Periodic Assessment of Ethics and Integrity**

Ethics and integrity are essential to the mission and identity of Cedar Crest College. The College demonstrates ethics and integrity in daily institutional operations and in compliance with federal and state laws, MSCHE policies, as well as College policies and procedures. Cedar Crest College ensures ethics and integrity across the campus by embedding these principles in all practices related to research and instruction, administration, financial operations, and student achievement. Cedar Crest College internally conducts reviews across campus to ensure compliance with all applicable federal, state, and Commission reporting policies, regulations, and requirements. College legal counsel, administration, and appropriate faculty/staff committees meet regularly throughout the academic year to discuss best practices and changes to practices. A description of the College's Compliance Committee is in the Faculty Handbook II.K (EI.II.1). These committees include the overall Compliance Committee, the Institutional Review Board, the Animal Care and Use Committee, and the Campus Safety Committee.

The College's Compliance Committee coordinates departmental and office activities to ensure compliance with applicable federal, state, and accrediting-agency regulations, as well as adherence to obligations regarding ethics and integrity and internal college policies. The Compliance Committee, created in 2015 and based upon institutional assessment and MSCHE workshops, improves monitoring of MSCHE Standard II. The full membership of the Compliance Committee is in Faculty Handbook II.K (EI.II.1) and found on the College website under the Information for Faculty page. The Committee Co-Chairs are CFO/COO and the MSCHE ALO/Associate Provost. The Compliance Committee meets each October and April. The Committee produces an Institutional Federal Compliance report that addresses all Federal, State, and Accreditation requirements (EI.II.2-Institutional Federal Compliance Report) (Criteria 8 b-d and 9 and Requirements of Affiliation 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, and 14).

### **Academic Freedom**

All members of the Cedar Crest College faculty, whether tenured or non-tenured, adjunct, part-time, or full-time, have academic freedom as set forth in the 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure formulated by the Association of American Colleges and the American Association of University Professors (AAUP). The AAUP Academic Freedom statement, with an additional reference to subsequence interpretive comments is in Faculty Handbook III.B.2 (EI.II.3) (Criterion 1).

### **Intellectual Property**

The College recognizes that faculty members, including full-time, part-time, and adjunct faculty are independent scholars, researchers, and teachers governed by the principles of





academic freedom. The products of their normal academic pursuits including scholarship and creative works, research and teaching materials reflect the special status of faculty intellectual work; as a result, faculty members retain the intellectual property rights to those products created while in the employ of the College. The language presented in the Faculty Handbook III.I (EI.II.3) defines intellectual property and sets forth the typical circumstances surrounding ownership of intellectual property, as well as rare exceptional circumstances (Criterion 1).

### **Title IX Training and Compliance**

The College is committed to ensuring that everyone has a learning and working environment that is free from sexual misconduct. The College prohibits any acts of sexual misconduct without exception. The College expects all members of the College community to share the responsibility for ensuring that the College environment is free from any form of abuse, violence or verbal or physical intimidation. College policies, community resources, and information on where to seek help for or report incidents of sexual misconduct are in multiple locations and formats, including a page dedicated to Title IX on the College's website, on my.cedarcrest intranet, in print brochures and on ADP, the College's human resources information and payroll system. Faculty, staff, and students can make reports directly to the Title IX Coordinator or submit reports electronically through the Maxient reporting system. The system allows for anonymous reports; however, faculty and staff may not submit anonymous reports.

Cedar Crest maintains the position of Title IX Coordinator, currently held by the Executive Director of Human Resources and one Deputy Coordinator, currently the Vice President of Student Services/Dean of Students. There is also a designated Senior Woman Administrator (SWA) for athletics to assure compliance with National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) regulations. For situations that may involve a formal investigation and require individuals to serve as advisors, investigators and decisions makers, the College contracts out for individuals with the necessary training and expertise in these roles. Currently, the College handles situations involving informal resolution internally. These processes continue to evolve since the implementation of new federal regulations in August 2020.

Upon hire, Human Resources requires all new employees to complete on-line training through United Educators "Prevent Discrimination and Harassment: Faculty & Staff" and "Prevent Sexual Violence Together" and review the College's Sexual Misconduct, Harassment Free Environment and Protection of Minors policies. Thereafter, all employees review the Sexual Misconduct, Harassment Free Environment and Protection of Minors policies on an annual basis, typically during the open enrollment period for benefits. The Title IX Coordinator and designated delegates conduct periodic training for faculty and staff to prevent and address incidents of sexual harassment and sexual violence. The Student Affairs Office coordinates training and education for students to prevent sexual harassment, gender harassment, and sexual violence (Criterion 8b and Requirement of Affiliation 5).





### **FERPA Compliance and Notification**

Cedar Crest College's notification of compliance with the Family Educational Rights Privacy Act (FERPA) is on the College website via the Registrar's Office page. The Registrar is responsible for public display of this policy and regular communication to faculty emphasizing compliance and ethical importance of respecting students' legal rights to privacy. Developed by the Registrar and maintained by the Student Affairs Office, this campus-specific information for students is on the College's my.cedarcrest intranet. Discussion of faculty and staff FERPA training occurs in Standard IV. The Institutional Federal Compliance Report (EI.II.2) also addresses FERPA (Criterion 8b and Requirement of Affiliation 5).

### **Academic Integrity**

The College's undergraduate policy on Academic Integrity covers plagiarism, obtaining unfair advantage, falsification of records or official documents, and other related issues. The Provost's Office oversees complaints alleging violation of the Academic Integrity Policy. Students who breach the academic standard of integrity as designated by the defining types of academic misconduct set forth in the Student Handbook and in the Faculty Handbook IV.B.2 (EI.III.6) may be subject to sanctions imposed by the course instructor, a department chair/dean, an Academic Integrity Review Board, the Provost, or the Board of Trustees. Any faculty member who determines that a student has breached the academic standard of integrity must report the incident to the Provost's Office using the Academic Misconduct Report and attach relevant evidentiary documentation as appropriate. The complete process for reporting violations, the review board, and student appeals details are in the Faculty Handbook IV.B.2 (EI.III.6). The College's graduate policy on Academic Integrity mirrors the undergraduate policy. The graduate policy is in Faculty Handbook VII.A.5, pages 5-8 (EI.III.8) (Criterion 1).

### **Conflict of Interest**

All faculty, staff, and student members of Cedar Crest College must avoid any conflict of interest between themselves and the College. Specifically, no member may contract to do business on behalf of the College with a related party where the employee stands to receive financial gain from the business transaction. The faculty, staff, and student handbooks describe these policies. The Faculty Conflict of Interest policy (Faculty Handbook V.F) covers these guidelines, including prohibiting the acceptance of gifts and gratuities, the employment of relatives, and employment verifications. The Board of Trustees Conflict of Interest policy found in the College Bylaws (EI.VII.1-Faculty Handbook I.XI, p. 21) requires Trustees to sign an annual Conflict of Interest Statement (Criterion 4).

### **Data Integrity**

The Director of Institutional Research (IR) manages external data reporting. These data include figures on enrollment, demographics, financial aid recipients, 6-year graduation rates, retention rates, and other areas. The Director of IR is a member of the Northeast Association of Institutional Research (NEAIR) and the regional chapter of the Association of Institutional Research (AIR). These organizations create binding ethics and data integrity policies to which the College adheres. The Director of IR reports the College's IPEDS data, which MSCHE uses to post College demographics.



The Director of IR and Associate Provost maintain the “Student Right to Know” webpage on the College website. This page (one of the URLs provided in the portal) provides students with information on College Integrated Postsecondary Education (IPEDS) data, student financial services, Title IX, student complaints (including complaints to National Council of State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements [NC-SARA] and outside accreditors), professional licensing, and Middle States accreditation. This page serves as a student resource and ensures compliance with federal, state, and MSCHE policies (Criteria 8 a, b, c, d and Requirements of Affiliation 5 and 6).

### **Institution-wide Assessment**

Each administrative office, academic undergraduate major, and graduate program participate in assessment, including the Office of Institutional Research and the Office of Assessment, Accreditation, and Compliance. Each area submits an Annual Assessment Report (AAR) and Periodic Program Review (PPR). Administrative offices report areas for which they maintain compliance reporting under PPR section 3.5 “Compliance,” while academic programs report under PPR academic section 9.1-9.3 their compliance with discipline-specific accreditors, regulatory bodies (such as state boards), and cooperating college offices with which they work. This assessment occurs on a five-year cycle fully described in Standard V. The Compliance Committee, described previously, oversees federal, state, and MSCHE policies (Criteria 8 b and 9 and Requirement of Affiliation 5).

### **Respect and Appreciation for Diversity**

Cedar Crest College demonstrates respect and appreciation for community members of diverse backgrounds through its commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, as codified in the College’s Diversity Statement. Written as part of the 2015-2016 Diversity Task Force this Diversity Statement is available online through the Center for Diversity and Inclusion (CDI) website. The CDI supports the College’s diversity goals through its educational programming and services. The CDI provides resources that foster awareness and empower students and the campus community with the knowledge, tools, and experiences that promote global citizenship and a more inclusive campus. The CDI also helps with the facilitation of grants, events, and committees that are committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) work on campus such as the DEI Council and the Diversity Trainers and Advocates for Change, a grassroots faculty group formed to support DEI initiatives across campus. Offered throughout the year, DEI training modules are a staff requirement. As of the AY 20-21, 85% of the faculty and staff had completed at least one module (Source: Human Resources).

Members of the Diversity Trainers and Advocates for Change, along with other members of faculty, have been actively engaged in efforts to provide informational and instructional resources to faculty. A description of these initiatives is in Standard III.

Cedar Crest maintains a Bias Response Team to address bias incident reports filed from the campus community. Students with bias concerns utilize the bias response page on the College’s my.cedarcrest intranet to generate a report to the Executive Director for Diversity and Inclusion via Maxient, a confidential report-monitoring support service. The Director distributes



bias response forms to the Bias Response Team for review and follow-up at its monthly meeting. The additional Bias Response Team members comprise the Vice President (VP) of Student Services and Success/ Dean of Students, the Executive Director of Human Resources and Title IX Coordinator, and the Associate Provost. The Bias Response Team reviews submissions for policy violations or campus climate concerns and follows up with the reporter and the offender when deemed necessary.

In the face of national crises related to social justice and racial equity in 2020, Cedar Crest completed a process of introspective DEI work. The short-term Racial Equity Committee (REC) process guided by the Board of Trustees began in July 2020 and concluded in May 2021 with a final report presented to the Board May 13, 2021 (EI.II.4-BOT Diversity Report). Work towards creating an equitable campus community began immediately and an Equity Action Plan (EI.II.5- Equity Action Plan) is a result of the REC report and The Diverse Learning Environment (DLE) survey administered in spring of 2016 and spring of 2021. Developed from this process, the goals and objectives of the plan will remain the foundation from which all ongoing DEI workflows. The Equity Action Plan will go into effect for the AY 2022-2023 (Criterion 2).

### **Grievance Policies and Procedures**

Cedar Crest College maintains a consistent set of policies and procedures to address complaints and grievances from faculty, staff, and students. These guidelines comply with all federal and state regulations. The administration in collaboration with Faculty Council (FAC), Faculty Personnel Committee (FPC), and Faculty Grievance Committee (FGC) develop and maintain grievance policies and procedures for faculty through shared governance. Human resources develop and maintain grievance policies and procedures for staff. The Provost and the faculty's Academic Policy and Standards Committee (APSC) develop and maintain grievance policies and procedures for students through the shared governance process. This section outlines access to and descriptions of key policies for each of these three constituent groups and demonstrates compliance with Criterion 3 of this Standard.

#### **Student Grievances**

All students have access to grievance policies via the Student Handbook. Students receive the Student Handbook (EI.IV.1-Student Handbook) via email at the beginning of each academic year. The Student Handbook is on the Student Affairs page of the College website, and the my.cedarcrest intranet.

As outlined in these handbooks, students submitting a complaint must complete a Student Complaint Form. Students may access the Student Complaint webpage on the College website. This page has a table that clearly outlines the different areas of potential concern and appropriate contacts and steps to resolution. The VP of Student Services and Success/Dean of Students and the Provost monitor the electronic filing of Student Complaint forms. The dissemination of the completed forms to the appropriate campus respondent occurs via the Maxient software. Reports of Title IX issues go directly to the Title IX Coordinator via the webpage.

The Provost addresses academic concerns and the Vice President of Student Success and Student Affairs addresses student affairs related concerns. An outline of student appeals of academic misconduct deadlines and procedures are in Faculty Handbook Book IV.C.16.





### ***Student Complaints to Other Organizations or Accreditors***

The Student Complaint and Student Right to Know webpages on the College's website provides information regarding complaints about Cedar Crest to the NC-SARA. Explanation of the process for filing a complaint to NC-SARA, the deadline for complaints (2 years), and a link to the NC-SARA Student Complaint page is there. The page also contains the contact information for student complaints to the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE). Programs with external accreditations display contact information on their accreditors in student handbooks and academic webpages.

### **Faculty Grievances**

Grievance policies exist across multiple Faculty Handbooks with Faculty Handbook III.L.1-3 (EI.II.3) outlining faculty grievance policies and procedures. Faculty Council hears grievances related to Faculty Handbook II (EI.II.1) while FPC hears grievances related to Faculty Handbook III (EI.II.3). The FGC responds to individual faculty grievances and make recommendations to the President. Any faculty member feeling adversely affected by a violation, misinterpretation, or improper application of the provisions of the Faculty Handbooks may petition for a review by the FGC (Book III.L). The Faculty Handbook is available on the College website on the Information for Faculty page and the my.cedarcrest intranet. The handbooks encourage faculty to resolve conflicts with their department chair/dean prior to filing a grievance. The Office of the Ombuds is another resource for faculty to seek confidential guidance; this process description is below.

### **Staff Grievances**

Staff and administration follow the policies set forth in the Staff Handbook (EI.II.6). Employees on an annual basis review the Staff Handbook located on the Automatic Data Processing (ADP) website. Each employee maintains a confidential username and password for this website. Section V of the Staff Handbook details workplace policies. There is a section entitled Harassment Free Environment Policy, which discusses procedures for managing any type of harassment on campus, including submitting a complaint. There is also an open-door policy in the handbook, which describes the process for managing a conflict or issue in the workplace. Section VI of the Staff Handbook, Performance and Discipline, contains a section on the College's Problem-Solving Policy. This section describes the process of reporting a problem at the College. The section refers an employee to his/her direct supervisor. If the dispute is unresolved, the employee may contact Human Resources or the Office of the Ombuds.

### **Office of the Ombuds**

Cedar Crest College maintains an Ombuds Office to provide all employees with a confidential venue to discuss a campus concern. The Office operates under the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice of the International Ombudsman Association (IOA). The Ombuds' webpage describes which topics the Ombuds may or may not manage. Contact information for the Ombuds is on the webpage and in printed brochures provided to employees. The goal of the Ombuds process is to support finding a collaborative resolution to challenges for campus employees.



### **Ethics Point Website**

Cedar Crest is committed to the highest standards of ethical conduct among all members of the College community. Information about the College's Whistleblower Policy is available to faculty (EI.II.7-Faculty Handbook V.I.D, p.5), and staff (EI.II.6- Staff Handbook I, p. 14) in their respective handbooks. An active link in the handbooks directs employees to the Ethics Point website. Ethics Point is an anonymous, third-party complaint and whistleblower website. An individual who feels unable to report misconduct, harassment, or non-compliance issues to a direct supervisor or the Chief Financial Officer/Chief Operating Officer (CFO/COO) may complete a form anonymously on the Ethics Point site. Ethics Point is a confidential reporting mechanism with cases assigned to the CFO/COO and the Executive Director of Human Resources for investigation. Alternate case assignment pathways exist if the complaint names the CFO/COO and/or Executive Director of Human Resources.

### **Employment and Staffing**

Employment practices and policies are in keeping with Cedar Crest College's mission and priorities. The College encourages open communication and feedback regarding performance and provides resources and support for employees to address concerns. This section satisfies Criterion 5 of this Standard.

#### **Employment Practices**

Cedar Crest College's policies provide equal employment opportunities to all employees and applicants as defined in Equality Opportunity Employment (EOE) regulations. All decisions regarding terms and conditions of employment occur based on the ability and competency to perform the skills and services required. This applies to all phases and conditions of employment, including, but not limited to, recruitment, selection, placement, transfer, promotion, training, compensation, benefits, and termination. The College leverages processes to ensure fair, impartial, and inclusive employment practices that limit the role unconscious bias may play in employment-related decisions. These processes also assess candidate and employee alignment with institutional mission and values.

Employment policies and practices comply with applicable local, state, and federal regulations found in Faculty Handbooks III (EI.II.3), V (EI.II.7), and the Staff Handbook (EI.II.6-Staff Handbook). The Staff Handbook receives updating annually. Then, Human Resources distributes it to administrative and support staff for review. Communication of major policy or practice changes to the campus community in a timely manner may take place outside of the annual distribution period, depending on the significance. The Office of the Provost updates the Faculty Handbook annually as changes occur.

#### **Staffing for Programs and Growth**

The College desires to reflect in its programs the evolution of current academic disciplines over time and the development of new disciplines. Achieved by planning at the departmental level for the future of the discipline and its course offerings, these goals maintain flexibility as needed in the staffing of the discipline and associated support departments.

Each year, as part of its curricular and budgetary planning process, departments project the programmatic and staffing needs of each discipline represented within the department. These



plans take into consideration past and current enrollment in courses, projected enrollment trends both at the local and national levels, as well as plans for growth or modification of the course offerings in response to student needs or interests, or developments in the discipline. This process forms the basis for determining course offerings in the discipline and staffing requirements. This process also forms the basis for programmatic recommendations made to the Provost, FAC, and Curriculum on Undergraduate Education (CUE), Graduate Program and Policy Committee (GPPC), CFO/COO, and the President.

### ***Faculty Employment***

The Faculty Handbook III (EI.II.3) and the Guide to Hiring a Diverse Faculty (EI.II.8) outline the College's well-defined policies to recruit, retain, and promote qualified faculty; evaluate the competence and performance of faculty; and support the professional development and advancement of faculty. The use of Interfolio, a faculty information system, allows the College to increase transparency, equity, and efficiency around academic staffing decisions. The College utilizes the Faculty Search module, which supports diverse hiring processes through posting creation, job application submission, committee review, and applicant selection, as well as the Review, Promotion and Tenure module which supports the collection of review materials and approval workflows for appointment, reappointment, and promotion.

New faculty participate in a first-year onboarding program. A senior faculty member and an administrator from the academic affairs division directs this program. A description of this program is in the evidence inventory (EI.II.9- New Faculty Mentoring Program) and described fully in Standard III. Faculty evaluations occur annually by their department chair/dean in teaching, professional development/scholarship, and service to the College and the community. The outline with criteria for evaluation according to faculty rank and tenure are in Faculty Handbook III.B (EI.II.3). The College adopted the Boyer Model in 2021 to evaluate faculty in the category of professional and scholarly activities. This allows for more equity and inclusiveness across disciplines, especially with the development of more practitioner programs as part of a comprehensive college.

### ***Staff Employment***

Staff hiring practices closely align to the faculty process, utilizing the Interfolio Faculty Search module to support fair, inclusive, and impartial hiring processes. In addition, there is a multi-layer review and approval process for hiring new employees as well as for internal transfers and promotions. Periodic evaluations of all staff provide insight regarding each employee's professional growth and development. Supervisors should bring areas of concern or accomplishment to an employee's attention on a regular basis and complete a written performance evaluation for each employee on an annual basis. Reviews and updates of job responsibilities occur annually during the review process.

Employment for staff at the College is at will, meaning that the College or the employee may terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without cause and with or without notice. The Staff Handbook (EI.II.6) contains a full description of terms of employment for staff.





## **Honesty and Truthfulness**

To maintain honesty and truthfulness in public relations announcements, advertisements, and recruitment materials, the College's office of marketing abides by the Statement of Ethics set forth by the American Marketing Association. The statement focuses on ethical norms that include "do no harm," foster truth in the marketing system, and embrace ethical values. These ethical values include honesty, responsibility, fairness, respect, transparency, and citizenship. This section addresses Criterion 6 of this Standard.

### **Marketing- Public Relations Announcements and Advertisements**

Cedar Crest uses a third-party vendor, Carnegie Dartlet, to confirm that all marketing materials are in alignment with our core mission and brand as approved by the College using data from a 3-year study to inform future personality pieces and reinforce brand awareness. In collaboration with Carnegie Dartlet, Cedar Crest utilizes three institutional personality types to maintain integrity by advertising the College's authentic identity. These institutional personality types include: 1) Dedicated Leader which highlights influence and independence; 2) Inspired Transformer which highlights intelligence and forward thinking, and 3) Inclusive Power which highlights the collaborative, compassionate, and caring personality of the Institution. This process allows the College to adjust its messaging to accommodate changing demographics.

Recently, to better support the LatinX community, the College has committed to adding Spanish-language materials. The IT Department is also in the process of adding Google Translate to the College's website to further support linguistic diversity via user experience. Accessibility on both mobile and computer platforms is currently set for review in the spring of 2022.

### **Admissions- Recruiting and Admissions Practices**

Policies, procedures, and materials utilized to locate and select qualified individuals who have the educational prerequisites and the interest and motivation to pursue educational programs at the College comply with state and federal laws and regulations ensuring nondiscrimination and equal opportunity.

The Admissions Office's work with Carnegie Dartlet revealed that on-campus student experiences yield higher conversion rates with applicants. As such, Cedar Crest holds a fall departmental scholarship day where winners receive monies from the department to which they express interest on their admissions application. In late January or early February, the College hosts a College Scholarship Day. The competition is by invitation only and includes high-achieving high school students. Participants complete an online examination with the top ten ranking students competing in an essay-writing competition, and the top-five participating in interviews. Every participant receives a monetary award relative to their placement in the exam portion of the event. The top winner receives a full scholarship. Admissions also hold an Accepted Students Day annually in March or April. These events have proven successful in attracting students to campus.

The Admissions Office provides prospective students with written policies and procedures related to the protection of student rights consistent with current institutional practice. These policies and procedures clearly identify the background necessary, and define the expectations for admission to, continuation in, and completion of academic programs at the



College. All statements made about college programs and services in promotional advertising, catalogs, or other institutional publications are accurate, and are in alignment with the College's institutional priorities of providing academic excellence, a diverse and inclusive environment offering exceptional resources and student services. The Admissions Office works closely with faculty and academic departments in the annual review of all materials utilized for student recruitment.

Prospective student advisement of the typical suitability requirements to prepare students for application to undergraduate, graduate or certificate programs, or the job market happens during the recruitment and admissions process. Admitted students receive accurate and timely information about the academic calendar and academic policies through the Student Handbook and College's Undergraduate or Graduate Catalog. Accredited undergraduate programs provide students with handbooks which define the requirements of the major in an advising meeting. Graduate program directors provide students with program specific information upon admission.

### **Affordability and Accessibility**

As part of its mission, the College focuses on access to education. This includes a commitment to making the college experience affordable to students and their families. To that end, recruitment events include information about academic programs, student experience, and the cost of education. Specific emphasis on financial literacy ensures that potential students and their parents understand commonly used terms when reviewing award letters, student invoices, and completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®). At each event, Student Financial Services personnel are on site to meet with families, support the completion of the FAFSA® and answer any questions that families may have. Presentations about the FAFSA® and cost of attendance provide students and families with expected family contribution and federal loan programs.

#### **Affordability**

The College currently offers the State Tuition Access Rate (STAR) program that matches in-state tuition rate at a student's home state flagship public institution when they meet certain academic requirements. Most Cedar Crest students are STAR-eligible. This provides a private education at a state college price. The College has also implemented a commitment to ensuring that students graduate within four years, also known as the Four-Year Guarantee (4YG) for most undergraduate programs. Students who follow and meet the criteria as outlined by the College will graduate within that timeframe, and if not, the College will facilitate expedited offerings, or pay for the remaining balance of tuition costs (Criteria 7a and b).

#### **Accessibility**

The Director of Student Accessibility Services works with students in need of accommodation. Enhancements within the area of disability services have improved the College's ability to serve various populations of students successfully. The College has witnessed an increase in students with accommodations annually. This year the College had 169 students receiving accommodations. The College has made Kurzweil3000, which makes text-to-speech tools available to all students. The Student Success Center has eight testing spaces with



dividers and lamps, white noise canceling headsets, computers that monitor testing time, calculators, and storage lockers. Modifications to classroom equipment meet current ADA requirements. Information on development of accessible content is in the Canvas Learning Management System course for faculty, which includes topics such as captioning videos, course recording transcripts, and making documents accessible. Students, faculty, and staff may submit an accessibility barrier report to the department through a newly created process. Lastly, the completion of updates to the student and faculty handbooks with disability service information critical to student success takes place annually (Criterion 7a).

### **Key Findings**

- The College has policies in place to ensure compliance with federal, state, and MSCHE regulations. The Compliance Committee oversees this area and meets bi-annually to manage risks.
- The College demonstrates respect and appreciation for all its community members through its commitment to DEI through activities and initiatives across the College.
- The College supports an Ombuds Office encouraging collaborative and respectful means of conflict resolution.
- The College has clear policies in place for faculty, staff, and student grievances.
- The College assures honesty and truthfulness in advertising in marketing and public relations through adherence to the American Marketing Association guidelines.
- The College demonstrates commitment to accessibility and affordability.
- The College acknowledges that faculty and diversity is not representative of the student population's diversity. Efforts to diversify the faculty/staff are ongoing.





## Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Experience

Requirements of Affiliation: 8, 9, 10, and 15

Institutional Priorities: *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Resources for College Innovation, and Academic Excellence as a Comprehensive College with Undergraduate and Graduate Programs in the Liberal and Practitioner Arts*





### **Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Experience**

*An institution provides students with learning experiences that are characterized by rigor and coherence at all program, certificate, and degree levels, regardless of instructional modality. All learning experiences, regardless of modality, program pace/schedule, level, and setting are consistent with higher education expectations.*

#### **Undergraduate Curriculum: Aligned with Mission, Enhancing Learning, and Preparing Students for Success**

The College's curriculum for First Year Traditional Students enhances engagement and learning throughout a student's academic career beginning with the First Year Experience (FYE), a two-semester sequence combining a traditional 3-credit first year seminar and two 0.5 credit courses to develop students' skills and connection with campus resources. Engagement continues with the Carmen Twillie Ambar Sophomore Year Expedition (CTA SYE), which consists of a 3-credit course and week-long international study tour for all eligible sophomore students. Five hundred and thirty students have traveled internationally through this program from 2018 to 2021. While there are not equivalent first year and second year programs for undergraduate students admitted through the School of Adult and Graduate Education (SAGE), or traditional students who transfer with sophomore (or higher) status, the FYE Leadership Team has developed proposals for equivalent programming for first-semester transfer students. Additionally, Academic Services piloted CSS 150 Becoming a Master Student as a first-year experience style course for SAGE undergraduate students, though low enrollment forced its cancellation.

The undergraduate and graduate curricula provide diverse learning opportunities for students across a broad range of majors and programs of study. The College offers 75 different academic programs in the 2020-2021 Undergraduate Catalog, which includes 38 majors (16 BA and 22 BS degrees), 32 minors, and 7 certificate programs. The Graduate Catalog lists 17 programs of study including four doctoral programs. In addition, 4+1 programs allow students to complete a combined undergraduate/graduate degree in Master of Business Administration, Master of Science in Integrative Exercise Science, Master of Education, and Master of Crime Science. Cedar Crest College also has three pre-professional advising programs in Pre-Medicine, Pre-Veterinary advising, and Pre-Dentistry that prepare students for graduate programs in health-related fields, and 4 +2 and 3+4 program affiliations with Salus University. The College also supports Audiology, Optometry, Blindness: Low Vision Studies, and Physician Assistant programs affiliated with Salus University (Criteria 1, 3 and 4).

The undergraduate curriculum has evolved to accommodate the needs of our adult undergraduate student population. As of 2021, 20 programs offer SAGE-compatible majors. A systematic review process completed in 2019 responded to program delivery availability and adult student needs. This review defined the need for coursework offered entirely online or during courses scheduled conveniently for adult lives, such as in the evening or over weekends. This compares with 14 SAGE-compatible majors offered by the College in 2013 (Criteria 1 3 and 4).



The College's graduate programs are rigorous and responsive to the needs of students and the community. Graduate programs of study provide students with diverse learning experiences to support professional development. The graduate curriculum utilizes four values as its foundation: Scholarship, Innovation, Collaboration, and Professionalism. Instructors deliver graduate programs in multiple modalities such as face-to-face, hybrid, HyFlex, and online. These options allow flexibility to students managing a work/school/life balance (Criterion 6).

The endpoint for most undergraduate majors is the capstone experience with completion of a course, series of courses, or integrative portfolio as a culmination of the students' experience. Many students presented these projects at the College's Capstone Presentation Day, an academic event designed to disseminate and highlight student work. In May 2021, 155 students presented their capstone experiences across a variety of academic majors. The endpoint for most graduate programs of study is a thesis, final project, or dissertation as a culmination of their academic work rooted in the principles of research, scholarship, and independent/critical thinking. Program directors invite the campus community to the oral presentations of student scholarly work as required by the program (Criterion 6).

As a liberal arts college, Cedar Crest emphasizes undergraduate learning experiences that extend beyond the student's academic major. The College's Liberal Arts Curriculum (LAC) consists of 40 general education credits distributed across eight areas of knowledge: Arts, Humanities, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, Ethics, Global Studies, Mathematics & Logic, and Writing. Assessment of the LAC-provided general education on a systematic basis ensures these courses continue to enhance student learning. Faculty evaluate student learning in Oral Communication, Information Literacy, and Technological Competency as requirements embedded in each undergraduate major (Criterion 5b and Requirement of Affiliation 9). Standard V details the undergraduate general education assessment process. Program directors/department chairs/deans establish student learning outcomes for their respective graduate programs of study. Directors/chairs/deans monitor these outcomes annually in the Annual Assessment Report (AAR) and every five years in the Periodic Program Review (PPR) (Criterion 8).

Recognizing the value of global engagement to post-graduate success, a central part of the College's mission, is preparing students for life in a global community. As such, the College is committed to offering expanded opportunities for students to engage in this aspect of the learning experience. The undergraduate curriculum meets this goal in several ways: the Global Studies LAC requirement, several programs that emphasize global learning, such as the minor in Global Diseases and major in Global Studies, as well as international study tours associated with specific courses. From 2016 to 2020, seven academic departments offered study tours, with a total of 112 participants. As noted, all eligible sophomore students can participate in the CTA SYE, which also fulfills the LAC Global Studies requirement. Placement of this experience in the sophomore year keeps students connected with the institution while fostering academic growth and personal development as a part of a global community. The costs of the CTA SYE, less the cost of any travel documents that students must provide, ensures equitable access to international learning opportunities. Further, all students who choose to study abroad at any point during their Cedar Crest career receive awards up to \$2,500 in study abroad scholarships. In the past six years (Academic Year 2015 – 2020), 114 scholarship awards totaled \$103,750 (EI.III.1-Study Abroad Funding). (Criteria 1, 4, and 5a)





The graduate curriculum also allows for study abroad opportunities in alignment with its mission. However, few students take advantage of these opportunities due to work/life commitments. In 2012, the College created the Pan-European Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing. This low-residency program offers students distinct experiences to support global learning through three 15-day residencies in various European locales over the summer months (Criteria 5a and 6).

To ensure the College's curriculum is providing enhanced student-learning experiences and preparing students for success, individual undergraduate majors and graduate programs of study assess outcomes annually via AAR (EI.V.4 AAR Template) and PPR on a five-year cycle (EI.V.2- PPR Guidelines). These systematic assessments allow faculty, department chairs/deans/program directors, and other stakeholders to identify strengths and address areas that need improvement. Standard V provides further information on the AAR and PPR process. Designed as a means for academic programs to plan for and respond to shifting enrollment and financial scenarios, an Academic Portfolio Evaluation (APE) took place during academic year (AY) 2020-2021 served to assist department chairs/deans with managing programs as part of the comprehensive mix of all those offered by the College. The APE assessed academic programs across three domains: quality, opportunity, and cost across the College. Within the context of quality, programs identified areas of collaboration and efficiency to enhance student learning and career preparedness. The APE process description is in Standard V (EI.V.3) (Criterion 8 and Requirement of Affiliation 8, 9 and 10).

To further enhance the undergraduate curriculum, the College also offers student learning opportunities designed, delivered, or assessed by consortium providers. Students can take courses at other local institutions through Lehigh Valley Association of Independent Colleges (LVAIC) cross-registration, and through online consortia partnerships with other institutionally accredited independent colleges and universities (the Council of Independent College's Online Consortium through Acadeum, 2020-present; the Lower Cost Model for Independent Colleges Consortium through Rize, 2022-present; and prior to 2021 the Online Consortium of Independent Colleges and Universities). These providers allow students additional opportunities to complete degree requirements in a timely manner or to supplement their Cedar Crest education with exposure to disciplines and courses not otherwise offered at the College. Students also pursue additional educational opportunities through off-site internships, clinical and/or fieldwork, study abroad, and transfer credits. For these external educational opportunities, faculty advisors, supervising faculty, department chairs/deans, or program directors are responsible for evaluating their instructional merit and curricular equivalency. Managed by the Registrar's Office, which retains records of course approvals by the appropriate faculty, this process ensures appropriate transcription and application of these credits to students' academic records and degree requirements (Criterion 7).

The combination of the undergraduate LAC, major and minor program requirements, global engagement, and leadership opportunities prepare students for achievement beyond their college years, as demonstrated by the success of the College's alumnae obtaining employment post-graduation. Graduates complete surveys 6 months post degree completion to assess their success in job and graduate school placement.



**Table 3.1**  
*Undergraduate Career Survey Data*

Survey Year	Employed (full-and part-time) 6 Months after Graduation	Continuing Education 6 Months after Graduation	Engaged Overall 6 Months after Graduation
2016	74%	17%	93%
2017	72%	16%	89%
2018	69%	18%	87%
2019	63%	19%	84%
2020	78%	8%	90%

Self-reported post-graduation survey results indicate 10% of 2020 graduates continuing to seek employment up to six months after graduation which is up from 6.8% in 2016. These findings demonstrate a need to connect students more intentionally to employment search strategies and to post-graduation opportunities. The COVID-19 Pandemic also may have impacted employment figures in 2020. Positively, students have demonstrated significant earning potential, with self-reported mean salaries of \$62,525 (class of 2016) 5 years post-graduation. Master’s degree completers (class of 2016) self-reported in a 5-year post-graduation survey an overall engagement rate of 100% (83% employed full-time, 8% employed part-time, and 9% continuing education) (E.I.2- Academic Affairs Dashboard). (Criteria 1, 5a, and 6)

The evidence demonstrated the College provides undergraduate and graduate students with rigorous and coherent learning experiences that are consistent with higher education expectations. Cedar Crest is intentional in its approach to engaging undergraduate students in the LAC, co-curricular programs like the First Year Experience and the CTA SYE, as well as interdisciplinary learning opportunities throughout their academic experience. Graduate programs stress scholarship, innovation, collaboration, and professionalism, which provides them with the skills needed for professional development and career success (Criterion 6).

### **Integrating Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

In response to an increasingly diverse student body at Cedar Crest and the national conversation about racism, social justice, and equity, the College faculty are engaged in an ongoing process to better integrate diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) into student learning experiences. This section outlines recent evidence of this work.

The development of several programs provided faculty opportunities and resources to strengthen their pedagogy as it relates to DEI. Since 2018, the College has offered four Diversity Education Modules (workshops) to faculty and staff as described in Standards I and II. Additionally, faculty may apply for Innovative Diversity Efforts Awards (IDEA) Grants help fund campus initiatives from faculty and staff that advance the College’s commitment to diversity. Beginning in AY 2019, the Faculty Discussion Series: Informal Conversations About Racism, Curriculum, and Pedagogy brought faculty together to learn and discuss social justice issues, including racism, microaggressions, and accommodations. This monthly faculty speaker



series spotlights those faculty whose research or teaching addresses racism, diverse pedagogies, or social advocacy.

In fall 2020, College faculty developed the Anti-Racist Resources and Pedagogy Canvas Course. This Canvas course provided resources to faculty and staff who were seeking ways to incorporate DEI into their courses, research, and engagement with students. All faculty and staff have access to this Canvas course. Discipline-specific resource pages organize the material. Additionally, the course provides information on advising and mentoring, curriculum design, and links to college resources. As part of the ongoing work around DEI, faculty and staff members submit resources so that the course can be an evolving resource.

In addition to the development of the Anti-Racist Resources and Pedagogy Canvas Course, faculty and staff members worked to develop a diversity rubric presented to faculty in August 2020. This rubric provides a guide for faculty members to evaluate their courses and teaching practices to assess where they are integrating diverse perspectives into class content and engagement, as discussed in Standard V (EI.III.2- Culturally Responsive Teaching Rubric).

In spring 2021, the Faculty Council President introduced the Faculty Curriculum Survey, which utilized aspects of the diversity rubric to assess the principles of DEI present in course content and classroom pedagogy. Of the 89 faculty members that received the survey, 68 completed it, representing at least one faculty member from each academic department. In all, faculty evaluated 205 different courses on curriculum and content as an initial baseline, with the goal of using the rubric to expand and enhance embedding diversity into the curriculum (EI.III.3- Faculty Diversity Survey Data).

In summer 2021, College faculty and staff were able to participate in a Lehigh Valley Association of Independent Colleges (LVAIC) consortium series focused on the book, What Inclusive Instructors Do. Author Tracie Addy was an invited speaker at the August 2021 College faculty workshop, where she engaged faculty in small group activities that encouraged them to incorporate inclusive language and practices into syllabi and classroom teaching strategies. These resources and workshops provide faculty with the professional development necessary to meet the needs of our students and ensure that pedagogy remains rigorous and aligned with the College's commitment to DEI.

In addition to faculty development, the College has instituted and expanded other DEI policies that support the student learning experience. For instance, a Chosen Name Policy, implemented in January 2020, following the 2016 Transgender Student Task Force's assessment of student needs, recognized students' preferences to reference names other than their legal name. This policy allows students acknowledgment, both inside and outside of the classroom, by the name that is most reflective of who they are as an individual, which helps faculty and students build more genuine and authentic relationships.

All faculty/instructors receive a Disability and Accessibility Handbook via email after consulting with the Director of Disability Services, and all faculty have access to a Canvas course that provides instructional and reference information on designing accessible content. The Director of Student Accessibility Services is available for one-on-one conversations and consultations with both faculty and students. Faculty members also have the capability to provide referrals to the Student Accessibility Services for students needing disability services and accommodations. Beginning in AY 2020, College's Diversity Statement and information about the accommodation process for students with disabilities is in the Canvas academic policy





modules. The College requires all courses to have a Canvas shell and faculty to have a Canvas presence.

Integrating DEI more intentionally into the curriculum is ongoing and the College continuously assesses student perceptions to determine if such initiatives are contributing to a positive learning environment. In AY 2015 and AY 2020, the College administered the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) Student Diverse Learning Environments (DLE). This assessment captures student perceptions regarding the institutional climate, campus practices as experienced with faculty, staff, and peers, and student learning outcomes (HERI survey descriptions). Standard IV reports details of these survey results.

### **Resources Supporting Delivery of the Learning Experience and Students' Academic Progress**

Cedar Crest provides a variety of resources to support the delivery of the learning experience and students' academic progress. The College's faculty are sufficient in number and qualifications to support the student learning experience. As of the fall 2021 semester, 81% of the College's 74 full-time faculty have a terminal degree; the average class size is 14 and, with 77% of classes having 20 or fewer students, and a student: faculty ratio of 9:1. With a 35% student population of color, the College is committed to increasing diversity among the faculty as this supports diverse and inclusive practices in that diverse students see themselves reflected in the faculty body (Criteria 2 b and c and Requirement of Affiliation 15).

Faculty deliver the curriculum via multiple modalities (face-to-face, online, hybrid, and Hyflex). Assessment of the effectiveness of these modalities is a part of PPR to ensure the quality of teaching in all modalities meets the College's rigorous standards. To support delivery of courses, the Office of Information Technology equipped classrooms with necessary technology and provides training and workshops throughout the year. More specific information about the support provided during the COVID-19 pandemic is below. The College's Senior Instructional Designer works directly with faculty to enhance the use of teaching technologies, such as Canvas, Microsoft Teams, Folium, TurnItIn, Proctortrack, and more. These tools allow faculty to connect with students in multiple ways and support academic integrity. Additionally, faculty orientation to the Canvas platform occurs as new employees and faculty peers serve as Canvas coaches to offer support and suggestions for optimizing the available instructional technology (Criterion 2d and Requirement of Affiliation 15).

Information technology training is one means by which the College supports faculty in delivery of the curriculum. Additionally, the College offers Faculty Development Awards, competitive grants to strengthen the quality of the educational program, such as original research, conference presentations or professional enrichment. Bi-annual faculty workshops incorporate professional development opportunities on a range of topics, such as supporting first-generation students, academic advising, and Folium (Criteria 2 a and d).

Faculty new to the College participate in a first-year onboarding program directed by a senior faculty member and administrator from the Academic Affairs division. New faculty and a senior faculty mentor pair in an informal mentor/mentee relationship. Senior faculty meet with new faculty on a regular basis to assist with transition to the College and develop an understanding of college policies and procedures related to teaching, service, and scholarship. Additionally, each cohort of new faculty members meets monthly throughout the first year of



employment at the direction of the orientation program directors. During these monthly sessions, discussions of topics such as instructional delivery modalities, Canvas usage, faculty development, scholarship, and service take place. An agenda for this program is in the evidence inventory (EI.II.9- New Faculty Mentoring Program). (Criteria 2 a and d)

Faculty evaluations consist of regular peer observations of teaching, annual faculty self-evaluations, student course evaluations, and department chair/dean evaluations for nontenured faculty members. Non-tenure track faculty obtain peer teaching evaluations annually and tenure-track faculty obtain peer teaching evaluations twice per year. The handbook recommends that tenured faculty members seek a peer teaching evaluation every three years (EI.II.3-Faculty Handbook III.G.3.b). All faculty complete an annual self-evaluation submitted by September 1<sup>st</sup> (EI.II.3-Faculty Handbook III.G.2). Faculty self-evaluations serve as a tool for faculty to reflect on teaching practice/pedagogy, scholarly work, and service to the College. A regular cycle for faculty members allows them to receive feedback from department chairs/deans, as well as the Office of the Provost. Faculty meet with the Provost as part of the evaluation process on a three-year cycle. The faculty evaluation process (EI.II.3-Faculty Handbook III.G) and responsibilities in the areas of teaching, professional development, and scholarship are in the Faculty Handbook (Book III.C [EI.II.3]). In the 2020-2021 academic year, faculty adopted use of the Boyer Model for faculty demonstration of performance around scholarship (EI.II.3-Faculty Handbook III.C.2.b.ii). This adoption of the Boyer Model was based on the College's growth as a comprehensive institution with increasing numbers of practitioner faculty and a broader number of faculty doing inclusive scholarship in community settings. All students complete anonymous course evaluations each semester via SmartEvals (EI.II.3-Faculty Handbook III.G.3.a). Student feedback is integral to this process and incorporated into faculty self-evaluations as well as department chair/dean and Provost evaluations related to teaching effectiveness. This process of regular reflection and evaluation ensures faculty excellence in teaching and scholarship (Criterion 2e and Requirement of Affiliation 15).

Outside the classroom, all students have access to multiple resources that support delivery of the learning experience. The Cressman Library gives students access to 95 databases and provides access to 33,298 electronic journals used for research. In addition, Cressman Library has published 83 electronic Research Guides, or LibGuides, on topics, disciplines, or courses.

To support students' academic progress, the College uses the ALEKS Math Placement program to help place incoming students in the appropriate level math-course. This tool allows students to feel confident in their skills which translates to better comprehension, academic achievement, and increased retention. From its launch in 2018 through August 2021, 511 ALEKS Math placement assessments took place. During that time, there were 442 unique users and 58 students taking the placement exam multiple times. Forty students improved their placement level in subsequent attempts and 18 students placed at the same level after multiple attempts. ALEKS is an instructional platform for MAT 113, a workshop course that students may take for supplemental support before or in conjunction with other math courses.

The College recognizes that student learning experiences and academic progress also rely on a wide range of integrated services and resources. For example, *Finish Line* has become a key component of the student experience. Introduced in AY 2014, *Finish Line* is an alert system designed to connect faculty, staff, and students to respond to academic concerns, including



student performance, poor attendance, low mid-term grades, and transfer intent, among others. Standard IV contains additional student success services as well as financial support to students in need.

### **Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Students’ Education Experience**

In March of 2020, the College shifted to remote learning because of the COVID-19 pandemic. This shift in delivery required added resources to be allocated to support student learning and success. To prepare faculty, the Office of Information Technology created a set of Web-based resources for faculty to “Get Your Course Online Quickly!” and provided “Tech Talk” trainings to help faculty leverage online platforms for virtual instruction and meetings. In preparation for the 2020-2021 academic year, faculty members within each division volunteered to serve as Faculty Canvas Coaches, to support fellow instructors in better use of online learning management systems. Faculty experts also organized workshops on the HyFlex model of instruction to support the return to the classroom considering social distancing protocols and room capacities. Additionally, faculty received professional development around online teaching pedagogies during the summer of 2020. As part of this ongoing faculty development initiative, faculty participated in the common read, Small Teaching Online, and attended a seminar with the author Flower Darby (Criterion 2d).

To support students during the transition to remote learning, Academic Services developed a page on the my.cedarcrest intranet with resources related online learning and collaborated with the Office of Information Technology to identify students not engaging in Canvas. Academic Services reached out to these students to help them through the transition and aid accessing relevant support resources. While the transition impacted day-to-day operations at the College, faculty and staff worked diligently to ensure academic progression and success with minimal disruption to student learning experiences during this period. As such, results from the HERI DLE Survey administered in spring 2021 indicate student satisfaction following a year of transition to remote instruction.

**Table 3.2**

*HERI DLE Survey Regarding Transition to Remote Learning*

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Cannot Rate/No Experience
Effectiveness of remote instruction	19.5%	36.1%	24.2%	14.1%	3.4%	2.4%
Flexibility with the attendance policy	27.7%	33.7%	20.8%	8.9%	3.5%	5.4%
Instructor flexibility in responding to student concerns	30.5%	36.0%	18.7%	8.4%	4.9%	1.5%
Access to academic support services	19.2%	29.6%	19.2%	3.9%	2.5%	25.6%





### **Communicating Academic Programs, Academic Progress, and Resources to Foster Student Success**

The College is diligent in its communication regarding academic programs, progress, and resources. All relevant information pertaining to academic programs of study, academic progress, and resources for academic success are available in various locations, such as the my.cedarcrest intranet, Canvas, department webpages and handbooks, and the College Catalog. In 2019, the College comprehensively revised and updated its “Academics” webpage to accurately display its expanding portfolio of programs available in the undergraduate women’s college, co-educational undergraduate programs in SAGE, and graduate programs. Information about College-related events and opportunities is on the College’s social media pages, departmental social media pages, and via the Admissions Office. Admissions and recruitment events serve as a primary means for communicating information about academic programs of study to prospective students. Annually, the Admissions Office updates academic departmental promotional fact sheets, seeking input from department chairs/deans to ensure accuracy. Faculty and department representatives attend and participate in admissions and recruitment events, including undergraduate and graduate Open Houses, SAGE student information session, graduate-related programming, and college-wide scholarship days and recruiting events (Criterion 3).

The primary source of information related to academic programs of study for current undergraduate and graduate students is their respective College Catalogs. The Undergraduate Catalog features detailed information on majors, minors, certificates, and interdisciplinary programs, such as the LAC, the FYE, and the Honors Program. The Graduate Catalog offers information about programs of study and certificates. Department chairs/deans/directors annually update the Catalogs via a shared drive maintained by the Registrar’s Office. Students can access current and archived versions of their College Catalog through the College’s website or via the my.cedarcrest intranet (Criterion 3).

The Office of Academic Advising provides information to undergraduate students pertaining to academic programs, as well as academic progress, through the 4-Year plan documents (EI.III.4- Sample 4YG Plan). Academic departments submit revisions to the Recommended Course Sequences (4-Year plans that form the foundation of the 4-Year Guarantee (4YG) program each spring. All undergraduate students and advisors have access to the course sequences and 4YG program documents, beginning with AY 2014, via the my.cedarcrest intranet. The Office of Academic Advising also hosts an annual Majors Fair where current undergraduate students can explore interests, potential academic majors, and graduate programs. The MyMajors online assessment, used by Admissions, Career Planning, and Academic Advising, offers additional opportunities for prospective and current students to explore available programming. SAGE Admissions, graduate program directors, and advisors provide graduate students with information related to programs of study, academic progress, and course sequencing. Career Planning offers resume review and interview skill sessions for all students (Criterion 3).

While not required, some departments share information about academic programs of study through department-specific student undergraduate handbooks; all graduate programs of study require student handbooks in accordance with Book VII.B.2. Undergraduate students in



departments without handbooks rely on the resources described above for information about program requirements.

In addition to majors and minors, all undergraduate students complete the LAC except for SAGE students with an Associate of Arts (AA) or Associates of Science (AS) degree as this previous degree serves to satisfy the College's LAC requirement. The College Catalog contains information about LAC requirements. The Registrar's Office also maintains a portal on the my.cedarcrest intranet that allows students and advisors to search for specific courses that fulfill LAC requirements. Advisors can also access advisees' completed LAC requirements, which has improved efficiency in keeping track of student academic LAC needs. Students can request an LAC audit independently from the Registrar's Office to track their progress.

All students rely heavily on faculty advisors and professional advisors to assist in learning about academic programs of study, academic progress, and connections to resources for student success. Based on office assessment and APE recommendations, the Registrar's Office is currently working to make electronic degree audits available for all undergraduate majors by fall 2022, with initial program audits having been available in the 2021-2022 academic year. The Office of Academic Advising prepares electronic advisee files and records advising notes in the my.cedarcrest intranet. When advisees transition from the Office of Academic Advising to major-specific faculty advisors, the faculty advisor receives the records electronically. However, some faculty advisors and academic departments chose to maintain paper advising files and notes. Graduate student advisors keep either electronic or paper files to maintain student records.

As previously mentioned, College resources provide information about courses students need to progress through a specific program of study. Communication about student academic progress occurs in multiple ways. Faculty utilize the Canvas gradebook feature for undergraduate and graduate students, which allows students to view current information of their course progress. Faculty submit midterm grades for undergraduate students and submit *Finish Line* reports for both undergraduate and graduate students with a C- or lower at any point in the semester. These reports go to the student, the student's advisor(s), and other related College staff to connect students with appropriate support and resources. Additionally, all faculty record attendance during the first two weeks of each semester to support student retention efforts. There are *Finish Line* reports for missed classes, missed assignments, and other academic issues of concern with any faculty or staff member able to submit a report. Since its implementation in AY 2014, 2500-3500 *Finish Line* alert submissions have occurred annually (EI.III.5-*Finish Line* Flow Chart/Total Actions Recorded in *Finish Line*).

Students can also access information related to student success in multiple locations. Links to Academic Advising and Academic Services are available through the my.cedarcrest intranet. In fall 2020, with the need to better connect students with services due to COVID-19 distancing, a dedicated Student Resources and Services module, placed in all Canvas course shells, provided college-wide information pertinent to student success. The Student Resources and Services module also offers information related to the Student Success Center, Tutoring Services, and the Registrar's Office. Additionally, all Canvas courses include Academic Policies module providing students information related to college policies such as Academic Integrity and Attendance. Maintained by the Office of the Provost, these modules ensure accuracy and consistency of information universally across programs.



## **Development and Design of New Programs**

### **Undergraduate Programs**

The foundation of undergraduate programming lies in the mission and guiding principles of the College. Book IV of the Faculty Handbook (EI.III.6-Faculty Handbook IV.A.12.a) outlines the process for developing and designing new undergraduate majors, concentrations, certificates, and minors. Faculty Handbook IV.A.12.b (EI.III.6) contains the new undergraduate course proposal procedures.

A faculty member, department(s), or the Provost initiates a new undergraduate program. Undergraduate academic departments proposing a new major complete a new program proposal form (EI.III.7). As such, this starts a conversation regarding the feasibility and marketability of the new program. The Provost and the Chair of the Committee on Undergraduate Education (CUE) receive the new major proposal simultaneously. Upon receipt, the department chair/dean presents the new major to CUE at a general meeting. New major development reviews assess alignment with the College's mission and goals, career outcomes, costs, and timely completion. If the Provost and CUE approve the new major proposal, the department chairs group reviews it for program effectiveness and similarities to existing programs. Then, FAC reviews the proposal before presentation to the full faculty for a vote. Lastly, the Board of Trustees has final approval of new undergraduate majors (Criterion 1 and Requirement of Affiliation 10).

### **Graduate Programs**

Grounded in the philosophy of teaching excellence, each graduate program aspires to engage graduate level students in four areas: scholarship, innovation, collaboration, and professionalism.

Book VII of the Faculty Handbook (EI.III.8-Faculty Handbook VII.B.6) outlines the process of developing and designing a new graduate program and has effectively resulted in the establishment of eight new graduate degrees since the previous Middle States Self-Study: MBA, Modular Masters, MS in Integrative Exercise Science, Master in Health Science with a Nutrition Concentration, MS in Crime Science, MSN in Adult Acute Care, MSN in Family Primary Care, and four practitioner Doctoral Programs (three in Nursing and one in Occupational Therapy).

A faculty member, department(s), and/or the Provost may initiate a new graduate program, which may lead to an additional certificate, master's degree, or doctoral degree. In doing so, the initial conversation begins with the Provost, who discusses the idea with the President and her Cabinet to determine feasibility from an academic and financial perspective as well as community interest and marketability. If there is preliminary interest, the relevant academic department will complete a new program proposal using the guidelines found in the Information for Faculty tab on the College website. These documents require alignment of course content to the mission of graduate programs as well as the College's mission and vision.

The Provost, FAC, and Graduate Programs and Policy Committee (GPPC) receive the new program proposal (EI.III.7). Each party makes recommendations in 30-45 days. In addition, the Chairs group discusses the initiative to determine any overlap in programming and the overall fit of the proposal; chairs do not vote on the proposal but may make recommendations. If approved by all voting parties, the next step is presentation to the full faculty, who vote on the proposal after a 30-day layover. Once approved by faculty, the Provost brings the proposal to the





President and Board of Trustees for final approval. Faculty Handbook VII.B.7 (EI.III.8) lists new graduate course proposal procedures (Criteria 1 and 6 and Requirement of Affiliation 10).

Similar to undergraduate programs, graduate programs also undergo yearly annual reviews (AAR) and comprehensive periodic reviews (PPR). Faculty Handbook VII.B.5 (EI.III.8) outlines the assessment of graduate programs for consistency, quality, and effectiveness. Standard V addresses the process for annual and periodic assessment.

### **Key Findings**

- As survey findings indicate, larger percentages of undergraduate students seek employment six months after graduation. As such, greater investment in career development is necessary, including expanded opportunities to participate in internships, co-ops, field experience, student teaching, clinical placement, or other hands-on work experience for undergraduate students.
- With the expansion of graduate programming, faculty engage in professional development to support instructional delivery in various modalities. This work is ongoing and expanding to undergraduate programs.
- The College and faculty have made commendable strides in expanding and enhancing access to resources and training to improve DEI in the curriculum and classroom climate. This work is ongoing.
- Most students were very satisfied or satisfied with the support provided during the shift to online/virtual learning. Work around teaching pedagogy is ongoing.
- Advising resources and other forms of communication pertaining to academic programs of study (undergraduate and graduate handbooks, access to electronic advising module) are not consistent across departments and are often located in a multiple of locations, making advising less efficient.
- Since the last Self Study, Cedar Crest has demonstrated commitment to lifelong learning and student success through the expansion of undergraduate SAGE-compatible majors and graduate programs of study.
- The College has successfully provided students with the ability to engage with the global community in multiple ways: the CTA SYE, study tours for undergraduate students, guaranteed scholarships for students studying abroad, and other opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students to study abroad.
- The College may consider first and second year equivalent programming for undergraduate SAGE and transfer students to ensure high-impact touchpoints for all students across the curriculum.
- The process for developing new programs (undergraduate and graduate) involves multiple College stakeholders.



## Standard IV: Support of the Student Learning Experience

Requirements of Affiliation: 8 and 10

Institutional Priorities: *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and Resources for College Innovation*







## Standard IV: Support of the Student Learning Experience

*Across all educational experiences, settings, levels, and instructional modalities, the institution recruits and admits students whose interests, abilities, experiences, and goals are congruent with its mission and educational offerings. The institution commits to student retention, persistence, completion, and success through a coherent and effective support system sustained by qualified professionals, which enhances the quality of the learning environment, contributes to the educational experience, and fosters student success.*

The Mission and Guiding Principles of Cedar Crest College align with the Mission Statement of the Student Affairs, Admissions, and Academic Services areas of the College. An overall positive student experience lends itself to academic success. Standard IV addresses the student experience from the first contact as a prospective student to post-graduation. Many of the initiatives discussed in this Standard have roots in the 2017 Strategic Plan, *The Aspiration of Others* (Requirement of Affiliation 10).

### Fostering Student Success

Cedar Crest College has policies, procedures, and processes in place to support our students in realizing their own vision of success. Published in the College Catalog, the College website, and the Student Handbook, the information is accessible to students. Cedar Crest is committed to educating the whole student as many factors influence a student's academic success. The Faculty Handbook IV.C. (EI.III.6) outlines the Academic Policies governing all accepted undergraduate students, whereas Book VII and program handbooks outline policies pertaining to graduate students. Cedar Crest College values academic integrity. The Student Handbook (EI.IV.1-Student Handbook), Section 2 lists the College Honor Code. Provided to all students, the Student Handbook contains the policies and standards for being a member of the College community. Graduate programs have their own student handbooks, which deal with the graduate student policies and procedures. Student services addressed in this chapter have contributed to student success. This entire section satisfies Criteria 1 a, b, c, and d of Standard IV.

### Admissions Requirements

Cedar Crest College has admissions policies and procedures publicized on the College's website. The College admits traditional students, adult undergraduate and graduate students, transfer students, and international students. Demonstrating its commitment to diversity and inclusion, Cedar Crest encourages applications by interested students of every race, ethnicity, age, and religious affiliation.

Cedar Crest has developed an Enrollment Plan for the next academic years (EI.IV.2-Enrollment Plan). This document will guide College planning as a tuition-driven institution. The Vice President (VP) of Enrollment and Marketing communicates regularly with the Board of Trustees, Cabinet members, and faculty to keep them abreast of enrollment numbers and trending data related to undergraduate and graduate admissions.





**Table 4.1**

*Projected Students FTE*

<b>Fall Semester</b>	<b>Institutional FTE Total Students</b>
2021	1216 ( <i>Actual</i> )
2022	1100
2023	1201

***Traditional Undergraduate Admissions***

Cedar Crest College seeks to enroll students who have shown academic achievement and promise in combination with varied interests, talents, and backgrounds. A student’s high school record is a key factor in the selection of candidates. A good foundation for the Cedar Crest curriculum includes a college preparatory program of four years of English, three years of mathematics, two years of laboratory science, three years of social studies, two years of international language, and three to four academic electives. In individual cases, the College is willing to consider a good student whose preparation does not include all these subjects.

***The School of Adult and Graduate Education (SAGE) Admissions***

Cedar Crest seeks students who want the challenge of an excellent academic program while pursuing the interests and goals that will shape their future lives. Adult undergraduate students entering through SAGE are those who are either twenty-two years of age or older or have been out of high school four or more years and are now pursuing a college degree or certificate.

Students applying to Cedar Crest College graduate programs must provide official transcripts as evidence of a completed bachelor’s degree. Graduate Program Directors review applications to make an admission decision after processing by SAGE admissions.

***International Students***

International Students applying to the College must submit transcripts from their secondary school, complete an application, provide exam results from the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), or a comparable assessment, an English writing sample, teacher recommendations, and a statement of finances.

**Orientation**

All students receive invitations to attend orientation. Orientation for First Year traditional students beginning in the fall semester takes place in two parts. The first part of orientation, Summer Orientation and Registration (SOAR), takes place in June. This required, one-day program offers students a chance to review their fall class schedule, meet with their academic advisor, and learn more about what academic life on campus resembles. Students will also have an opportunity to meet First-Year mentors, other incoming students, and begin making connections that will turn into fast friendships. The second part, August Orientation, is a four-day program that occurs immediately prior to the start of Fall classes. During August Orientation students meet their classmates, academic advisor, faculty, staff members, learn about campus resources, and participate in programming to help with their transition to college. Traditional



transfer students may attend the one-day orientation in June and may opt to participate in the four-day August Orientation program. First Year and Transfer Traditional students beginning in the Spring semester participate in a one-day Orientation prior to the start of classes in January.

The School of Adult and Graduate Education students attend separate orientation sessions focused on information pertinent to adult undergraduate students and graduate students. The School of Adult and Graduate Education (SAGE) offers orientation in two parts: a Canvas course and an in-person Preparation Night. The Canvas course is available to students one month prior to each semester. Preparation Night is an evening event that takes place the week before fall, spring, and summer classes begin. The SAGE Orientation Canvas course includes a pre-semester *To Do List* with suggested items for students complete one week in advance of the start of the semester. The Preparation Night includes options for students to obtain their photo IDs, parking permits, and a campus tour. The Information Technology (IT) department is also available during these sessions to discuss device set up, log on questions, and other information system matters. The Bookstore and Student Financial Services are also both open to assist students.

### **Summer Bridge Program**

In summer 2020, the College piloted a summer bridge program called Aspire. Funded by a grant, its intention was to improve participants' persistence and graduation rates in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields. The College held Aspire on July 26-August 19, 2020, with 11 participants. The program took place in-person, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, allowing students to gain hands-on experience and meaningful engagement with faculty and mentors.

The College reported 100% of Aspire students who completed the program received a grade of C or better in their respective science course sequence at the end of their first semester. Additionally, 88% of Aspire participants received a grade of C or better in their respective math course at the end of the first semester. These results demonstrated that participating students remained on track for their desired degree in their first year. Due to adjustments in course formatting and scheduling, these students' quantitative literacy assessment completion took place after their spring semester. Beyond these three stated goals, five of the participating students made the fall 2020 Dean's List, demonstrating extraordinary academic achievement in their first academic semester.

### **Student Success Center**

Commitment to students' academic success has been a major part of strategic planning at the College. The creation of the Student Success Center and corresponding renovation to Cressman Library in fall 2016 increased campus awareness of student services provided by Academic Services. The Student Success Center houses the Advising Center, Tutoring (peer and professional), Disability Services, IT help desk, and the Cressman Library circulation desk. Students can access student success services through the College website, Canvas, the my.cedarcrest intranet, or by using the area's specific email address. The Student Success Center also features computer and technology resources, collaborative study spaces, and a self-serve café. Smarthinking, a 24/7, online tutoring service, is also available to any student. All student services and academic policies appear in modules on each Canvas course beginning fall 2021, as discussed in Standard III. These modules provide students with easy access to student resources

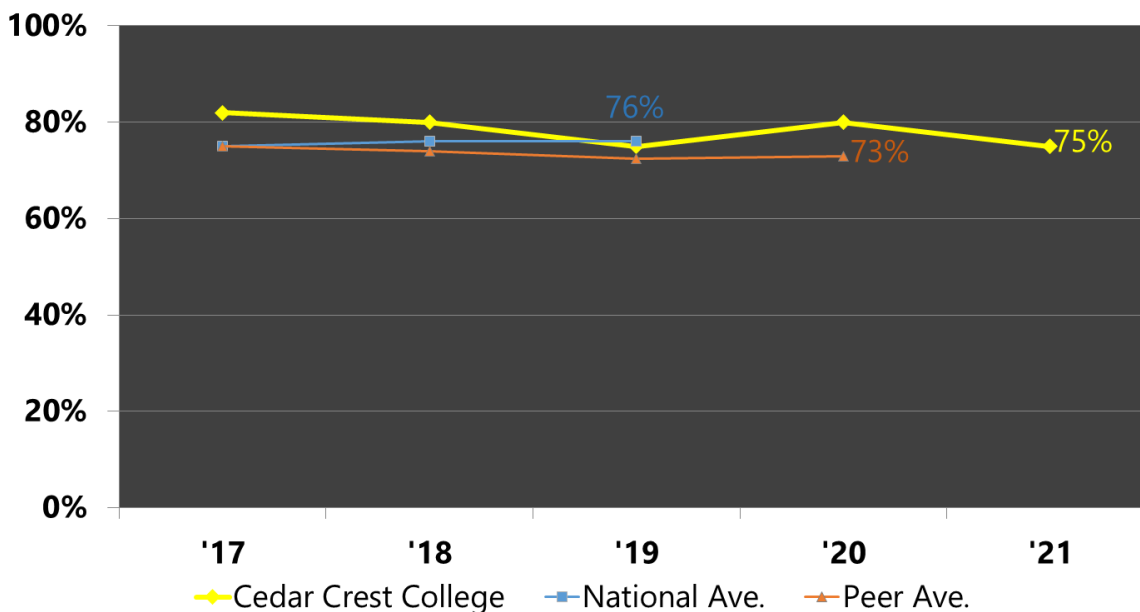


and policies. Since this is a new initiative, the College has not elicited feedback from faculty, staff, and students as to the impact of this change. The Student Success Center was an academic initiative of the transformational student experience pillar of the 2017 Strategic Plan.

**Retention Initiatives**

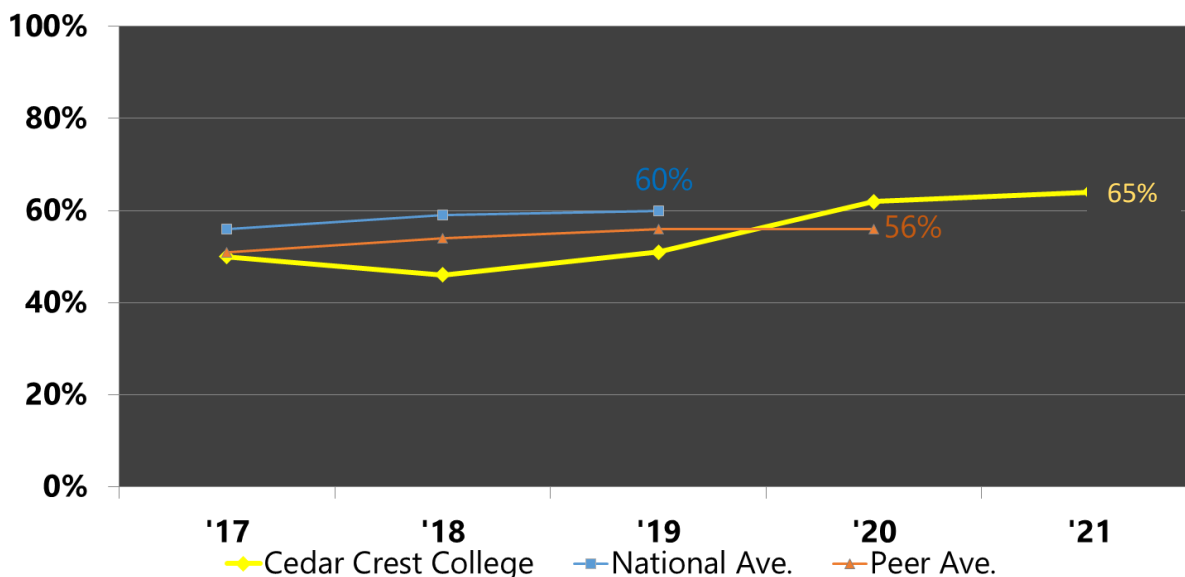
The Vice President of Student Success/Dean of Students and the Provost monitor student attendance through faculty emails and notifications during the first two weeks of each semester (or 7-week session). In fall 2014, the College began using *Finish Line* to monitor student attendance and academic performance. Faculty and staff can file *Finish Line* reports via the my.cedarcrest intranet. As part of the advising process, students meet with their academic advisors prior to registration in spring and fall with first- and second-year students scheduling required meetings with advisors for clearance to register online. Students may meet with their academic advisor at any time during the semester by request as well as advisors may initiate advising meetings upon receipt of a *Finish Line* report of concern. *Finish Line* also includes an option for faculty/staff members to submit a “positive performance” alert, which notifies students and their administrative contacts of positive academic success moments. In AY 2020, 63% of instructors submitted at least one *Finish Line* action (EI.III.5- *Finish Line* Flow Chart/Total Actions Recorded in *Finish Line*).

In fall 2014, the College also instituted the use of a Four-Year Guarantee (4YG [EI.III.4]) for many of its undergraduate majors. Students signature on the 4YG form with their academic advisor guarantees completion of their undergraduate degree in four years barring any academic missteps during their time at the College. Since the institution began assessing metrics such as the 4YG and *Finish Line*, the College’s retention rate has held steady since 2015 and the 6-year graduation rate rose to 65% in 2021.



**Figure 2** *First Year Retention Rate 2017-2021*





**Figure 3** Six-Year Graduate Rate 2017-2021

*Finish Line* and the 4YG are two of the comprehensive retention initiatives the College employs. In AY 2017-2018, the College convened a Persistence Task Force with five distinct groups: Curriculum, Data, Diversity, Student Support, and Student Engagement. Faculty and staff served on these groups in accordance with their areas of expertise and College role. In total, the Persistence Task Force developed 38 recommendations/initiatives. To date, six are complete with 14 in progress. In AY 2018-2019, the College’s Retention Committee expanded to become the Retention and Persistence Committee actualized as one of the Persistence Task Force recommendations. The work of this Committee yielded a 10% improvement in the College’s retention rate.

**Tutoring**

The College also offers multi-modal tutoring services. Two full-time, professional tutors employed by the College are available for all students in response to the greatest course/content areas of need and volume of students needing assistance. One professional tutor specializes in Math and Chemistry while the other specializes in nursing content topics and preparation for the National Council Licensure Exam (NCLEX). In addition to the professional tutoring staff, the College also supports 21 peer tutors, writing consultants, and instructional assistants with some of these students holding multiple roles. Peer tutors are available for student drop-in help or by scheduled meeting times. Currently, peer tutors cover 18 courses including graduate courses with second-year students in the Master of Forensic Science program tutor the first-year students. The Doctor of Occupational Therapy (OTD) program utilizes peer tutors for courses in anatomy and neuroanatomy. Along with discipline-specific tutors, there are also three to five peer-writing consultants on staff in any given academic year. The College also offers web-based tutoring services via Smarthinking, which complements group and individual tutoring providing greater flexibility and availability for students. From AY 2016 – AY2020, students utilized



Smarthinking tutoring services an average of 132 hours per year. With the growth of graduate programs of study across the College, Graduate Programs and Policy Committee (GPPC) should explore graduate student academic support services related to graduate student needs.

### **Career Data**

Cedar Crest surveys undergraduate and graduate students who complete majors/programs at the time of graduation, 6 months post-graduation, and 5 years post-graduation. The class of 2020 responded that 78% had a job in their field 6 months post-graduation with 90% of respondents engaged overall. Sixty-six percent of 2016 undergraduate program graduates reported employment in jobs either directly or mostly related to their degree with 99% engaged overall. Eighty-three percent of 2016 graduate program completers confirmed full-time employment in jobs directly or mostly related to their degree with 100% engaged. Table 4.7 later in this chapter contains the career survey data (E.I.2- Academic Affairs Dashboard).

### **Student Financial Information and Services**

Student Financial Services (SFS) provides numerous ways to educate prospective students about College's costs and the financial aid process. The College website includes comprehensive information about financial aid opportunities (scholarships and need-based financial aid), costs and payment options for prospective students/families looking at Cedar Crest. A College Cost Calculator provides prospective traditional students/families with an estimate, based on the information they input, as well as scholarship and need-based financial aid possibilities. Prospective students may utilize this tool prior to applying to the College. Prospective students who visit the College receive information as part of the admissions packet (E.IV.3- Student Financial Aid Packet), which provides students with a timeline for financial aid and billing processes as well as the comprehensive costs and scholarship opportunities available. Financial Aid education is also a specific component of every personal visit or Open House/admissions event at the College. The Admissions Office, in conjunction with SFS, mails information to all prospective students with information regarding completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®). Upon FAFSA® completion, accepted students (with a completed application) receive a personalized financial aid notice. Student Financial Services provides opportunities to educate prospective students about their financial aid notification at Scholarship Competition Day, Accepted Students Days, and during individual visits to the College. Students receive a comprehensive packet with additional information about payment options, example repayment charts and other pertinent information currently as well. Finalized financial aid notifications accompany the student's bill each semester. Information pertaining to payment options is also available on the my.cedarcrest intranet for all students.

Student Financial Services educates students about federal loans (Federal Direct Student Loans) prior to borrowing and repayment on these loans. First-time borrowers must complete Entrance Loan Counseling and the Master Promissory Note (MPN) at studentaid.gov, along with accepting their loan on the College's student portal. Students receive a Disbursement Notification letter disclosing that their loan disbursement to the College occurred. The College provides student loan exit counseling for all students who withdraw, take a leave of absence, are less than half time or are graduating from the College and have borrowed federal loans. Students



receive an appropriate exit packet from SFS (EI.IV.4- Student Financial Services Exit Packet). SFS sends annual student reminders of total loan borrowing via Your Annual Student Loan Notification, which is a Pennsylvania (PA) Department of Education requirement. This notification includes Federal Student Loans borrowed while at Cedar Crest College and other institutions, if applicable, and Non-Federal Student Loans borrowed while at Cedar Crest College only. This notification provides interest rates, estimated monthly payments, and estimated payoff amounts (Criterion 1a).

The 2021 Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) Diverse Learning Environment (DLE) survey solicited student responses about their engagement with academic advising, financial aid advising, and career counseling and advising. Table 4.2 illustrates how often students participate in institutional programs or engage in activities that help them successfully traverse the Institution with use of these student services correlating to student success. In 2021, Cedar Crest scored lower than peer institutions in the use of academic advising and career advising but scored higher for financial aid advising. The College’s SFS area works with students and parents to navigate ways to finance a college education.

**Table 4.2**  
*HERI DLE Data: Student Engagement in Success Activities*

Criteria	2016 Mean Responses Cedar Crest	2016 Mean Responses Comparison Group	2021 Mean Responses Cedar Crest	2021 Mean Responses Comparison Group
Academic Advising	53.4%	56.9%	52.8%	60.5%
Tutoring	19.3%	15.1%		
Writing Center	29.0%	31.1%		
Financial Aid Advising			46.6%	33.2%
Career Advising			32.0%	40.1%

Note: blank cells indicate that this item was not included in the survey

### **Advanced Academic Standing Policies and Procedures**

Cedar Crest College provides information on policies and procedures regarding advanced standing to prospective and current students through the College Catalog, the college website, Registrar’s Office, and the academic advising process. These policies include information regarding the transfer credit procedures for both newly accepted and matriculated students as well as information on College Level Examination Program (CLEP) testing, Advanced Placement testing, and credit for Experiential Learning. The Transfer Student Admissions page on the College’s website is a starting point where prospective and newly accepted students can seek more information about how to begin the process of transferring credits to the College. Those looking for more information on this process will find a chart illustrating the maximum number of credits awarded based on the institution a student previously attended. Prospective students receive information regarding degree completion requirements for exemption of the College’s LAC requirements and essential information regarding minimum grade and





accreditation requirements. There are also links to Traditional, SAGE, and International Admissions. The Registrar's Office page provides additional information to students via a link to Detailed College Policies ((EI.III.6-Faculty Handbook IV.C) for both current and perspective students. To assist prospective students seeking to transfer to Cedar Crest College from a local community college, the Registrar's Office offers Transfer Guides from nine institutions. Maintained by the SAGE Admissions Office, Transfer Guides updates are a collaborative effort with academic departments. Department chairs/deans review and determine if individual community college offerings are eligible for transfer credit as annual community college catalog publications occur. These guides are important as prospective students use these tools to make their scheduling choices based on the transferability to Cedar Crest College. Matriculated students who have not already transferred in the maximum number of credits allowed for transfer may request to transfer credits from another institution through the Permission for Transfer of Credit Request form. These students are eligible to transfer up to 18 credits from another institution, with a maximum of four credits within their final 30 credits towards graduation. This policy is in the Faculty Handbook IV.C.9, p. 44 (EI.III.6) (Criterion 2).

Faculty Handbook VII.C.2, p. 16 (EI.III.8) lists the current policy for transfer credits across graduate programs of study. While graduate program policies differ, the handbook refers students to the required program specific handbook for transfer credit details. Credits do not transfer to the College once a graduate student matriculates. To transfer credits, students must provide the graduate director with an official transcript from another institution. The program director bears responsibility for notifying the Registrar's Office of transfer credit acceptance (Criterion 2).

### **Maintenance and Protection of Student Information**

The College ensures the maintenance and protection of student information through college-wide policies, processes, procedures, and training. The College's policies and procedures regarding the release of student information are in the Faculty Handbook IV.E.8 (EI.III.6), page 65. Faculty Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) training through the Registrars' Office takes place during their orientation. Staff receive a FERPA Basics for Staff white paper created by the Registrars' Office. The College provides students with FERPA information during orientation, via the College's Student Right to Know webpage, and through the my.cedarcrest intranet. The College also ensures the maintenance and protection of student information using Jenzabar One for College records. Jenzabar One allows the College to protect student information through permission rights and encryption. The College also uses Maxient for student conduct, academic integrity, and Title IX records, which also protects student information through permission rights and encryption. Faculty and staff who use Jenzabar One and Maxient receive training on use of both systems when granted access. Cedar Crest College has implemented a Policy for Verification of Student Identity in Distance Education that details procedures for ensuring student identity in online and hybrid classes. The College issues all students a unique and secure login ID and password for its Learning Management System, the my.cedarcrest intranet, and the College's email server. It further requires instructors to identify changes in student behavior (such as writing style) that may indicate potential assignments that are not the work of the registered student. The College maintains the option of using other identity verification technologies provided by third-party vendors. This policy labeled as



Appendix 1.1 in the Institutional Federal Compliance Report submitted as part of Standard II (Criterion 3).

### **Extracurricular and Non-Academic Student Services**

The 2017 *Aspiration of Others* Strategic Plan consists of institutional goals as four core pillars of our mission and guiding principles. Two of these four pillars, Academic Excellence and Transformational Student Experience, resulted in the development of non-academic and extracurricular initiatives that enhance the overall student experience and foster student success. Of the 22 strategic initiatives, seven focusing on the student experience were key initiatives to foster student success. These strategic initiatives were the Student Success Center as addressed previously in this Standard, Closing the Gap, creation of the Center for Diversity and Global Engagement (CDGE), Student Employment Center, the Carmen Twillie Ambar Sophomore Year Expedition (CTA SYE) addressed in Standards I and III, the Strengths Campus, and Collaborative Student Spaces. Instituted, integrated, and maintained within the fabric of the Cedar Crest community with policies and processes are initiatives that support the ongoing mission of student success support. This section provides evidence for Criterion 4.

### **Closing the Gap**

Closing the Gap helps students overcome non-academic barriers that affect their experience and success. Among both the traditional-age and SAGE population, many of our students have unmet needs that include food, clothing, emergency one-time costs, and textbooks. By providing resources to students to close their financial gap, retention, academic success, and persistence to graduation increases. Since the last Middle States Self-Study, Cedar Crest has continued to enroll and serve first-generation and Pell-eligible students. These students have less financial support than more affluent students do and for whom a single unexpected expense, such as a car repair, may cause an interruption in their education. While the College cannot provide everything these students may need; it can support their learning by eliminating barriers to their success at strategic moments and positively improve retention and graduation rates over time.

**Table 4.3**

First Generation *Students 2010-2021 (Self-Reported on Admissions Application)*

Fall of:	1st gen YES	total with Y or N	% first gen
'10	67	117	57.26%
'11	136	263	51.71%
'12	196	405	48.40%
'13	231	499	46.29%
'14	246	593	41.48%
'15	279	668	41.77%
'16	295	620	47.58%
'17	240	648	37.04%
'18	250	663	37.71%
'19	236	666	35.44%
'20	272	741	36.71%
'21	313	787	39.77%



**Table 4.4**  
*Pell Recipients 2010-2021\**

Fall of:	Pell Yes	Total UG Trad Plus SAGE	% PELL
'10	638	1444	44.18%
'11	635	1371	46.32%
'12	583	1307	44.61%
'13	545	1238	44.02%
'14	603	1284	46.96%
'15	620	1293	47.95%
'16	605	1265	47.83%
'17	613	1300	47.15%
'18	554	1211	45.75%
'19	475	1138	41.74%
'20	406	1044	38.89%
'21	405	1009	40.14%

\*Pell grants are for undergraduate students only.

Since 2016, the College has provided \$38,452 in emergency aid to approximately 160 students. Other key components include an annual winter clothing drive, restructured housing policies that allow students to stay in the residence halls over breaks, meal coverage when dining operations close for breaks, and book vouchers. During the AY 2020-2021, Closing the Gap gathered information about students' needs via a quantitative and qualitative Needs Assessment Survey (EI.IV.5 Needs Assessment Data), offering insight into aid required to increase a student's ability to succeed academically and persist to graduation. The assessment demonstrated that on average 40% of students are knowledgeable about the on-campus resources at their disposal and 32% of students have accessed these resources.

### **The Center for Diversity and Global Engagement**

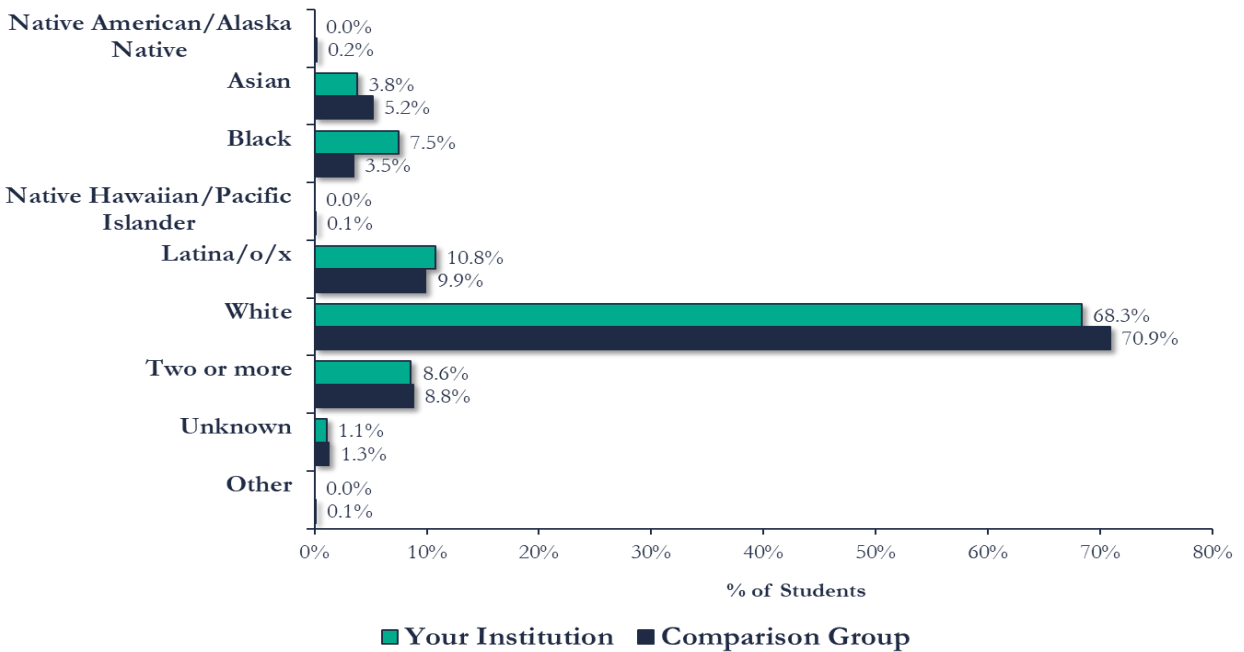
The CDGE occupies the Allen House on campus and includes the Center for Diversity and Inclusion (CDI), the Office of Global Initiatives and International Programs, and International Student Services. This strategic plan initiative under the *Transformational Student Experience* opened on Martin Luther King Day of 2018. The CDGE offers a space for students and other College community members to connect with individuals from diverse backgrounds and nationalities.

The CDI is a gathering place for students. Fully described in Standard II, the CDI is an active place on campus. The College is committed to ongoing efforts to promote inclusivity. In spring of 2016 and spring of 2021, the College administered Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) Diverse Learning Environment (DLE) to assess campus climate from the students' perspective. In 2016, there were 184 respondents and 186 respondents in 2021. Data from these responses are in the tables below.





### Race/Ethnicity Group



**Figure 4** *HERI Respondent Demographics (Self-Reported)*

While the data demonstrates that Cedar Crest’s mean scores are consistent with the Comparison Group of Colleges and Universities completing the HERI DLE, Cedar Crest continues to have students who report incidents of bias on campus. Linked to student success, Sense of Belonging on college campuses is an important data point. Cedar Crest intends to form focus groups to discuss these data with our Executive Director of Diversity and Inclusion in spring 2022. The CDI’s work occurs through the coordination of a comprehensive programming calendar led by student Inclusion Advocates and directed by the Executive Director of Diversity and Inclusion. Additionally, the Executive Director of Diversity and Inclusion collaborates with the College-wide Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council to for DEI efforts across campus. The CDI houses the Student Diversity Council, which comprises student-led clubs and organizations that identify as diverse.



**Table 4.5**

*HERI DLE Data: Campus Climate (Graphed on a scale of 0-100)*

Criteria	2016 Mean Responses Cedar Crest	2016 Mean Responses Comparison Group	2021 Mean Responses Cedar Crest	2021 Mean Responses Comparison Group
Sense of Belonging*	52.70	50.40	49.05	50.16
General Personal Validation**	55.60	50.10	52.74	50.27
Co-Curricular Diversity Activities+	52.90	50.60	52.70	50.42
Institution Commitment to Diversity	51.92	49.34	52.60	49.80
Discrimination and Bias++	48.00	50.70	50.60	50.21

\*I feel that I am a member of the campus community; I belong here. \*\*At least one faculty/staff member has taken an interest in me. +I have joined at least one campus group that deals with topics of diversity on campus. ++I have witnessed or experienced verbal, cyberbullying, or bullying on campus.

The data below contains results the percentage of students participating in organized discussions on racial/ethnic issues, activities at the CDI, diversity discussion panels, LGBTQ activities, or diversity presentations in performing or studio arts.

**Table 4.6**

*HERI DLE Data: Co-Curricular Diversity Activities*

2016 Mean Responses Cedar Crest	2016 Mean Responses Comparison Group	2021 Mean Responses Cedar Crest	2021 Mean Responses Comparison Group
52.9	50.6%	52.74%	50.27%

### **Student Employment Center and Career Planning**

Since 2018, the Student Employment Center has hired and placed 845 students in on-campus jobs (299 in 2018, 261 in 2019, 189 in 2020, and 89 to date in 2021). By graduation, students possess meaningful work experience related to their majors and career-ready skill sets. This program has provided valuable work experience to students. Career Planning tracks career outcomes through the College’s First Destination Graduate Survey and 5-Year Graduation Survey. The College surveyed recent graduates using the First Destinations Graduate Survey to collect career outcomes for students 6 months after graduation and 5 years post-graduation (Table 4.7 and EI.I.2- Academic Affairs Dashboard).



### **Strengths Campus**

This initiative incorporated the Gallup Strengths Finder model into the College's advising and student affairs roles. The College posited that advising students on strengths rather than deficits would improve self-confidence and reinforce positive behaviors with translation of positive advising experiences to foster retention and student satisfaction with major choice. In fall 2016, the entire freshman class, first-year advisors, and course instructors completed the Strengths survey. Students continue to participate in the CliftonStrengths (new title) survey as part of the Exploring Your Future course in the second semester of their freshman year in conjunction with the First Year Experience (FYE). As such, students participate in class activities related to the Strengths approach and engage in assignments tied to the CliftonStrengths survey tool.

### **Collaborative Student Spaces**

The purpose of this 2017 Strategic Plan initiative was to encourage and support collaborative workspaces across campus as suggested by students during the Strategic Planning process. Actualization of this initiative occurred with renovations to computer labs in the residence halls and the creation of indoor and outdoor collaborative settings across campus. Ongoing work around this initiative included the unveiling of collaborative workspaces in the Student Success Center in fall 2016 and renovations to the commuter student lounge and student accessible student affairs offices in the Tompkins College Center in spring 2019.

### **Care Team**

The Care Team engages in a proactive and collaborative approach to identify, assess, and coordinate responses to various student situations. Working with members of the community, the Team strives to ensure individual student well-being, retention, and persistence while promoting community safety. From August 2015 to September 7, 2021, the Care Team aided and supported 398 unique students. Out of the 398 students supported, 27% graduated, 4% have applied to graduate in May 2022, 16% have withdrawn from the College, 7% have taken a leave of absence with intent to return, 0.5% dismissed from the College, and 45.5% are current students (EI.IV.6-Care Team Data 2015-2021).

### **Health and Counseling Services**

Cedar Crest College contracts with Lehigh Valley Health Network (LVHN) to offer medical care and counseling services to all traditional students and SAGE students who reside on campus. Services include general medical care, routine gynecological services, physical examinations, allergy injections, immunization, and one-on-one counseling services. The LVHN database houses all medical records. Since fall 2020, Health and Counseling Services has provided COVID-19 testing to undergraduate students exposed to or symptomatic from COVID-19 as well as randomly selected students as part of the College's surveillance strategy. Health and Counseling Services has also provided re-entry testing to students who are returning to the residence halls each semester. In a recent initiative, the College contracted with BetterHelp in fall 2021, the world's largest teletherapy provider, to extend an additional layer of mental health





support to all full-time students (undergraduate and graduate), providing access to professional counseling, anytime, anywhere for the 2021-2022 academic year. As of December 2021, 8% of the full-time students have used BetterHelp with 485 live sessions and an average length session lasting 34 minutes. Students and their therapists can message each other using BetterHelp. Since August 2021, students and their therapists have sent 3,583 messages using the system. Since BetterHelp is new to the College in the 2021-2022 Academic Year, limited data is currently available (Criterion 5).

### **First and Second-Year Experience**

The Office of First and Second-Year Experience seeks to provide comprehensive programming and strategies that support successful transition, integration, and retention of first- and second-year students. The FYE includes the SOAR program, August orientation, FYE Mentors and curriculum (CCC 101, CCC 102, FYS). Academic year 2021-2022 will be the first year that the office will be tracking participation rates in SOAR and August Orientation to compare with first year retention rates-based findings of the Periodic Program Review (PPR) of the FYE. Information on the effectiveness of the FYE curriculum and First Year seminar is in Standard III (Criterion 6).

### **Residence Life and Community Standards**

The Office of Residence Life & Community Standards at Cedar Crest exists to create a safe and supportive residential community that empowers students to be socially responsible and provides unique learning opportunities that allow students to evolve during their time at Cedar Crest College. The Student Handbook (EI.IV.1) governs students. The Handbook addresses academic and non-academic policies; Section VI provides students with the Community Standards for Social Conduct, and Section X contains the Guidelines for Residential Living. Review of the Student Handbook takes place annually. Updates occur due to process improvements and when state and federal laws and regulations change policies, practices, and procedures outlined in the handbook. The Dean of Students, Director of Residence Life, and Community Standards, Chief Financial Officer/Chief Financial Officer (CFO/COO), and General Counsel completes the annual review (Criterion 4).



**Table 4.7**  
*Undergraduate Career Survey Data*

Survey Year	Employed (full-and part-time) 6 Months after Graduation	Continuing Education 6 Months after Graduation	Engaged Overall 6 Months after Graduation
2016	74%	17%	93%
2017	72%	16%	89%
2018	69%	18%	87%
2019	63%	19%	84%
2020	78%	8%	90%

### **Athletics**

Cedar Crest College competes in the Colonial States Athletic Conference (CSAC) at the National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) Division III level. The College fields 10 teams in the CSAC Conference (Basketball, Cross-Country, Field Hockey, Lacrosse, Soccer, Softball, Swim & Dive, Tennis, Track & Field, Volleyball, and Wrestling). While Cedar Crest teams have seen post-season play in recent years, participants are scholars first. Academics play a role in the success of Cedar Crest student-athletes. First-year students attend team tutoring sessions and coaches meet with athletes to monitor their classroom attendance and performance. This commitment to academics has earned Cedar Crest the CSAC Institutional Academic Award in 2008-2009, 2018-2019, and 2020-2021 (Criterion 4).

### **The College’s Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic**

In March 2020, the College went completely remote in compliance with Governor Wolf’s COVID-19 policies. Student Affairs held student activities to keep students engaged. In response, campus stakeholders completed a survey on their experiences at the end of the spring 2020 semester. These surveys led to the formation of the COVID-19 Task Force in May 2020. The Task Force was comprised of Board Trustees, Cabinet, faculty, staff, and the student government association president. Findings of the Task Force formed the plan to return to campus in fall 2020. The College invested resources to implement a HyFlex teaching model for its in-person classes. The plan contained health and safety guidelines, training for faculty, and financial opportunities to offset the reduction of income from rentals and housing discussed in Self-Study Standards I and VI. The Task Force findings are in the COVID-19 Task Force Report (EI.VI.2-COVID-19 Task Force Final Report).

The College’s Incident Management Team-COVID (IMT-C) starting meeting in early March 2020, making all decisions related to the College’s response to rapidly shifting conditions during the pandemic. It engaged deeply in planning for a successful return to campus, responding to changes in guidance, local conditions, and case counts at the same time. This is the group that produced the College’s Health and Safety Plan (Evidence Inventory), and all policies around testing, safety protocols, travel, opening of campus and remote work, among other significant decisions. In summer 2020, the College created the COVID Daily Response Team (CRT) to



engage in proactive and collaborative approaches to identify, assess, and coordinate response to daily COVID-19 cases. The CRT monitored the responses of the daily symptom monitoring survey, providing responses to community members with exposures, presenting symptoms, or testing positive for COVID-19.

Residential students participated in required re-entry testing each semester starting in spring 2021. The College has utilized surveillance testing for residential students during the academic semester weekly since fall 2020. Starting in fall 2021, the Athletics Department has been testing all unvaccinated student-athletes multiple times per week, in accordance with NCAA requirements. The College also tests residential symptomatic students. Throughout the 2021-2022 AY, the College has maintained indoor masking requirements throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, unless actively eating or drinking. There is no eating permitted during class or in classrooms. Students in the residence halls must wear masks when not in their rooms. Vaccinated athletes participating in indoor sports do not need to mask while playing, per NCAA regulation, but must mask when not actively engaged in play. In March 2022, the College updated residence hall policies to reflect the high vaccination rate of residential student and county-wide decline in COVID-19 cases removing the masking requirement in residence halls.

The College required residential students to submit proof of vaccination in fall 2021. As of December 10, 2021, the residence halls reached an 86% vaccination rate. In conjunction with LVHN, the College held mobile vaccine clinics on campus throughout the AY 2021-2022, which has bolstered vaccination rates across campus. The College's Health and Safety Plan has been effective in keeping COVID-19 cases minimal. Data from the 2021 Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) Diverse Learning Environment (DLE) Survey supports student satisfaction with the College's response to COVID-19 Pandemic. Seventy-two percent of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that campus leadership communicated effectively during the pandemic; 78% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that leadership prioritized the health and safety of students; while 80% of respondents supported the decision to provide the current level of in-person instruction.

### **Assessment and Review of Non-Academic Services and Programs Periodic Program Review and Annual Assessment Reports**

The College assesses effectiveness of policies, procedures, and practices through AAR (EI.V.2-PPR Guidelines and EI.V.4 AAR Template) and PPR for all College Offices. Each academic program and each College office completes a PPR every five years as detailed in Standard V. This section provides evidence the College utilizes assessment to for institutional planning and decision making (Criterion 6 and Requirements of Affiliation 8 and 10).

#### **Student Handbook Review**

A review of the Student Handbook (EI.IV.1), holding non-academic policies, takes place annually. Updates with process improvements, state and federal laws and regulations change policies, practices, and procedures are in the handbook. The Dean of Students, Director of Residence Life and Community Standards, CFO/COO, and General Counsel complete the annual review. Cedar Crest College is committed to the student success in and out of the classroom.





Student life is an important aspect of the College experience. Student Services are subject to the same administrative principles and planning procedures as all other areas of the College. Planning and budgeting processes are in Standard VI.

**National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)**

In 2015, 2017, 2019, and 2020, the College surveyed first-year students and seniors using the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). The data below represent a comparison of the mean scores for three NSSE items for first year and senior students.

**Table 4.8**

*NSSE Question 13d: Rate your interactions with student services (career, student activities, and housing) staff. (Scale of 1-7)*

NSSE Year	First Year CCC	First Year Other NSSE Completers*	Seniors CCC	Seniors Other NSSE Completers*
2015	5.6	4.9	5.2	4.7
2017	5.1	4.9	5.1	5.0
2019	5.1	4.8	4.9	5.0
2020	5.2	5.2	4.9	4.8

\*All other institutions participating in the NSSE. The mean scores for both First Years and seniors were significantly higher than the mean scores for other NSSE completers ( $p < .00$ )

**Table 4.9**

*NSSE Question 13e: Rate your interactions with other administrative staff/offices (registrar, financial aid, etc.) (Scale 1-7)*

NSSE Year	First Yea CCC	First Year Other NSSE Completers*	Seniors CCC	Seniors Other NSSE Completers*
2015	5.3	4.9	5.3	4.8
2017	5.3	5.0	5.3	4.9
2019	5.2	5.1	4.9	5.0
2020	5.2	5.1	5.2	5.0

\*All other institutions participating in the NSSE. The mean scores for both First Years ( $p < .00$ ) and seniors were significantly higher than the mean scores for other NSSE completers ( $p < .05$ ). In 2017, there were no statistically significant differences noted with other NSSE completers in subsequent years



**Table 4.10**

*NSSE Question 14b: To what extent does your institution provide support to help students succeed academically? (Scale 1-4)*

NSSE Year	First Year CCC	First Year Other NSSE Completers*	Seniors CCC	Seniors Other NSSE Completers*
2015	3.6	3.1	3.2	2.9
2017	3.5	3.0	3.1	3.1
2019	3.2	3.1	2.9	3.0
2020	3.3	3.1	3.0	2.

\*Data related to institutional support for students' academic success yielded responses from first-year students significantly higher ( $p < .00$ ) in 2015, 2016 and 2020 compared to other NSSE completers. Senior scores in 2015 were significantly higher ( $p < .00$ ) as well, however, senior student responses in other years showed no statistical difference with other NSSE completers.

### Key Findings

- While data regarding bias incidents on campus yield the College's mean scores consistent with those of comparison institutions, self-reported data indicate this is an area requiring continued attention related to the area of reported bias incidents on campus.
- Cedar Crest must continue to be strategic around enrollment management as the literature predicts a drop in college-aged students in the year 2025.
- GPPC should examine the needs of the growing graduate student population related to tutoring and academic support services.
- Cedar Crest College provides clear policies and procedures regarding advanced standing to prospective and current students.
- To better assist students with overcoming non-academic barriers, the College actively engages in evaluation of student needs and expanding hardship assistance programs to promote academic success, retention, and persistence to graduation.
- Data demonstrated the 2020 Summer Bridge pilot program was successful in promoting academic success among STEM majors.
- Cedar Crest College continues to meet the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, while providing a safe living and learning environment for students to succeed.
- Cedar Crest College is compliant with regulations regarding student records (FERPA) and trains employees in student confidentiality requirements as per compliance guidelines for institutions of higher education.
- Cedar Crest College provides students with clear procedures regarding student financial services. This includes information on loan repayment upon exiting the College.



## Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment

Requirements of Affiliation: 8, 9, and 10

Institutional Priorities: *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and Academic Excellence as a Comprehensive College with Undergraduate and Graduate Programs in the Liberal and Practitioner Arts*







## **Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment**

*Assessment of student learning and achievement demonstrates that the institution's students have accomplished educational goals consistent with their program of study, degree level, the institution's mission, and appropriate expectations for institutions of higher education.*

### **Educational Goals Alignment with the College's Mission**

Success in meeting the College's educational goals is a shared responsibility among the administration and faculty, as well as integral to the design and delivery of academic courses and programs. Undergraduate student learning outcomes, as stated in the College's General Education Assessment Plan (EI.V.1- General Education Assessment Plan), reflect engaging students in critical analysis, qualitative and quantitative reasoning, artistic and creative endeavors, understanding of ethics and values, responsiveness to local, national, and global issues, effective oral and written communication, and utilization of technology and information resources. The Liberal Arts Curriculum (LAC) sets the foundation for meeting the College's student learning outcomes. The College also takes a forward-thinking approach to the development and addition of graduate programs of study. Several of the College's graduate programs are the only programs of their kind in the region, and online offerings meet the needs of students at all stages of life and experience. The philosophy of graduate education centers on scholarship, innovation, collaboration, and professionalism. This section satisfies Criterion 1 and 2a, and Requirement of Affiliation 9.

All undergraduate and graduate programs of study have clearly articulated learning outcomes located in their respective College Catalogs and the College's website. Undergraduate and graduate programs use the College's guiding principles of women's leadership, global connectivity, scholarship, liberal arts, civic engagement, health and wellness, and creativity as a framework. Program learning outcomes align with institutional student learning outcomes, mission, and goals of the College. Course syllabi state course-specific learning outcomes which align to program outcomes. These concepts prepare students as future leaders and global citizens in accordance with the mission and vision statements.

Within the College's governance structure, the Committee on Undergraduate Education (CUE) is responsible for review and evaluation of all undergraduate courses and curricular proposals, as well as work related to educational effectiveness. Additionally, CUE oversees the routine assessment of undergraduate general education requirements and learning outcomes (EI.II.1-Faculty Handbook II.1.2). Graduate Program and Policy Committee (GPPC) is responsible for the review and recommendation of all graduate curricular proposals and policies (EI.II.1-Faculty Handbook II.1.2). Curriculum, course, and program approval processes also align with the institutional mission. Undergraduate proposals include LAC designation, if appropriate, as well as submission of a course syllabi. This allows CUE to assess alignment with the institutional mission. Graduate proposals must address alignment to the Graduate Program Mission, thus allowing GPPC to assess alignment to the institutional mission as well.

As such, all College programs perform annual self-evaluations via Annual Assessment Report (AAR) with a more in-depth assessment completed through Periodic Program Review



(PPR) (EI.V.2- Academic PPR Guidelines), which occurs on a 5-year cycle. The College provides AAR and PPR templates that align with the College's Strategic Plan to maintain uniformity. The AAR/PPR processes enable faculty to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of programs of study, including curriculum and pedagogy, in addition to the overall management of major, minor, or graduate programs of study. The College also engages in additional assessment processes as needed. An Academic Portfolio Evaluation (APE), completed during AY 2020-2021, responded to the shifting demographics in higher education as well as the financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The work of APE fostered collaboration among programs in accordance with the College's mission and strategic plan (EI.V.3- APE Final Report). (Criterion 5)

### **Student Learning and Achievement of Institutional and Program Goals**

Student learning assessment occurs on a periodic schedule to include both direct and indirect measures of students learning, and Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) Diverse Learning Environment (DLE) Survey on a regular basis. The Office of Institutional Research also completes the US News & World Report survey annually, as well as the Wall Street Journal/Time Higher Education survey in non-NSSE assessment years (Criterion 4) to inform curricular decisions. Assessment of student learning is a measure of institutional effectiveness and aligns with the College's mission and vision. Further, comprehensive student learning assessment ensures achievement of the knowledge and skills necessary for the professional, civic, and personal success of Cedar Crest graduates.

### **Faculty Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes- VALUE Data**

General education assessment examines the core knowledge, competencies, and abilities students demonstrate through satisfaction of the LAC, as well as major courses of academic study. General education assessment is a college-wide initiative completed on a five-year cycle as outlined in the General Education Assessment Plan 2014-2019 and the current General Education Assessment Plan 2019-2024 (EI.V.1). Since 2014, CUE has been calibrating expectations for faculty assessment of general education skills, as well as evaluation of) rubric from the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) as direct evidence of student learning. The General Education Assessment Plan 2014-2019 and 2019-2024 offer a detailed timeline for the focused assessment of information literacy, oral communication, critical & creative reasoning, quantitative reasoning, technical competency, and written communication. As part of the Committee's charge (EI.II.1-Faculty Handbook II.1), CUE disseminates the General Education Assessment findings (Criterion 2a and Requirement of Affiliation 9).

In collaboration with the Associate Provost, CUE prepares a written report at the conclusion of each assessment cycle citing commendations, suggestions, and recommendations for each year's focused student learning outcome. Utilization of these findings in making curricular decisions within the LAC and at the programmatic level are in the Summaries of Actions section of 2014-2019 report. This included changes to course rotations with THS 105 Public Speaking offered on an annual basis, faculty development to foster critical thinking and problem solving and the inclusion of the ALEKS Placement Preparation, and Learning (PPL). ALEKS is an initiative of strategic planning, key finding of the general education assessment, a recommendation of the Persistence Task Force, and natural-science PPR recommendation



regarding the need for improved math support. The math department uses ALEKS to assist with the placement of students in math courses. Recommendations from the last assessment of the Information Literacy component of the LAC led to the expansion of library guides (LibGuides), which the College now offers for 85 different areas of study. Portfolium is another student resource resulting from assessment of the LAC which fosters integrative learning. (Criteria 3 a, b, and c).

### Student Assessment of Learning Outcomes- NSSE

The NSSE is another measure of student learning. This survey provides information regarding the College’s ability to prepare students to write clearly and effectively, to develop skills related to speaking clearly and effectively, to analyze numerical and statistical information, and to solve complex, real-world problems, as well as other important learning outcomes. The survey compares perspectives of first year and senior-level students as well as comparisons of Cedar Crest to peer institutions in these key areas. Comparison of the NSSE survey data to FSSE and, more recently, the BCSSE data inform decisions related to curricular and programmatic improvement. The following tables illustrate NSSE first year and senior student data from 2015, 2017, 2019, and 2020. These data illustrate the College’s curricular success in fostering key skills from first year to graduation. Additionally, the College was in alignment with, and in several cases exceeded, the scores of peer institutions. This section addresses Criterion 3g and Requirement of Affiliation 9.

**Table 5.1**

*NSSE First Year Student Results (Scale 1-4)*

	Cedar Crest College First Year Students				Peer Colleges First Year Students			
	2015	2017	2019	2020	2015	2017	2019	2020
Q17. How much has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in:								
a. Writing clearly and effectively	3.0	2.9	2.8	2.8	3.0	3.0	2.9	2.8
b. Speaking clearly and effectively	2.9	2.8	2.6	2.5	2.7	2.8	2.8*	2.7
c. Thinking critically and analytically	3.3	3.2	3.1	2.9	3.1*	3.1	3.1	3.1
d. Analyzing numerical and statistical information	2.8	2.7	2.8	2.6	2.6	2.5	2.6*	2.5
i. Solving complex real-world problems	2.8	2.7	2.6	2.3	2.6	2.7	2.7	2.6**

\*Denotes a p value < .05, \*\*Denotes a p value < .01





**Table 5.2**  
*NSSE Senior Student Results (Scale 1-4)*

	Cedar Crest College Senior Students				Peer Colleges Senior Students			
	2015	2017	2019	2020	2015	2017	2019	2020
Q17. How much has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in:								
a. Writing clearly and effectively	3.0	3.2	2.9	3.1	3.0	3.1	3.1	3.0
b. Speaking clearly and effectively	3.1	3.0	2.9	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
c. Thinking critically and analytically	3.4	3.4	3.3	3.5	3.2	3.3	3.3	3.3
d. Analyzing numerical and statistical information	2.8	2.8	2.7	2.9	2.8	2.8	2.7	2.8
i. Solving complex real-world problems	3.0	3.0	2.9	3.0	2.6	2.8	2.9	2.8*

\*Denotes a p value < .05, \*\*Denotes a p value < .01

The College values assessment of student learning and makes this an integral component of collaborative work between the faculty and administration with academic excellence a hallmark of the College’s mission and vision. Data from General Education Assessment, AAR, PPR, and the national surveys the College completes on a regular basis are evidence of academic excellence. The College utilizes NSSE data to improve the curriculum. The General Education Plan (EI.V.1) lists improvements made to the curriculum from 2014-2019. For example, Global Studies was a mission-related area requiring attention with study abroad programs episodically available to students at the College. Beginning in 2018, the CTA SYE provided students with the opportunity to experience global learning and engagement. This sparked student interest in subsequent study abroad opportunities. The College administered the NSSE in 2019 and 2020 to assess the impact of the CTA SYE. Table 1.4 in Standard I shows NSSE data on Global Learning. The CTA SYE serves as a means for students to experience another place and its culture. As such, NSSE data shows evidence of global learning.

### **Continuous Program Assessment**

The College has been engaging in continuous program assessment. The College provides an AAR template (EI.V.4- AAR Template) that aligns with the Strategic Plan and establishes uniformity and a foundation for the assessment process for undergraduate and graduate programs of study. Annual Academic Review articulates an academic program’s mission and curricular design while focusing on the selective assessment of program-level SLOs in alignment with the College’s Strategic Plan. Annual Academic Review documents student learning and achievement measuring a program’s educational goals, as well as identifying changes a program makes to improve its educational effectiveness. This work ensures that all academic programs assess each



of their SLOs at least once between PPRs. This section satisfies Criteria 3e and h, Requirement of Affiliation 8.

As such, the primary purpose of PPR is to foster excellence in education through the continual improvement of the student learning experience. The review process provides an opportunity for all programs to identify areas of strength and address areas that need improvement. This review process is also a valuable resource for decision-making, resource allocation, and budgeting for the provision of undergraduate and graduate academic programs and services. Reviewers provide recommendations that preserve the strengths of programs or address specific weaknesses in each level of the review process (programmatic level and institutional level). Additionally graduate programs of study assess student learning through capstone projects such as a thesis, research project, licensure pass rates as applicable, and exit surveys. Graduate AAR and PPR monitor program goals and alignment with the College's mission (Criteria 2 b and c, 3 b, c, d, and e, and 5).

The College's LAC and general education assessment are other key indicators of student learning. Hence, comprehensive assessment of the LAC occurs periodically every five years, while assessment of individual program student learning outcomes (SLOs) occurs on a scheduled annual basis. The LAC serves as the intellectual foundation for the completion of academic majors and the pursuit of lifelong learning by ensuring that undergraduate students receive a comprehensive liberal arts education rooted in the Arts, Humanities, and Sciences.

Assessment for the LAC follows the same assessment guidelines as with all academic programs. Completion of the most recent assessment of the College's LAC was in AY 2020-2021. The College's Assessment Committee reviews the LAC PPR and shares the findings with the chair of CUE. Key findings from the most recent LAC assessment include regular and consistent communication of this assessment to the full faculty, continuation of calibration sessions and faculty development around the use of VALUE rubrics, and continuity of knowledge within CUE via a comprehensive succession plan for membership (Criterion 5).

The College maintains an Assessment Committee co-chaired by the Associate Provost, and comprised of five faculty members, and two staff members. The Committee's charge is to support ongoing program and departmental assessment and to make suggestions to the Provost, academic department chairs/deans, and administrative unit leaders regarding the assessment process. In 2015, in response to the revised Middle States Standards for Accreditation (vs the Characteristics of Excellence), the Assessment Committee adapted the College's PPR process for academic program and college office to align with MSCHE Standards in an outcome-driven form. Members of the Assessment Committee undergo bi-annual calibration sessions related to PPR assessment criteria and scoring to ensure interrater reliability and consistent use of rubrics across all academic disciplines and College administrative offices.

The College's overall assessment processes enable faculty to collaborate in the evaluation of commendations as well as areas of improvement in the curriculum, pedagogy, and management of major, minor, or graduate program. The Assessment Committee produces a scoring report using a rubric for all PPR reports (EI.V.5- PPR Scoring Rubric). The appropriate departments and offices receive the Assessment Committee reports for discussion on successes, improvements, and resource allocation. The College's updated Strategic Plan serves as a foundation for the PPR template with revisions taking place accordingly.



### **Institutional Assessment to Adapt the Curriculum**

The intellectual growth of our students is in part defined through the assessment of General Education Skills. There is a General Education Skills Tutorial posted for all faculty via the my.cedarcrest intranet under the Assessment section. As described there, acquirement of the General Education Skills within the LAC has continued reinforcement and mastery within major programs of study. Since 2014, CUE has been assessing undergraduate educational effectiveness in its current form for general education. This entailed compiling samples of student work representative of each of the four levels on a given AAC&U VALUE Rubric (1 corresponding to benchmark and 4 as capstone). Subsequently, August or January Faculty Workshops provide faculty development from CUE, in consultation with the Associate Provost, related to General Education skill work for faculty teaching courses in the LAC, program embedded general education skills, or capstone courses of academic majors. This includes calibration exercises and the creation of anchor data sets for the General Education skills identified in the General Education Assessment Plan as the Focused Student Learning Outcome for that academic year. These development activities ensure faculty interpret the calibration of the rubric in a consistent manner and has allowed for most AAC&U Value rubrics to hold a set of student work associated with them. This section demonstrates how assessment informs decisions related to curriculum, services, retention, and program completion (Criteria 3a-h and Requirement of Affiliation 10).

The assessment process includes collaboration of work performed by CUE and the Associate Provost's identification of faculty teaching courses within the LAC and capstone courses of academic majors to complete AAC&U Value rubrics to assess the Focused Student Learning Outcome associated with their course(s). From this guidance, faculty enter scores for each student into a portal on the my.cedarcrest intranet to allow for data collection related to the intellectual growth of our students. The AAC&U VALUE Data General Education Assessment Report 2014-2019 Cycle describes the details of this process. CUE and the Associate Provost review data collected from 100, 200, and 300-level courses annually. As part of the committee's charge, CUE reports the annual assessment data to the full faculty, and the Associate Provost reports assessment data to the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees on an annual basis. CUE shares a summary of the data with the faculty as part of the LAC PPR every five years (Criteria 2c, 3f, and 5).

Departments also assess the intellectual growth of their students on an annual basis via the AAR process. Each department or academic program within a department chooses annually to assess one to two SLOs for each of its academic majors. As such, faculty who teach courses designed to achieve the selected SLO(s) report student progress for developing skills from introductory to mastery level based upon direct and indirect measures. Findings from AAR have led to changes in coursework as well as teaching/pedagogy to ensure achievement of learning outcomes. Submission of these annual reviews the Assessment Portal on the my.cedarcrest intranet, which serves as a repository for PPR. Programs assess the intellectual growth of their students and quality of their entire program on a five-year cycle with the PPR. To measure key indicators of student success, the College developed a Retention and Persistence Committee. Part of the work of this Committee was the identification of several courses as strong indicators of student persistence. Examples of the courses included are WRI 100, PSY 100, CHE 103, CHE 111, BIO 123, SOC 100, ETL 235, and any FYS course (Criterion 2g).





The College surveys students 6 months and 5 years post-graduation. Students graduating from Cedar Crest College report finding meaningful employment after graduation. For career data, refer to the Career Survey Data Table 4.5 in Standard IV. The class of 2016 self-reported that 88% of undergraduate students and 94% of graduate students held positions related to their Cedar Crest College degree. This same group of respondents reported a job satisfaction rate of 85% among undergraduate students and 100% among graduate students. For the class of 2020, 84% of undergraduates reported they held a position related to their Cedar Crest College degree. This same group reported a job satisfaction rate of 74% (E.I.2- Academic Affairs Dashboard) (Criteria 2b and 3g).

Individual departments use standardized tests to measure outcomes. For example, nursing students complete the NCLEX upon program completion. To prepare for the licensure exam, nursing students complete a proctored Comprehensive Predictor Assessment Exam through Assessment Technologies Institute (ATI) in the final semester of their course work. Additionally, the School of Nursing has access to an annual third-party assessment, Mountain Measurement, which offers data related to graduates' performance on the NCLEX and use this data to modify the curriculum. Education students complete exams as dictated by the PDE, students in the Biological Sciences complete the Major Fields Test, Chemistry and Biochemistry majors complete the American Chemical Society (ACS) exam as seniors, and Spanish majors must pass an oral examination. As such, departments use these results to update their curriculum. Accredited programs, such as nursing, and nutrition adhere to pass rate requirements and are subject to warning notices from accreditors if scores fall below accepted standards (Criteria 2a and 3g).

Thus, use of the AAC&U VALUE rubrics that correspond to student learning outcomes represented within the LAC offers an excellent way to assess the intellectual growth of students. Creating calibration exercises for faculty aids in the creation of data sets compared across all majors on an annual basis. To lead the College's assessment efforts, the Associate Provost attended the Drexel University Assessment Conference in fall 2019, participates in webinars and conferences provided by MSCHE, and completed the AAC&U Written Communication Rubric Scoring Course in spring 2021.

The College also engages in continuous assessment to adapt the curriculum to promote student engagement in a diverse community. As indicated previously, the College regularly administers the NSSE to first year and senior students. Additionally, the College administered the NSSE topical modules on Global Learning and Inclusiveness and Engagement with Diversity to first year students and seniors in 2020. The Office of Global Initiatives utilized NSSE results on global learning for inclusion in that Office's assessment of the CTA SYE. CUE received all NSSE results for inclusion in the PPR assessment of the LAC in 2021. Standard I contains the tables with these data points (GL and DEI).

### **Addressing DEI in the Curriculum**

In 2015-16, the Diversity and Inclusion Task Force conducted a review of the College's policies, programs, faculty and staff, curriculum, and climate within the context of DEI. Several recommendations included in the final group report pertain to strengthening DEI in the curriculum. While the College has addressed more than half of the fifteen major recommendations made by this task force, the curricular recommendations are among the



remaining recommendations needing attention. The 2020 NSSE Topical Module on Inclusiveness and Engagement with Diversity provided data to CUE and Faculty Council (FAC) to direct these curricular recommendations; the process for addressing these curricular recommendations is below.

**Table 5.3**

*2020 NSSE Data from the Inclusiveness & Engagement Topical Module Question 1: During the current school year, how much has your coursework emphasized the following...? (Scale 1-4)*

NSSE Sub-question	Cedar Crest College First Year Students Mean Score	Other Module Completers First Year Students Mean Score	Cedar Crest College Seniors Mean Score	Other Module Completers Seniors Mean Score
a. Develop skills to work effectively w/ people of various backgrounds	2.3	2.6	2.8	2.8
d. Exploring your own background through projects, assignments, or programs	2.3	2.5	2.9	2.6
f. Discussing issues of equity or privilege	2.5	2.6	2.7	2.6
g. Respecting the expression of diverse ideas	2.6	2.8	2.9	2.8

In July 2020, the College’s FAC created a Faculty Action Plan to Address Institutionalized Racism and to foster a diverse, equitable, and inclusive learning environment. The action plan sets curricular goals addressed by different faculty constituencies. First, the Diversity Advocates and Diversity Trainers groups developed and distributed a rubric for faculty to use in evaluating course content and classroom structure. This group then used the rubric to lead discussions with individual departments during August and January Faculty Workshops. Participating faculty evaluated individual courses, and the groups discussed strengths, weaknesses, and approaches for improving teaching content and methods. In August, the introduction of the diversity rubric to faculty took place. Working in departmental groups, faculty evaluated fall courses and shared strategies utilized as part of the ongoing DEI work in their course construction and teaching. In January, faculty discussed their spring courses by department using the diversity rubric and discussed diversity in the classroom with a group of four Black alumnae. FAC, in collaboration with the Diversity Advocates and Trainers groups, gathered faculty data related to the rubric for all courses taught, and shared results with Faculty



Council and the full faculty. This data revealed areas of relative strength and weakness as well as differences across departments as it related to DEI. During the 2021-22 academic year, faculty within academic departments identified courses for each undergraduate and graduate major for intentional DEI work. This included using the DEI evaluation rubric (EI.III.2- Culturally Responsive Teaching Rubric), with the goal of moving each course forward on two dimensions of that rubric. This process recognized that the most effective way to make an immediate and measurable difference in the student experience of attention to DEI in the classroom was to allow departments to identify courses and approaches best tailored to individual academic disciplines and curricular needs and practices. Departments will assess progress on these courses and identify additional courses for Spring 2022 to engage in the same intentional work around DEI practices, with the goal of improving an average of five courses per semester, depending on the size of the academic program and the number of faculty teaching in each program.

Lastly, an area for reflection on DEI topics in teaching added to the faculty annual self-evaluation form served as a review and planning tool for the upcoming academic year. This completed alignment with the revised description of faculty work responsibilities in the Faculty Handbook (Faculty Handbook, Book III, Article C.1) and was a goal of the Faculty Action Plan to address DEI within the curriculum.

### **Assessment Process to Set Strategic Goals**

Feedback provided to academic program chairs/deans/directors offer an opportunity for reflection and adjustment of curricula and other aspects of assessment within programs. As a part of ongoing review of the assessment process, templates for AAR and PPR align with the College's Strategic Plan. In addition to academic program assessment, individual College offices participate in the AAR/PPR process. The Office of Assessment, Accreditation, and Compliance completed the PPR process in 2021 with an overall score of 87% with findings that included a plan to prepare new templates for assessing academic programs in alignment with the new strategic plan. Efforts to create new templates will be a collaborative initiative between CUE, GPPC, and the Assessment Committee. Revisions to the assessment tools using a shared governance model ensures key stakeholders are engaged in the task.

The current Strategic Plan includes initiatives related to diversity, student interaction, and global experiences. Data supporting the inclusion of these topics in the Strategic Plan include the FSSE and NSSE. For example, 2017 FSSE data indicated that 38% of faculty teaching 100 and 200 level courses and 33% of faculty teaching 300 level courses indicated that it is important for students to participate in a learning community or other formal group program for student interaction. Additionally, 53% of faculty teaching 100 and 200 level courses reported that it is important for students to participate in a study abroad program. Data from the 2020 NSSE yielded an institutional score of a 3.2 compared to 3.1 for peer colleges related to how often students have discussions with people of a race or ethnicity other than their own for both first year and senior students. (Requirement of Affiliation 10)

Additionally, the College engaged in an Academic Portfolio Evaluation (APE) during AY 2020-2021 to assess the ability of the College's academic programs to plan for and respond to shifting enrollment and finances because of changing demographics in higher education, as well as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Academic Portfolio Evaluation was a forward-thinking process to increase the efficacy of collaboration among programs. This work was





distinct from the AAR/PPR process in that APE did not evaluate individual programs, but the relationship of the College’s programs together. Academic Portfolio Evaluation was a highly collaborative process that included faculty, staff, administration, and the Board of Trustees and assessed the following three domains: 1.) Quality of programs to deliver the academic curriculum efficiently for the College’s number of students, faculty, and courses; 2.) Opportunity for programs to align and realize their enrollment potential with internal and external student demand; and 3.) Cost of programs to provide for affordability and to evolve to meet emerging enrollment shifts. From this work, the College realized the ability to impact quality and opportunity within all programs and \$265,000 in operating cost savings. (EI.V.3- APE Final Report) (Requirement of Affiliation 10)

In addition to internal assessment processes, academic programs such as business, forensic science, the School of Nursing, nutrition, occupational therapy, and social work participate in assessment via external accrediting bodies. In several of these programs, the assessment cycle includes a site visit via external accreditation body. Completion and submission of annual assessments reports to accreditors for these programs occurs in addition to the AAR for the College. Table 5.3 demonstrates the College’s accredited majors/programs, accreditation cycle and reporting.

**Table 5.4**  
*Accredited Majors and Programs*

Academic Major/Graduate Program	Name of Accreditor	Date of Next Review Month/Year	Site Visit with Review (Y/N)	Yearly Report (Y/N)
Business (UG & MBA)	Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP)	Sept – Nov 2029	Y	N Every 2 years
Forensic Science (UG)	Forensic Science Education Programs Accreditation Commission (FEPAC)	Sep-Oct 2023	Y	Y
Forensic Science (GR)	Forensic Science Education Programs Accreditation Commission (FEPAC)	Oct 2021	Y	Y
Dietetic Internship (Post-Bac)	Accreditation Council on Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND)	Nov 2021	Y	Y
Nutrition (UG)	Accreditation Council on Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND)	Nov 2021	Y	Y



Academic Major/Graduate Program	Name of Accreditor	Date of Next Review Month/Year	Site Visit with Review (Y/N)	Yearly Report (Y/N)
Nursing (BSN & MSN)	Accreditation Commission on Education in Nursing (ACEN)	Fall 2024	Y	Y
Nursing (MSN & DNP)	Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE)	Fall 2023	Y	Y
Nurse Anesthesia (MSN & DNP)	Council on Accreditation (COA)	Spring 2023	Y	Y
Occupational Therapy (OTD)	Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE)	November 1, 2022	Aug-Nov 2023	Y
Social Work (UG)	Council on Social Work Education (CSWE)	Spring 2024	Y	Y

### Key Findings

- The AAC&U VALUE rubrics and NSSE data assess student learning outcomes and to evaluate the Liberal Arts Curriculum.
- The College developed a Retention and Persistence Committee to encourage student persistence. The committee has recommended that faculty use new persistence tools to foster student collaboration in courses that have strong indicators for student persistence.
- Students who graduate from the College are achieving success after graduation. Over 90% of students graduating with a bachelor's degree report being employed five years after graduation, with 99% engaged overall (Class of 2016 data).
- For graduate students, 91% reported employment five years after graduation with 100% engaged overall (Class of 2016 data).
- The College has demonstrated an organized and comprehensive approach to the assessment of student learning to measure educational effectiveness through the General Education Assessment Plan and the PPR/AAR processes. The assessment processes enable collaboration among faculty and administration to effectively assess program curricula, pedagogy, management of a major, minor, or graduate program, and student needs. Program goals align with the College's Strategic Plan.
- The Assessment Committee Co-Chairs (faculty member and the Associate Provost) will meet with department chairs, graduate program directors, or office directors to discuss PPR results and develop an action plan for the next assessment cycle.



### **Key Findings (continued)**

- College faculty have actively engaged in DEI initiatives to identify and foster the incorporation of DEI topics and teaching/learning pedagogies within the classroom. The Diversity Trainers and Advocates for Change championed this effort with use of faculty workshop time for faculty development and work around the examination of courses in conjunction with the DEI rubric. DEI work across the College is ongoing and an essential component of the College institutional priorities.
- With the implementation of the new Strategic Plan, changes to the PPR/AAR templates to reflect alignment to the College's new goals and initiatives will take place within the next academic year.





## Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement

Requirements of Affiliation: 8, 10, and 11

Institutional Priorities: *Resources of College Innovation*





## **Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement**

*The institution's planning processes, resources, and structures are aligned with each other and are sufficient to fulfill its mission and goals, to continuously assess and improve its programs and services, and to respond effectively to opportunities and challenges.*

### **Aligning the Budget with the College's Mission and Goals**

As part of the College's commitment to fiscal sustainability and investment in its core mission and guiding principles, the Finance Office utilizes a zero-based budgeting process that builds budgets at the department level based upon current projected enrollments, supply and expense needs, and capital requirements annually from the ground up. After the electronic submission process, budgets become summarized; the Chief Financial Officer/Chief Operating Officer (CFO/COO) shares the budget with the Cabinet for review and approval. For nearly ten years, the College allocated 75% of approved budgets at the start of the fiscal year with the remaining 25% allocated in April based upon department needs. This process has supported allocation of resources based on sound fiduciary practices and allowed the College to invest resources into strategic needs (Criterion 1).

Deeply grounded in its mission and institutional goals is the College's current Strategic Plan, *The Aspiration of Others*. The Strategic Plan, comprised of 22 initiatives, contained four pillars of institutional goals. During the development of the Strategic Plan, a compilation of detailed budgets by the Finance Office on each initiative outlined the projected revenues and expenditures. For each Strategic Plan proposal, the inclusion of key constituents in the budgeting process ensured accuracy and inclusion of appropriate revenues and expenditures. The Strategic Planning Committee compiled plan proposals and budget summaries for review. The Planning Committee sent the fully proposed Strategic Plan, including all budget summaries, for approval by the President, Cabinet, and the Board of Trustees. To date, the College has implemented 18 initiatives with nearly \$15 million dollars invested (Criterion 3).

Resources for the Strategic Plan came from several different funding streams such as enrollment revenues generated from successes in the prior Strategic Plan, the endowment, and donor support, as well as general operating support. Staging and prioritization for implementation of initiatives based upon the potential to generate revenue, accreditation requirements, and overall available funding happened. Development and implementation of several initiatives occurred after the launch of the Strategic Plan, in alignment with the mission and institutional goals, and included examples such as the Doctor of Occupational Therapy (OTD), the Master's in Crime Science, and the Center for Police Innovation and Community Engagement. This demonstrated the Strategic Plan was nimble and fostered continued evolution of the College to meet the demands of the workforce while remaining grounded in its mission and institutional goals (Criterion 1).

Regular reviews of the budget occur at multiple levels within the College. First, departmental supervisors have real-time access to budget-to-actual reports through the my.cedarcrest intranet. This access allows departments to review current and historic data, monitor expenditures compared to budget allotments, ensure proper coding, and adjust to





expenditure changes. The Finance Office reviews budget-to-actual data monthly to ensure expenditures remain within available resources. Cabinet members also have real-time access to all departmental budgets that report through their division and are responsible for ensuring appropriate spending (Criterion 5).

Using data inputs from multiple departments (such as enrollment management, student affairs, athletics, facilities, aquatic center, advancement, marketing, and human resources), the Finance Office compiles the College's budget (EI.VI.1 Budget Cycle). As a tuition dependent institution, College enrollment is the driving factor of the budget. The enrollment plan, addressed in Standard IV, determines enrollment changes and projects for fluctuations in student populations. As such, the College can maintain its flexibility because of projected changes in enrollments and subsequent decisions regarding resource allocation. Finally, the CFO/COO shares the fully developed budget, in detail, with the Cabinet and adjusts, as necessary.

The College's endowment has seen substantial growth since the last Middle States review. In 2014, the endowment was \$25 million and as of fiscal year ending June 30, 2021, the endowment had nearly doubled to \$47 million. This is a result of increased endowment contributions from foundations and individual donors, careful investment and management, commitment to adding board designated funds, and overall market value growth. This increase in the endowment has provided additional budgetary resources to offset current expenses and allow resources for additional strategic investments (Requirement of Affiliation 11).

Through the annual Periodic Program Review (PPR), the College evaluates, adjusts, and reviews data to ensure departments and programs meet goals and assess financial impacts at the operational level (Criterion 9 and Requirement of Affiliation 8). The PPR is a collective process that reviews direct and indirect costs of programs and assesses the overall financial health of each program as addressed in Standard V.

A collaborative process for budget development ensures that stakeholders can offer feedback. This is in accordance with the charge of the Budget Advisory Committee (BAC). Faculty Handbook II.J.2, pages 23-24 (EI.II.1) outlines membership and the process of the BAC. This process ensures the College's commitment to shared governance and transparency.

Annually, the College receives a fiscal year end audit conducted by independent auditors who review all aspects of the College's financial operations. Auditors conduct an evaluation of internal controls, revenues and expenditures, financial health, debt ratios, and College processes. Since the last MSCHE Self-Study, the College has received unmodified opinions in each fiscal year. Additionally, the College reviews its Composite Financial Index Score (CFI) annually and proudly notes positive progress year by year in sustaining overall financial health with a composite score of 2.5 or greater in recent years. Copies of these audits and other financial compliance documents are in the Institutional Verification of Compliance document (EI.II.2) (Criterion 7).

At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the College faced a challenging budget as much of its auxiliary revenue sources experience a decrease due by the state-wide shutdown of non-essential businesses. Fortunately, the College had not allocated the remaining 25% of budgets to departments and was able to offset some of its reductions in revenue with sound fiduciary decisions regarding resources and utilities. It was, however, not enough to cover the shortfall faced by the College to finish the fiscal year. As such, the Board of Trustees required presentation of a balanced budget that did not utilize reserves to meet budgetary constraints.





A Board Task Force comprised of trustees, faculty, and staff reviewed operations, found new revenue sources, reduced expenditures, and improved operations. Upon conclusion of the Task Force, presentation of nearly 100 recommendations met the objectives outlined. The implementation of half of the recommendations provided budget relief, invested in critical needs, generated revenue, and improved operations. The work completed during this brief time demonstrated the resiliency of Cedar Crest College (EI.VI.2-COVID-19 Task Force Final Report).

### **Sustainability**

Cedar Crest College has a variety of processes in place to sustain and ensure the longevity of important assets. Annual and ongoing planning and decision-making processes occur across the College throughout the fiscal year. Included are the Strategic Planning, Academic Periodic Program Reviews, self-studies for accreditation, capital expenditures planning and facility reviews, survey completions (such as NSSE, NACUBO, AICUP), benchmarking, endowment reporting, Campus Master Planning, fundraising including the Annual Fund and Capital Campaign, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) training and assessment, and personnel surveys and performance reviews. The College uses data provided from these assessments and reviews to make important forward-thinking decisions. As such, the College and its leadership focus on long-term sustainability and viability ensuring that a Cedar Crest education will be available to students in the future (Criteria 1, 5, and 6).

Physical investments in our infrastructure, such as the FalconPlex, renovations to classrooms and student spaces that include a deliberate focus on third spaces for our students, development of new academic majors and outfitting of new laboratories, renovation of student residence halls and renovation and dedication of the original President's residence as the Center for Diversity and Global Engagement (CDGE) demonstrate the College's commitment to the institutional priorities. These investments, connected to the Strategic Plan, take into consideration deferred maintenance needs across campus. The College completed an overall assessment of building and facilities to provide clear direction on infrastructure needs annually and utilizes these assessments during campus planning discussions, the development of a comprehensive campaign, and evaluation of potential areas of growth and innovation (Criterion 6).

Investments in programs, faculty and staff have been a priority throughout the implementation of the Strategic Plan. Through the addition of new graduate programs in integrated exercise science, crime science, business administration, nurse anesthesia, occupational therapy and art therapy, the College has grown its faculty and staff. A careful balance of staffing levels managed across the institution ensures continued investment of resources in the areas that require support. The PPR process assesses College departments to confirm their mission, quality, and financial viability (EI.V.2- PPR Guidelines) (Criteria 4 and 9).

Fiscal sustainability has been a core principle of the leadership team. As shared previously, the College operates annually under a balanced budget. Careful management and allocation of financial resources occurs through use of a zero-based budget process. Monitoring enrollment trends for each of our enrollment cycles allows the College to pivot and adjust based upon



revenue projections. Budget updates transpire throughout the year as the budget is a living document that allows for real-time decisions. The Board of Trustees and the BAC receive an update to the budget in October, February, and May of each fiscal year. Even during the pandemic, the College managed to retain all employees while maintaining a balanced budget (Criteria 4 and 5).

The College has worked to sustain annual fund donations, with an annual goal of \$1.1 million in unrestricted dollars despite the challenging environment surrounding giving brought on by a global pandemic when more individuals are pulling back philanthropically. The College has seen progress enlisting additional strategies to boost philanthropic success. The Evidence Inventory contains a list of strategies to diversify fundraising, increase trustee giving, and boost endowment growth (EI.VI.3 Advancement Fundraising and Endowment Growth) (EI.VI.4 Investment Policy Statement).

To prepare the campus for the future, the Institutional Advancement team has planned and implemented a comprehensive campaign with a goal of \$25 million over five years. The College formed a Campaign Leadership Committee in fall 2021. This Committee provides leadership and input on campaign funding priorities, campaign messaging, the case statement and campaign handouts, and the gift table as well as valuable insight on prospect identification and community connections. Funding priorities for the campaign align with top priorities to move the campus forward including:

- A New Health Sciences Building with academic expansion
- Athletics Expansion
- Carmen Twillie Ambar Sophomore Expedition Endowment
- Building Renovations
- Cedar Crest Fund
- Endowed Funds

The Campaign's silent phase launched in late fall 2021 with early visits to leadership donors and Cedar Crest College Trustees and Cabinet members. Visits aided in cultivating relationships, telling the campaign story, and asking for early gifts. Itemization forms were submitted to and accepted by the State of Pennsylvania Office of the Budget for Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP) funding for the New Health Sciences building and the athletic expansion. Work with an architectural firm is underway to prepare renderings for these new projects. Upon completion of such renderings, naming opportunities will be available for presentation to leadership donors and prospects. Campaign events and fundraising efforts will continue from fall 2021 through June 2026. The Campaign reached approximately 21% of its goal in April 2022. The Evidence Inventory contains donor materials for the Comprehensive Campaign as well as concept designs and renderings (EI.VI.5). Figure 6.1 shows the Campaign progress as of April 2022.



**Figure 5** *Comprehensive Campaign Progress as of April 2022*

As discussed in Standard V, the College conducts PPR of all academic and non-academic departments on a five-year cycle to ensure programs’ alignment with the institution’s mission and values. This review provides departments with important feedback on key areas of assessment including the financial viability of each department. In spring of 2020, all programs participated in an Academic Portfolio Evaluation (APE), which further evaluated at all facets of programs including credits to faculty load, and curriculum as addressed in Standard V. Faculty made recommendations within departments and staged them through a three-year implementation period. This assessment ensured that the College was closely monitoring the investment of resources, the application of curriculum, the marketability of our programs and the delivery of course content (Criteria 5, 8, and 9).

The College maintains a detailed budget updated in real-time to manage the changing landscape of higher education. Close monitoring of enrollment funnels and numbers occurs at the seven entry points throughout the academic year. As the budget changes, the College adjusts its expenditures to manage positive and negative fluctuations. The College may use these resources to invest in new equipment, supplies, or renovations that in turn then benefit the student experience. By giving departments fiscal responsibility, they in turn proactively manage and support the overall mission of the College.

College employees comprise most of the budget expenditure (salaries and benefits). The College employs 75 full-time faculty, of which 43% are tenured or on tenure-track; 10 part-time faculty, 102 adjuncts and 160 staff. As of fall 2021, the student faculty ratio was 9:1, however the ratio has historically been 10:1 since the last MSCHE Self-Study. The College’s investment in new academic programs also results in the investment in new employees across the portfolio to support the delivery (Criterion 4).





### **Expanding Auxiliary Revenue Sources**

Since the last MSCHE Self-Study, Cedar Crest College has made significant improvements to increase its auxiliary revenue and expand the College's footprint within the community. The FalconPlex, installed in 2017, included a turf field, fieldhouse, lighting, and stadium seating. The addition of the FalconPlex increased rentals to all athletics facilities and allowed the College to host sports teams and events year-round. The College also added a full-time coaching staff in certain areas and the expansion of sports offerings utilized the coaching staff to manage the complex and expand outreach into the community. As such, FalconPlex rentals throughout the year, and even during the COVID-19 pandemic, occurred to the extent that federal health guidelines permitted. This section addresses Criterion 8 and Requirement of Affiliation 11.

Expansion of rentals across campus continues to grow for outside organizations. Renovations to the Commons, Samuels Theater and Alumnae Auditorium along with the creation of a new conference center and the expansion of meeting rooms provided the College with additional spaces to support the needs of our community. The College has also increased its summer rentals through the addition of various summer camps. This expansion of summer camps, outside of sports camps, has been a significant generator of revenue over the summer when the campus is quiet. Future Stars, Camp Lily, Camp Smile, and other day camps begin mid-June and end mid-July. During the COVID-19 pandemic the College was an approved site for medical and front-line workers children through the Future Stars program.

Cedar Crest College was also honored to assume the rights to Mayfair, Festival of the Arts, a 30-year tradition in the Allentown area. A music and arts festival held at Cedar Beach was unable to financially sustain operations and ceased operations in 2016. The College obtained the transfer of rights to Mayfair under its 501(c)3 in 2017 and held the first festival on its campus grounds in 2018. The College welcomed nearly 22,000 people that inaugural year for the three-day festival. We have continued the festival each year (except for 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic) and in 2021, held the first local large scale music festival in the area post-pandemic.

The College continues to expand its access to additional financial resources through grants and corporate giving. In 2017, the College received RACP funding from the State of Pennsylvania to support the construction of the FalconPlex. In addition to this funding, grant requests over the past five years continue to diversify to meet greater areas of need on campus. The number of unique program areas for which grant funding was requested nearly doubled from nine areas of focus in the 2015-2016 cycle to eighteen areas of focus in the 2019-2020 cycle. The Manager of Grants and Foundations continues to identify funding sources that align with strategic and operational needs on campus. When funding is received, grant reporting includes progress towards fulfillment of the objectives and progress towards meeting the grant purpose. Among the list of grants funded in recent years are:

#### **Community Engagement and Public Health**

- Commonwealth of Pennsylvania – Department of Health: \$100,000 per year to promote Type I Diabetes awareness, education, and outreach activities with a focus on the Lehigh Valley community. This work engages faculty, staff, students, and community members in the areas of nursing, education, nutrition, and public health.
- Harry C. Trexler Trust - \$30,000 for a Summer Bridge program providing early programming for underserved incoming first-year students. This program helped to



educate students and acclimate them during the summer months prior to their freshmen year, aiding them in greater success as they begin the fall semester.

#### Promotion and Growth of New Graduate Programs

- Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Nurse Anesthetist Traineeship (NAT) Program: A formula-based grant to provide stipends to full-time students pursuing a Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) in Nurse Anesthesia degree.
- The Arcadia Foundation, Keystone Savings Foundation, and Harry C. Trexler Trust: Foundation funding to support the development and launch of the OTD Program through academic equipment purchases.

#### Scholarship Funding for a Diverse Student Body

- Sylvia Perkin Perpetual Charitable Trust: Funding to support annual scholarships for minority students in need of financial assistance from the Lehigh Valley area.
- Charlotte W. Newcombe Foundation: Funding to support annual and endowed scholarships for non-traditional, female students.
- Donald B. and Dorothy L. Stabler Foundation: Funding to support endowed scholarships for traditional students.
- Charles A. and Leona K. Gruber Foundation: Funding to support endowed scholarships for students in STEM with financial need from the Lehigh Valley area.

### **Physical and Technical Infrastructure**

Support of the physical and technological infrastructure for innovation and delivery of existing and innovative programs is a priority for the College. Active communication between department chairs and the dean of the School of Nursing with the Administration during the budgeting process provides a mechanism for budget and capital requests to support existing and new undergraduate and graduate programs. Based on annual budget requests and approval summaries of capital expenditures for academic years 2018-19, 2019-20 and 2020-21, approximately 35% of the annual capital budget represented classroom infrastructure and technology update expenditures. This section discusses Criteria 6 and Requirement of Affiliation 10.

The College has made significant investments in supporting physical teaching and research space infrastructure. The College has 66 spaces primarily designated for instruction, which include lecture halls, lecture teaching classrooms, teaching laboratories, teaching art studios, dance performance studios, and theatre spaces. Since 2014, 50% (33 of 66) of these spaces have undergone some form of physical renovation such as replacement or addition of new chairs, flooring, tables, whiteboards, easels, or refinishing of walls. In the past six years, completed renovations of the introductory biology, and introductory chemistry laboratories that, on average, accommodate greater than 33% of any given year's incoming traditional students, supported teaching and research programs in the Biological Sciences and Chemical and Physical Sciences Departments. The College outfitted an Exercise Physiology laboratory for teaching and research supporting the newly developed Exercise Science program. The development, outfitting, and completion of two new Occupational Therapy laboratories Pediatrics and Life Skills support teaching and research in the new OTD program (EI.VI.6- Facilities Master Plan).



The rapid and continuous changes in educational and administrative technology present ongoing challenges for all colleges as the useful life of technology investments has become shorter as innovation drives obsolescence of existing capabilities. However, the College remains dedicated to maintaining modern technology for in-person teaching spaces. The College's Computer Replacement Policy Statement guides the transition of the institution's hardware and software needs (EI.VI.7- Cedar Crest College Computer Replacement Policy). Of the 66 rooms/spaces designated for instruction, 64 rooms have instructor podium computers with screen or television projection capability, and 72% of these spaces updated and standardized systematically over a five-year planned period, respectively. To support broader institutional goals, the College has made significant capital improvements to internet bandwidth and wireless infrastructure to meet growing campus needs and has migrated more than 80% of our systems to cloud-based availability. In addition, the instructional and research support technology of equipment, software, and peripheral items of academic departments such as nursing, biological and chemical, and forensic sciences, exercise science, nuclear medicine, as well as occupational therapy has required frequent updates and replacement.

Since 2014, the College has also made significant investments in online student engagement with the adoption of Canvas by Instructure as a Learning Management System (LMS). Additionally, there has been a college-wide integration of Microsoft Office 365, as well as an investment in online education resources such as Proctortrack, ExamSoft, and MediashareIQ. The College has dedicated resources for the provision of quality and rigorous online education opportunities for over a decade, with investments in faculty online pedagogy development through regular in-house training during mandatory faculty workshops, one-on-one education from the campus Senior Instructional Designer, and sponsored Quality Matters online instruction.

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the broader incorporation of online education and student engagement tools in the classroom. Within months of the COVID-19 shutdown in March of 2020, 100% of classroom instructor podiums had webcams. IT provided faculty with extensive training on the use of Microsoft Teams to allow for synchronous teaching of in person and online populations. This allowed the College to adopt a Hyflex model of teaching that offered a combination of in-person as well as synchronous and asynchronous online content delivery options for students within the same course in the 2020-2021 academic year. While this model poses continuous challenges in maintaining student engagement, frequently offered development sessions led by the IT Department and Faculty Canvas Coaches provided insights into online pedagogies and technologies to help support Hyflex education.

### **Communicating the Budget to the College Community**

Cedar Crest College's governance structure provides a well-defined process to communicate general budgetary information and allocations with the broader College community. Six times per fiscal year the BAC, with representation from Cabinet and each major faculty committee, meets with the following purpose: (a) provide guidance to the President on budgeting matters; (b) provide more opportunities for broader input in the College's budgeting process; and (c) provide greater transparency in the budgeting process. The BAC participates in broad discussions around major variables that impact the budget. Through the assistance of the BAC, the review, analysis, and communication of financial projections and operating results to





the faculty occurs through their committee structure and faculty meetings. Input provided from the Committee helps guide the budget process. Throughout the year, the President and Provost communicate regularly with the faculty and Faculty Council regarding budgetary issues (EI.VI.8-February 2022 BAC Presentation). This section discusses Criterion 2 of this Standard.

In addition to the BAC, the CFO/COO conducts financial and budget reviews with the full faculty, during a regularly scheduled faculty meeting and with the staff at a designated Administrative Council meeting. Administrative Council meetings ensure that staff have opportunities to hear directly from the senior leadership team in areas across the campus footprint. These meetings are informative and interactive and follow a similar structure to faculty meetings with the goal of increasing transparency to all campus constituents. A minimum of two meetings take place annually.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought forth an even greater need for transparency and communication. With much of the College's workforce working remotely during the height of the pandemic, along with the application of federal funding sources such as the Payroll Protection Act, the College pivoted to providing more regular updates. These began through video-recorded messages by the President and other Cabinet members as well as town hall style virtual meetings. The town hall meetings scheduled at various times throughout the year ensured all employees had the ability to ask questions, receive vital information, and have direct access to the leadership at the College. The meetings were an important communication and feedback tool.

Annually in September, the President delivers the State of the College address to the entire campus community. The President reviews the year, presents the College's financial picture, and highlights achievements of campus. The President also shares a shorter version with the College's alumnae at their annual meeting.

During each board meeting, the President provides the Board of Trustees with a report summarizing the work of the College since the last board meeting. The report covers all areas of the College, including a review of the President's goals. The CFO/COO presents a full budget presentation at each Board meeting and summarizes changes since the prior meeting, including actionable items. The presentation provided to the Board is the same presentation provided to the BAC, inclusive of input, questions, concerns, and comments. This feedback, shared with the Board, ensures a full shared governance approach. The review of feedback from the Board happens at the next regularly scheduled BAC meeting.

Faculty leaders and staff members with budget oversight for their areas have access to all budget information on a real-time basis through the College's my.cedarcrest intranet. These faculty and staff may access their charges, comparative reports, and budget to actual detail 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The CFO/COO provides the Cabinet with monthly budget to actual detail reports for their divisions to review and compare. Requests for analysis of accounts happen at any time to ensure the accuracy of the charges. New faculty and staff with budget oversight responsibilities attend a training session on how to read, understand, and use the reports available to them and to understand the budget process. Communication of the departmental budgets to the faculty and staff who work within the respective department are the responsibility of the academic chairs, graduate program directors, the dean of the School of Nursing, or staff directors, as appropriate.



### **Responding to the Changing Landscape of Higher Education**

In 2022, the College's mission and vision remain the core of its work. The College began to address the demographic shift scheduled to impact higher education. The 2017 Strategic Plan carefully focuses on the growth of graduate programs in demand locally and nationally. This focus on academic excellence propelled the development of eight new master's programs and four new doctoral programs. The addition of the new programs has resulted in a change to the College's Carnegie classification from baccalaureate to master's. This section addresses strategies used to provide resources for the College (Criterion 8).

Since 2012, the College regularly reviews its programs and offerings through the PPR and Annual Assessment Report (AAR), which followed the College's overall Academic Program Review (APR) from 2010. In spring of 2021, the Provost, members of the Board of Trustees, and department chairs/deans conducted an APE assessing the three domains of Quality, Opportunity, and Cost in accordance with the 2010 APR. The purpose of APE was to identify areas of efficiency and effectiveness across all programs as discussed in Standard V. This work provided pathways for improvement across majors, efficiency in spending, stabilizing costs, and areas for identified improvement. Standard V discusses this process in detail. (Criteria 6, 8, and 9)

To best support a student's academic pathways, the College has added online consortia relationships with Acadeum and the Lower Cost Models for Independent Colleges (LCMC) as resources for additional course offerings and programs not otherwise provided by Cedar Crest College. The offering of college courses to visiting students to maximize course enrollments and provide pathways of completion for students outside the Cedar Crest community is also a revenue generator. The College continues to partner with community colleges and other master's level degree institutions to provide students with the opportunity to complete bachelor and master's degrees. The close partnership with Lehigh Carbon Community College (LCCC), the largest academic partnership with the College, continues to grow via a direct nursing and theater partnership. The College has affiliation agreements with many community colleges and is working to enhance these partnerships similarly to that of LCCC. For example, Cedar Crest is exploring a direct theater and humanities partnership with Northampton Community College (NCC). For students seeking programs beyond those offered at the College, agreements provide seamless transfer and acceptance of students. For example, in collaboration with Salus University, Cedar Crest students receive preferred admittance into several programs such as audiology and optometry.

With continued concerns about the cost of education, the College creatively searched for opportunities to maximize the value of a Cedar Crest education. The creation of the Four-Year Guarantee (4YG) ensured students can graduate college within four years by following a prescribed curriculum plan. Additionally, the College created multiple 4+1 degrees, which allow students to actively take graduate level courses in their senior year and graduate with a master's level degree with one additional year of education, thus reducing out-of-pocket costs for students and their families.

The focus on a transformational student experience led to the creation of the Student Campus Employment Center (SEC), which guarantees every student on-campus employment that supports the development of transferrable skills in their field of study. The SEC provides internships, performance appraisals, and increases in pay as students advance and enhance their



skill sets. The College uses student employees to support College operations. Additionally, students learn skills that enhance their marketability for employment upon graduation.

The Carmen Twillie Ambar Sophomore Year Expedition (CTA SYE), created under the premise that to change the world, students must see the world, guarantees every traditional sophomore student a trip abroad at no cost other than that of a passport. With four trips already taken, and one planned in May of 2022, the College has provided access to student travel and experiences that previously were only available to those with financial resources. The Student Success Center, located in the Cressman Library, provides a one-stop location for students to obtain critical support services, such as tutoring, information technology support, and advising. Additionally, critical work has centered around the Closing the Gap initiatives, which support students' needs such as a food pantry, career closet, emergency funds, books, and meal swipes. The creation of an endowment to support this initiative shows the long-term commitment of the College to this important need.

A core focus of academic excellence also focuses on the expansion and hiring of faculty. As demographics of the College and local community continue to shift, the institution must adjust accordingly. The College engaged in strategic initiatives around DEI as it relates to faculty and staff hiring processes and procedures such as the purchase of Interfolio to expand the search and hiring process as well as the incorporation of inclusion of diversity statements for applicants across all positions into the hiring process.

Being a college of greater impact solidifies our position in supporting the growth of women as leaders in their field of study. The College engaged in a brand campaign to enhance its messaging to clearly communicate the mission and goals and attract new prospective students into recruitment bands. The College's messaging is clear, well defined, and focuses on the strengths of the institution in being innovators of the field of education. The College will continue to enhance its presence and exposure through the comprehensive campaign that began in 2021. Through donations and support of our alumnae, corporate sponsors and loyal giving communities, the College will be able to expand access to education to more students nationally.

### **Key Findings**

- The College will continue to invest in improvements to the wired network to support the wireless network.
- The College will continue to invest in improved technologies and AV equipment to support the Hyflex model of instruction.
- The College has a sound budgetary process and effectively trains new academic chairs, graduate program directors, staff directors, and others with budgetary oversight in the budget cycle procedures.
- Shared governance on planning occurs in the BAC and Facilities Committees.
- The College complies with federal, state, and MSCHE policies in finance.
- The College actively plans for changes in higher education such as the predicted traditional enrollment decrease due to changing demographics. Part of this planning is to foster growth of graduate programming.





## Standard VII: Governance, Leadership, and Administration

Requirements of Affiliation: 12 and 13

Institutional Priorities: *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Resources for College Innovation, and Academic Excellence as a Comprehensive College with Undergraduate and Graduate Programs in the Liberal and Practitioner Arts*





## **Standard VII: Governance, Leadership, and Administration**

*The institution is governed and administered in a manner that allows it to realize its stated mission and goals in a way that effectively benefits the institution, its students, and the other constituencies it serves. Even when supported by or affiliated with governmental, corporate, religious, educational system, or other unaccredited organizations, the institution has education as its primary purpose, and it operates as an academic institution with appropriate autonomy.*

Cedar Crest College has a clearly defined shared governance structure, which enables the institution to safeguard the institution's mission and ensure academic excellence. This structure, developed in alliance with the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) Policy Statement on Government of College and Universities, states that "the variety and complexity of the tasks performed by the institutions of higher education produce an inescapable interdependence among the governing board, administration, faculty, students and others. The relationship calls for adequate communication among these components and full opportunity for joint planning and effort" (Faculty Handbook, II.A, p. 3) (Criterion 1).

### **Cedar Crest College Board of Trustees – Governing Body**

The primary governing body of the College, the Board of Trustees, originates from the College Charter and operates according to the College's Bylaws. These Bylaws enumerate the committee structure of the Board, including roles and responsibilities, as well as defining the decision-making responsibilities of each committee and Board Officer. According to the Bylaws, membership on the Board of Trustees of the College shall consist of not less than fifteen, and not more than forty Trustees. Within this structure, five positions are alumnae nominated by the Alumnae Association and recommended by the Governance Committee. Additionally, the Alumnae Association President holds a position (ex-officio, voting member), a member of the faculty serves as a voting member of the Board of Trustees and an Ex-Officio member to Faculty Council (FAC), the sitting President of the College holds a position (ex-officio, voting member) and a member of the student body (ex-officio, voting member) who "must be a full-time matriculated student at Cedar Crest College, who is the President of the Student Government Association at the time of her election" (Faculty Handbook I.II.1, p. 6). Qualifications for independent Trustees numerated in Articles I and II of the College Bylaws ensure appropriate expertise maintaining the integrity of the institution (EI.VII.1- Faculty Handbook I). A more specific document outlines the Succession Process for Board Chair and Vice Chair that delineates the responsibility for changes in Board leadership (EI.VII.1- Faculty Handbook I.IV). This section documents Criterion 1 and Requirement of Affiliation 12.

Determining the general, educational, financial, and strategic policies of the institution is one of the primary functions of the Board of Trustees (as stated in the Bylaws). This includes ensuring the development, approval, and review of College-wide strategic plans to monitor



progress toward the plans' priorities and goals (EI.VII.1- Faculty Handbook I). The Board of Trustees has sufficient independence and does not interfere with the daily operations of the institution. Trustees annually self-evaluate these issues (EI.VII.3 Board of Trustees Self-Assessment Survey) (Criterion 2a).

The Board of Trustees Bylaws also outlines its responsibility to promote financial solvency and preserve institutional integrity. This fiduciary function of the Board of Trustees ensures the availability of resources for new College initiatives or innovation dealing with academic programs, College operations, student life, and infrastructure (Faculty Handbook I.I.7). Trustees provide leadership and actively participate in fund-raising activities, which may include building relationships, individual solicitation, participating in special events, and fundraising. In addition, Board members contribute financially to the College each academic year to the maximum of their capacity through the Office of Institutional Advancement (EI.VII.1- Faculty Handbook I, Article I, Section 1.7) (Criterion 2a).

Tasked with reviewing and approving new and major revisions to the educational programs of the College, the Board of Trustees ensures these remain consistent with the College's mission, plans, and financial resources. Recommendations from the faculty to the Board of Trustees on the implementation of new academic programs rests with the Academic Affairs Committee, which considers available resources and the financial impact of the proposed program on the institution (Faculty Handbook I.V.6). Similarly, the Facilities and Property Committee makes recommendations to the Board of Trustees regarding innovations involving alternation, improvement, and expansion of college infrastructure. The availability and management of resources impacts these recommendations (Faculty Handbook I.V.11).

In addition to the Bylaws, the Board also operates by the Board of Trustees Standing Rules, which defines the required meeting schedule, distribution of agenda/reports, speaking privileges, elective year, committee membership, committee meetings, attendance requirements and procedure for removal from office. This document also outlines the Board of Trustees conflict of interest policy. All Trustees sign an annual Conflict-of-Interest Disclosure form (EI.VII.1-Faculty Handbook I.XI.1-4). When a conflict of interest arises, Trustee members excuse themselves from deliberations and abstain from voting on matters which they or the Board/Committee chairperson determine to present a potential conflict of interest. Furthermore, the document Cedar Crest College Board of Trustees Responsibilities/Norms provides details of good practice in board governance (Criterion 2 h and Requirement of Affiliation 13).

The Board of Trustees and the President create ad hoc committees for specific purposes or to study a particular issue on an as needed basis. The Board Chair gives each ad hoc committee its charge or mission in writing, including expected outcomes and a timeline for completion of the study. Ad hoc committees typically dissolve upon completion of the study and committee recommendations. Recent ad hoc committees included the Academic Portfolio Evaluation (APE), COVID-19 Board appointed Task Force, and Racial Equity Committee. Descriptions of these committee activities are in previous chapters.





### **President of Cedar Crest College and Cabinet – Leadership and Governance**

Responsibility for the College’s administration, autonomy, governance, and leadership lies with the President of the College and the Cabinet (which includes the Provost, Chief Financial Officer/Chief Operating Officer (CFO/COO), Vice President of Enrollment Management and Marketing, Vice President of Institutional Advancement, Vice President of Student Services and Success/Dean of Students, and the Executive Director of Diversity and Inclusion) (EI.VII.1-Faculty Handbook I.VII). The Cabinet members possess the necessary qualifications to lead the College (EI.VII.2- Cabinet CVs). As defined by Article VII, Section 2 of the College By-Laws, “The President shall act as the executive head of the College in all matters relating to educational program, student life, internal management, and long-range planning and development” (Faculty Handbook I.VII.2, p. 15). Determination of the President’s compensation and the annual review of the President’s performance comes from the Compensation Committee of the Board of Trustees (EI.VII.4 BOT- Annual Evaluation of the President Questionnaire). The basis of the annual performance evaluation of the President are the performance goals established in the context of the Strategic Plan and approved by the Board of Trustees (Faculty Handbook I.I). Dr. Meade became the fourteenth President of Cedar Crest College on July 1, 2018, after a search process led by the Board Chair and included members of the Board of Trustees, faculty, and staff (EI.VII.1- Faculty Handbook I, Article VII, Section 2). In July 2017, the Board named Dr. Meade, a member of the Cedar Crest faculty since 1993, Interim President (Criteria 2f, 3a, b, and c, and 4 a, b, and c).

The President meets with the Board Chair on a weekly basis to provide updates and discuss any important pending issues. In addition, the President makes reports to the Trustees at each Board meeting (Faculty Handbook I.VII.2). The Board’s Executive Committee meets monthly to discuss important topics and to plan upcoming Board meeting agendas. The President has weekly meetings with direct reports and a weekly Cabinet meeting. In addition, the President reports to the full faculty monthly and to the staff through Administrative Council meetings held at least twice a year. The President also provides an annual “State of the College” address during an open meeting to the College-wide community in September, on the College’s Founding Day (Criterion 4e).

The institution has an effective and efficient administrative structure, is of appropriate size and with relevant experience and credentials to assist the President in fulfilling the mission of the College. Its organizational chart outlines the reporting lines for faculty, administration, and staff (EI.VII.5 College Organizational Chart). The Office of Human Resources updates this chart annually with each position holding a job description that details the duties and responsibilities required for that position. These job descriptions also delineate the goals and functions of each administrative position. The College utilizes a formal written performance evaluation system throughout the administrative structure to ensure appropriate qualifications in meeting assigned responsibilities described in Standard II (Criteria 3 d and 4 a-f).



### **Cedar Crest College Shared Governance**

The interrelatedness of the College's governance structure and transparent communication model among all College stakeholders (faculty, students, and staff), serves as the foundation for meeting prior and ongoing challenges and successes. The inclusive nature of the governance structure is central to the ways the College's governance structure supports efficacy through the roles and responsibilities of faculty, staff, and students. This process provides a feedback loop that enables all parties to assess needs and bring solutions to the table expeditiously while maintaining the College's mission and ensuring academic excellence.

The Faculty Bylaws begin with a statement on shared governance, collaboration, and transparency (EI.II.1-Faculty Handbook II.A) noting that “in order successfully to achieve its mission as an institution of higher education, Cedar Crest College embraces a philosophy of shared governance in its organizational structure, outline of assigned responsibilities, and promotion of open communication and opportunity for mutual input” (p.2). The College recognizes shared governance is most effective through cross-functional committees composed of administration, faculty, staff, and students tasked with representing their constituents and facilitating dialogue between governing bodies (Criteria 2b and c).

In addition to the faculty trustee, seats exist for faculty members on each the following four Board Committees: Academic Affairs, Advancement, Facilities & Property, and the Enrollment Management & Student Affairs Committees. College Bylaws governing Board committee expectations assigns the duties of faculty representatives to the Board of Trustees. The Faculty Handbook II (EI.II.1) lists all committees that comprise faculty governance, including responsibilities and membership. It also lists College-wide committees in which faculty participate. As per the Cedar Crest Bylaws, “the Faculty is concerned with the matters of instruction, formulation of the curriculum, and advancement of academic standards.” Faculty may serve on committees or in an advisory role as it relates to the “educational and disciplinary life of the College” (Faculty Handbook I.VIII.2, p.16). “Departments and faculty committees are responsible for disseminating information, make recommendations, and propose policies and programs that will enable the College to fulfil its educational mission” (EI.II.1-Faculty Handbook II.B.1, p.3). (Criteria 2d, e, g, and i)

The primary way in which the faculty exercises its role in shared governance is by voting on proposals at full faculty meetings. These come as recommendations from FAC on academic matters and policy changes to the Faculty Handbook. Faculty participation in shared governance also includes service in other Cedar Crest college-wide appointed committees and task forces. Faculty tasked with reviewing the College’s operating budget serve on Budget Advisory Committee (BAC). They can “1) provide guidance to the President on budgeting matters; 2) provide more opportunities for broader input in the College’s budgeting process; and 3) provide greater transparency in the budgeting process” (EI.II.1-Faculty Handbook II.J.2, p.24). The inclusion of BAC in broad discussions of major revenue sources, as well as salaries, benefits, supplies and expenses, capital improvements, maintenance, and other major expenditures occurs. The BAC provides a forum for understanding the annual budget preparation process as well as providing a general review of revenues and expenditures (EI.II.1-Faculty Handbook II.J.2).



The College's overarching academic governing body is FAC, to which all academic committees and disciplinary representatives report. Membership of the FAC includes the elected Faculty President, the Faculty President-Elect, the outgoing Faculty President, Faculty Secretary, and the Chair of each Academic committee as well as an elected representative from each of the College's five disciplines (Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences, Math and Natural Science, and Program Certification). The President and Provost serve as ex-officio members of FAC with voting rights as per Faculty Handbook II.D.2.b (EI.II.1). The overarching membership of incoming, current, and outgoing presidents enhances the effectiveness of this governing body (EI.II.1-Faculty Handbook II.I.1).

Prior to consideration by the Board of Trustees, proposals for new academic programs take place in various College constituencies within the shared governance structure. First, the Provost and Curriculum on Undergraduate Education/Graduate Programs and Policy Committee (CUE/GPPC) receive a written proposal for a new academic program from a faculty member, academic department, or several departments (as in the case of an interdisciplinary collaboration). If approved, the proposal moves to FAC. Part of the proposal addresses impacts to the College at both the departmental and institutional level, much of which is resource-based. Proposals for new academic programs must also include a budget with projections for expenses and revenue. Recommendations by the various college constituencies based in part on the current and future availability of resources occur during this process. Ultimate approval rests with the full faculty, President, and Board of Trustees (EI.III.6-Faculty Handbook IV.A.12) (Criterion 2d).

The review of initiatives, needs, and innovation regarding technological and informational services happens in the Information Services and Technology Committee (ISTC). Three at-large faculty members and several ex-officio members including the Director of the Library and the Director of Information Technology compose this committee. The ISTC provides the opportunity for faculty, staff, and students to provide perspective in the development of technological initiatives and to make recommendations for the implementation of initiatives, including modifications to the existing technological infrastructure of the College as well as the planning of facilities to support the use of technology (EI.II.1-Faculty Handbook II.J.3).

Recognizing that students provide a valuable perspective, Cedar Crest's shared governance process encourages active participation of students in the decision-making process. Student involvement in campus governance occurs through regular meetings with the Student Government Association (SGA) with the Vice President of Student Services and Success/Dean of Students. The SGA President is also a voting member on the Board of Trustees and participates on the Academic Affairs and Enrollment Management and Student Affairs Committees (Faculty Handbook I.II.1). Students provide feedback through surveys, as well as focus groups and other methods. Students also participate in the strategic planning process and College-wide task forces. For instance, four students recently were members of the Board appointed Racial-Equity Committee that helped form recommendations presented to the Board





of Trustees. In addition, students as well as staff serve on advisory boards and committees from many academic departments (EI.II.1-Faculty Handbook II.G.6).

The administration utilizes an inclusive process in formulating and articulating a vision for the institution with Inspiration Sessions held in fall 2021 as part of the new strategic planning activities. They also provide strategic and operational leadership, and management of the College's resources and operations. The administration participates in the shared governance structure by consulting faculty, staff and students in the decision-making process creating an inclusive environment. The shared governance process recognizes that the Board assures in its charge that it delegates the day-to-day management of the institution to the administration.

### **Campus-wide Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion**

The College's current Strategic Plan titled *The Aspiration of Others* exemplifies the College's commitment to excellence and support of the student experience. It includes an institutional priority focused on "ensuring that Cedar Crest will be the intersection at which people of an infinite diversity of ethnicity, national origin, faith, sexual orientation, and identity come together to learn" in conjunction with the 2015-2016 Diversity and Inclusion Task Force recommendations (Vision Statement, p. 27). Recommendations from this Task Force led to: (a) regular analysis of student outcomes for students of differing identities and life experiences (curricular/ co-curricular/student life); (b) creation of a Diversity and Inclusion Council; (c) hiring of an Executive Director of Diversity and Inclusion; (d) development of a comprehensive diversity training program for the entire college community (students/staff/faculty/Board of Trustees); (e) formation of the Bias Response Team; the relocation of the Center for Diversity and Inclusion (CDI) to the renovated Allen House; and (f) adoption of a diversity statement to define the College's value of diversity. The diversity statement is on the College's website.

The College community continues to reaffirm its commitment to improving campus climate for members of minoritized populations. In 2020, The Board of Trustees and the President created a special Committee for Racial Equity, co-chaired by a trustee and an alumna, and including staff, trustees, current students, and alumnae along with the President and the Chair of the Board. The charge of the Committee was to assess areas of opportunity to deepen and expand initiatives to address racism and create a culture of inclusion from an institutional perspective. Representatives from all the College's stakeholders comprised the Committee ensuring that the resulting Action Plan reached all aspects of the College community. The committee conducted an inventory of the College's existing initiatives and procedures to dismantle institutionalized racism and create an inclusive culture. The Committee's charge included: (a) advising the College on critical areas not currently addressed by existing initiatives; (b) reviewing the institutional Anti-Racist Action Plan for 2020-2021 and making recommendations to the College regarding the Anti-Racist Action Plan for 2021-2022 and beyond; and (c) assisting the College with creating an effective communications process (Criterion 4e).

In response to the Committee's recommendations, the Board added two diversity-related demographic metrics to the Trustee's Key Performance Indicators for the institutional dashboard



in fall 2021. These metrics track the total percentage of students of color (33% in fall 2020) compared with faculty and staff employees of color (10% in fall 2020). In fiscal year 2020-2021, the College made 14 administrative hires, 28.6% of whom were of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, and four faculty hires, two of whom were of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, for a 66.7% diverse hiring percentage (Source: Human Resources). In addition, the College administered several surveys to measure the current campus climate. For instance, the College issued Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) Diverse Learning Environment (DLE) Survey in academic year 2020-21. Data from this survey are in Chapter IV (Tables 4.3 and 4.4).

The expanded work of this special committee reached College alumnae through the following actions: (a) The Director of Alumnae Affairs was asked to join the Diversity and Inclusion Council; (b) the Alumnae Office prepared a calendar of all major religious and diverse holidays to avoid scheduling events or major communications on these dates; (c) the February 2021 issue of Touchpoints featured updates on the College's diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts and profile pieces from students and staff of color; and (d) the Alumnae Association Board added two additional alumnae of color as Directors (currently four of the twelve elected Directors are alumnae of color).

In 2022, implementation of an Equity Action Plan (EI.II.5) directed by the new Executive Director of Diversity and Inclusion will occur. Three pillars will be the foundation of this Action Plan, including: 1) access and equity for the Cedar Crest College community; 2) diversity education development for the campus community; and 3) creating a sense of belonging for every member of the campus community.

College faculty created a two-year Faculty Action Plan to Address Institutional Racism (EI.I.3- Faculty Action Plan for Institutional Racism), detailing a commitment to ensuring a curriculum and faculty that reflect the diversity of our community of students. The Athletics Department also produced their own Action Plan supported and recognized by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). The Diversity Council produced a comprehensive list of recommendations, spanning a three-year period and outlining our next steps as an institution on DEI.

### **Assessment of Governance and Administration**

Assessing the effectiveness of governance, leadership and administration occurs through several areas. The Governance Committee conducts a Board Self-Assessment Survey annually to assess the work of the Board and identify areas that need revision as per the Board of Trustees Handbook (Faculty Handbook I.V.13). The Board also identifies areas for change and improvement through the Board of Trustees Self-Assessment Survey (EI.VII.3 Board of Trustees Self-Assessment Survey). The Compensation Committee assesses the President and surveys all independent Trustees to assess the performance of the President in terms of strategic goals (EI.VII.4 Board of Trustees Evaluation of President Questionnaire). In accordance with the College's human resource requirements, the President evaluates the Cabinet annually.



All administrative, academic, and student support departments submit annual assessment reports. Each assessment report indicates where these College constituencies used assessment data to make changes or improvements. In addition, every five years all academic, administrative and student support departments submit a Periodic Program Review (PPR). department chairs/deans, graduate program directors, and office directors receive feedback from the Assessment Committee on the PPR used to make changes and improvements as needed (EI.II.1-Faculty Handbook II.J.4). Additionally, assessment of faculty and administrative departments takes place through an annual self-evaluation and an evaluation of department chairs/deans (Criterion 5).

The administration gathers feedback from faculty, students, and staff through surveys, open meetings, and reports. The assessment and decision-making process utilizes data obtained from various constituencies. For example, faculty committees are responsible for disseminating information and findings drawn from faculty surveys and the general faculty as part of faculty governance (EI.II.1-Faculty Handbook II.G-I). Administrators also discuss results as they inform decisions, for example, CUE receives NSSE results to inform general education assessment.

Regular assessment of roles and responsibilities of governing bodies ensure that the College can meet the changing needs of the College and the environment in which it exists. These changes may reflect the changing landscape associated with shifts in population, the evolution of pedagogical approaches to teaching excellence, fiscal stewardship, and (as evidenced in the recent past) response to crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic. In response to the unprecedented challenges of the pandemic, the College turned to its shared and inclusive governance structure to quickly form required ad-hoc committees, task forces, and advisory groups. A seamless collaboration ensued with the administration, the Board of Trustees, faculty, and staff. Evidence of the proficiency and effectiveness of the College's governance structure was the efficacious response and planning for the institution's future success through the pandemic.

### **Key Findings**

- The Board of Trustees works synergistically with the College administration to determine the general, educational, financial, and strategic policies of the institution.
- All College constituencies play an active role in the shared governance of the institution.
- Assessment of the College's governance structure is comprehensive and periodic.
- The governance structure is committed to ongoing DEI initiatives.