

Report to the
Faculty, Administration, Students, Board of Trustees
of the

University of Vermont
Burlington, VT

By
An Evaluation Team representing the
New England Commission of Higher Education

Prepared after study of the institution's
self-study report and a visit to the campus,
March 24-27, 2019

The members of the visiting team:

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This report represents the views of the evaluation committee as interpreted by the Chairperson. Its content is based on the committee's evaluation of the institution with respect to the Commission's criteria for accreditation. It is a confidential document in which all comments are made in good faith. The report is prepared both as an educational service to the institution and to assist the Commission in making a decision about the institution's accreditation status.

**New England Commission of Higher Education
Preface Page to the Team Report**

Please complete **during the team visit** and include with the report prepared by the visiting team

Date form completed: 3/5/2019

Name of Institution: University of Vermont

1. **History:** Year chartered or authorized: **1791** Year first degrees awarded: **1804**
2. **Type of control:** State City Religious Group; specify: _____
 Private, not-for-profit Other; specify: _____
 Proprietary

3. **Degree level:**
 Associate Baccalaureate Masters Professional Doctorate

4. **Enrollment in Degree Programs:** (Use figures from fall semester of most recent year):

	Full-time	Part-time	FTE	Retention ^a	Graduation ^b	# Degrees ^c
Associate	-	-	-	-	-	-
Baccalaureate	10,262	350	10,378.7	86.8%	75.9%	2,404
Graduate	1,423	596	1,621.7	-	-	615

(a) full-time 1st to 2nd year (b) 3 or 6 year graduation rate (c) number of degrees awarded most recent year

5. **Student debt:**

	Most Recent Year	One Year Prior	Two Years Prior
Three-year Cohort Default Rate	1.8%	3.2%	2.9%
Three-year Loan Repayment Rate	98.2%	96.8%	97.1%

	Associate	Baccalaureate	Graduate
Average % of graduates leaving with debt	N/A	55%	43%
Average amount of debt for graduates	N/A	\$30,914	\$56,557

6. **Number of current faculty:** Full-time 1,320 Part-time 414 FTE 1,458

7. **Current fund data for most recently completed fiscal year:** (Specify year: **FY 2018**)
 (Double click in any cell to enter spreadsheet. Enter dollars in millions, e.g., \$1,456,200 = \$1.456)

Tuition	\$323.61	Instruction	\$178.71
Govt Appropriations	\$44.41	Research	\$89.82
Gifts/Grants/Endowment	\$194.15	General	\$214.83
Auxiliary Enterprises	\$94.06	Auxiliary Enterprises	\$83.66
Other	\$86.67	Other	\$101.33
Total	\$742.90	Total	\$668.36

General expense includes public support, academic support, student services, and institutional support.
 Other expense includes operations and maintenance of plant, scholarships and fellowships, and depreciation.

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

9. **Number of degrees and certificates offered electronically:**
 Programs offered entirely on-line 7 Programs offered 50-99% on-line 8

10. **Is instruction offered through a contractual relationship?**
 No Yes Specify program(s): _____

INTRODUCTION:

The Evaluation Team visited the University of Vermont (UVM) from 24-27 March 2019 to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the institution following its last interim report in Spring 2014. The team was very favorably impressed with the preparation for its visit and the effectiveness of the arrangements for the work of the visiting team.

Extensive meetings occurred in one-on-one or small group formats with representatives and leaders from all areas within UVM including students, faculty, staff, and alumni, as well as a conference call with online students. Meetings were held with the President, Provost and other members of the senior leadership team, Deans, Associate Deans, members of the Board of Trustees, Faculty Senate leadership, the President of the UVM Foundation, faculty, staff, and students as well as members of major committees. The extensive participation of the Trustees was particularly noteworthy and appreciated. Members of the visiting team also had an additional meeting with the Chair of the Board.

The team toured the campus and several of the key facilities, including a sample of those scheduled for major renovation. The visiting team was impressed by the substantial levels of new investment in key facilities that has occurred since the last comprehensive review.

Throughout our visit, the team was very well served by UVM staff and by the attentive, timely support of the staff of the hotel that accommodated our group.

STANDARD 1: MISSION AND PURPOSES

The current Mission Statement was last revised in September 2008. The Statement reads:

The mission of the University of Vermont is to create, evaluate, share, and apply knowledge and to prepare students to be accountable leaders who will bring to their work dedication to the global community, a grasp of complexity, effective problem-solving and communication skills, and an enduring commitment to learning and ethical conduct.

Vision: To be among the nation's premier small research universities, preeminent in our comprehensive commitment to liberal education, environment, health and public service.

Goals: To realize our vision to be among the nation's premier small research universities, we must take these actions:

- "Access to Success": Promoting Affordability, Financial Access, and Academic Support
- Promoting a culture of advancing academic excellence and cultivating talent

- Identifying necessary investments to ensure a bright future
- Instilling an institutional commitment to efficiency and effectiveness that optimizes the use of facilities, technology, assets, and shared services

The mission, vision and goals are displayed on the UVM and Office of the President home pages. The mission and purpose can be found in the University of Vermont Catalogue online on pages 477-478. The colleges and some other units within the University have their own mission statements that align with that of the institution.

The vision statement: “To be among the nation’s premier small research universities, preeminent in our comprehensive commitment to liberal education, environment, health, and public service”, is compelling and appropriate for the history and setting of UVM.

The role of the University as a research-based institution with a defined land-grant mission tradition, however, is not explicit nor consistently represented when discussing UVM’s mission, vision and priorities. The overall vision, mission and goals of UVM do not reference that it is the nation’s smallest land-grant institution with a medical school. It is also not part of the UVM Office of the President and Catalogue websites. Rather, the land grant mission appears to be compartmentalized to UVM Extension, “which for over 100 years has been **the unit primarily responsible for the fulfillment of the university’s land grant mission**” (emphasis added). These outcomes may reflect both UVM’s unique history as a public institution and the low levels of state support of the university. However, such compartmentalization of the land-grant mission is inconsistent with what is widely regarded as best practices for land-grant universities, and might even have, over time, weakened the university’s case for state and private-sector support.

In July 2012, President Sullivan introduced the Strategic Action Plan, and it was formally adopted by the Board of Trustees in October 2013. The plan includes the following four strategic goals:

- “Access to Success”: Promoting Affordability, Financial Access, and Academic Support
- Promoting a culture of advancing academic excellence and cultivating talent
- Identifying necessary investments to ensure a bright future
- Instilling an institutional commitment to efficiency and effectiveness that optimizes the use of facilities, technology, assets and shared services

The first three goals are included in the vision, mission, and goals on the UVM and Office of the President home pages, but the fourth goal is not included.

With regard to UVM’s vision regarding liberal education, it should be noted that, according to the January 14, 2014 UVM Fifth-Year Interim Report, UVM established an undergraduate general education program that is the product of several years of research, groundwork, and engaged discussion on desired outcomes for all graduates. May 2011 was historic for UVM because the Faculty Senate endorsed this plan, which consists of six desired outcomes for all

graduates. The assessment of the success of this relatively new effort with regard to fostering a preeminent liberal education experience for undergraduates is, in part, a subject of this team's assessment.

STANDARD 2: PLANNING AND EVALUATION

The University of Vermont embarked upon an ambitious program of planning following the arrival of its new President in 2012. The President shared his Strategic Action Plan with the campus shortly after his arrival. Its four tenets are: 1) promoting affordability, financial access and academic support; 2) promoting academic excellence and cultivating talent; 3) identifying necessary investments to ensure a bright future; and, 4) instilling an institutional commitment to efficiency and effectiveness. Eight Academic Excellence Goals were introduced by the Provost shortly afterwards. These are: increasing student retention and graduation; improving advising; increasing interdisciplinary research, teaching and scholarship; expanding programmatic offerings to include distance and hybrid modes; increasing research in high-impact, high-visibility areas; increasing domestic diversity and international enrollments; and increasing graduate and professional enrollments. The intention was for UVM's Colleges to then develop their own Strategic Plans consistent with the University's overarching Plan.

Evaluation of UVM's academic program is via the Academic Program Review (APR) process. According to the self-study, (page 78), 75% of UVM's academic programs have gone through the University's revised system of APR which was implemented in Spring 2012, and 14% have completed a two-year follow-up. Non-academic units are evaluated by the Administrative Unit Review (AUR) process instituted in 2014/2015. UVM's management is guided by the Campus Master Plan, and its budget and finances by a Strategic Financial Plan. The Board, through its Budget, Finance, and Investment Committee (BFI), annually reviews multiyear projections tied to the strategic financial planning model. The University's Incentive-Based Budget (IBB) model, which the President and Provost (acting as chief budget officer) instituted shortly after the President's arrival in 2012, is the predominant mechanism for implementation.

The guiding principles for planning and evaluation at UVM are laid out in the 2013 Strategic Action Plan, which calls for "continuous strategic planning" and the implementation of "well-devised actions designed to sustain, promote, and measure academic creativity, research breakthroughs, and impact." However, the self-study notes several times, in the context of different Standards, the challenges UVM faces due to limited resources. These challenges were echoed throughout the team's meetings with campus constituencies who collectively expressed strains associated with being stretched thin. For example, the Faculty Senate's Curricular Affairs Committee requires 24 faculty members to do the work necessitated by the University's APR process in addition to its role in the review and approval of proposals for new programs, revisions to existing programs, and curricular policy matters. A staff member in the Office of the Provost also contributes 0.75 FTE to coordinate the multiple APR processes ongoing at any given time. The team heard similar resource concerns surrounding the Administrative Unit Review process. While staff agree that the process itself is worthwhile, the team heard a level

of frustration that the amount of work required is quite substantial and not commensurate with the outcomes.

The Strategic Action Plan specifically calls for "transparent communications and open dialogue throughout the University." The team found that information about the Incentive Based Budgeting (IBB) process is regularly communicated via individual meetings and via the IBB website. However, conversations revealed that apart from IBB, inconsistencies existed across all units more broadly with regard to communication, particularly communication from the President's Office outward about initiatives, such as the Campus Master Plan, the Inclusive Excellence Plan, and the Strategic Action Plan.

The Office of Institutional Research (OIR) is tasked with data collection and analysis. The team found that the OIR not only produces and disseminates data, but also helps the campus community to interpret and analyze the data. The data provided by OIR in the Catamount Data Center tie directly to the priorities outlined in the University's strategic planning documents, but especially the Strategic Action Plan, the Provost's Academic Excellence Goals, and the IBB model (especially student credit hours). Therefore, faculty, staff, and administration can monitor the IBB's impact on academic programs. Business and operational staff indicated that the OIR's partnership on issues surrounding data and analysis is very helpful and much appreciated. The OIR and Budget Group were roundly praised for their effective training in the implementation of the IBB. In addition, OIR is partnering with IT on several initiatives to improve its efficiency and data accessibility.

Planning

The Team read and heard about many new and exciting initiatives on campus, but it was unable to verify that the institution's planning activities are coordinated. Specifically, the Team found no indication, in either the self-study or in conversations during the visit, on how these various and varied efforts are tracked, coordinated, and integrated into a cohesive, University-wide whole. The College of Engineering and Mathematical Sciences (CEMS) and the College of Nursing and Health Sciences (CNHS) provided Strategic Plans that support planning and evaluation that is regular, coordinated, comprehensive, and outcomes-based, with measurable indicators. Other units are not as far along as evidenced by the self-study, supporting documents, and conversations during the visit.

The team found the planning process, overall, has been largely directed by the senior administration and seems not to be as broad and inclusive as portrayed in the self-study. This perception was validated through conversations with leadership, staff, faculty, and Trustees. Implementing measurable outcomes, tracking progress toward them, and using the results for improvement were found to be uneven. One positive example of a unit that has produced and implemented measurable outcomes, monitored its degree of success, and then applied what was learned for unit improvement is the Division of Student Affairs. The outcomes it aims to have for students is that they are "healthy, engaged and successful," and the metrics that the Division tracks provide evidence of fulfilling this mission.

Forty-one new programs have been introduced since FY2015. The number of new interdisciplinary programs has increased, and several Colleges voiced appreciation of the flexibility that IBB provides to develop new programs. The Larner College of Medicine has launched an online Master's in Public Health and has plans for additional Master's-level public health programs; the College of Education and Social Services was able to build up an innovation fund that is used for generating undergraduate programs in new markets. However, the team heard from the Deans that there is no collective strategy for building or coordinating such programs across Colleges, a specific goal of the Provost's Academic Excellence Goals.

The team also notes that some of the planning documents are not current. For example, the most recent Campus Master Plan was in effect from 2006-2015; yet, the team heard that the new master planning process is not anticipated to begin until 2020. Since 2015, multiple smaller planning efforts have been conducted. While these provide evidence of sound, tactical thinking for 2015-2020, the institution lacked overarching strategic thinking to guide the University in this gap period. UVM may want to consider the value of developing a multi-year capital plan, reflecting the University's Strategic Action Plan that is fully integrated into its long-term financial planning.

In its meeting with the new CIO and his management team, the team heard that Information Technology's Strategic Plan and Priorities, 2018-2023, approved by the Board of Trustees, includes supporting the teaching and learning environment; supporting research and scholarship; supporting and improving administrative processes; promoting information security; and enabling consistency for IT at UVM. Importantly, the CIO and his management team are building relationships across the institution. One of the units with which IT is consciously partnering is the Office of Institutional Research. Based on feedback heard in multiple meetings, the IT Strategic Plan has been well received.

A major element of planning at UVM has been the introduction of the Incentive-Based Budgeting (IBB) model. As outlined in the self-study, this version of a Responsibility Center Management (RCM) style model was phased in over several years. The team found that information about the implementation of IBB was effectively communicated across the institution. For instance, over 300 formal meetings and numerous informal colleague-to-colleague meetings occurred, which included the Provost and his staff. The team heard from multiple stakeholders that IBB provides more transparency into the budget, and there is broad appreciation for this aspect of IBB. An IBB Steering Committee was also formed to oversee implementation and address issues as they arose. Nevertheless, the team heard multiple concerns about IBB from stakeholders, some that seemed to be based, in part, on the underlying financial situation of limited revenues rather than IBB processes.

The self-study makes it clear that the University is aware of the risks associated with its heavy reliance on non-resident undergraduate tuition as a source of revenue. Accordingly, UVM has developed and implemented plans to diversify its revenues. One strategy is to increase Graduate programs, and the institution has launched 13 Graduate programs since the

implementation of IBB on July 1, 2015, the start of UVM's FY 2016 . The associated revenue has increased and now represents 6% of General Fund revenue. In addition, UVM plans to grow its distance education offerings. The institution received approval from the Commission to offer distance programs in 2014, but outside of the Larner College of Medicine, there has been meager interest in developing additional online programs.

Given the importance of undergraduate tuition to the University, coupled with the demographic decline in the Northeast, the University undertook the development of a Strategic Retention Action Plan. The plan features four major strategies, ranging from the use of EAB's Student Success Collaborative to improved First-Year Experience efforts, as well as a more thoughtful way of improving the engagement of high-performing undergraduates. Despite these initiatives, some parts of UVM (particularly the College of Arts and Sciences) have experienced substantial financial challenges since the inception of IBB. The team heard clearly, however, a broad understanding that the root cause of UVM's financial challenges was not the IBB process, but rather the underlying strains in the budget coupled with demographic changes.

UVM has launched its Inclusive Excellence Action Plan for 2016-2021. As evidenced in the self-study and supporting documents, most Colleges and major administrative units (for example, the Division of Student Affairs and Libraries) have begun intentionally developing their own programs for integrating the four pillars of Academics, Community, Environment, and Operations into their units. The team found that a broad array of efforts is under way at UVM in advancing these goals. Again, however, these appeared to be done more in isolation rather than through a larger, coordinated University-wide effort.

Evaluation

The University has introduced several efforts to evaluate the achievement of its plans, with the academic program being a central focus. The University's Academic Program Review (APR) process was revised in 2011. Academic programs that aren't subject to external programmatic accreditation are reviewed on an eight-year cycle. The process includes both a department self-study and a review by an external team composed of members from peer institutions. The Curricular Affairs Committee then reviews the self-study and the external team report and issues a final report. A Memorandum of Record between the department and the Provost specifies agreed-upon outcomes and subsequent actions and progress is assessed two years later. The team reviewed the APR portfolios for a sample of departments and saw evidence that the process appears to be thoughtful and intentional. The reports, though, varied in terms of content and format, schedule and elements of the overall portfolio of materials, and inclusion of measurable metrics and outcomes, thereby limiting input that could inform departmental and College planning. During the visit, the team heard that the APR process is very helpful, but, as noted above, is quite resource-intensive.

Given its central role in the University's budget and academic models, the IBB process was reviewed in 2017. Feedback was solicited from the campus-wide community in a number of ways including discussions, focus groups, and surveys administered via the internet. Results of

the extensive review were shared via the IBB website and were readily available at the time of the team visit. Based on the evaluation of campus feedback and the results of the Steering Committee's accompanying investigations, the overall model was revised and IBB 2.0 was launched.

In addition, the IBB Steering Committee and the Faculty Senate created the Educational Stewardship Committee (ESC) to ensure that the IBB model did not have unintended negative consequences on the academic program. The ESC partners worked closely with the OIR to monitor key metrics of academic quality, including student credit hours (SCH), class sizes, and total number of general education courses. A member of the team viewed the data dashboards that the OIR had built and made available to the ESC and academic administration. The data there are presented in multiple formats (e.g., tabular and graphical), and the functionality exists for users to download the raw data for their own additional analysis. Analyses of SCH by College, over time and with several types of disaggregation, are available to ESC members.

As noted earlier, the University has implemented an Administrative Unit Review (AUR) process modelled on the Academic Program Review. Non-academic units write a self-study and undergo an evaluation by an external review team. These are both reviewed by an internal AUR Committee and recommendations are made for areas of improvement. In contrast to the APR, however, there is no two-year follow-up; adding it to the AUR might be helpful.

The schedule of AUR reviews is available on the President's Office website and the Vice President for Executive Operations coordinates the process. The team reviewed a sample of AUR portfolios and found them to be satisfactory. While the team heard support for the AUR concept, there was also confusion about the final outcome of the process and concerns about the lack of resources available to implement both the process and the resulting suggestions.

Evaluation in terms of assessment of student learning is covered in this report's discussion of Standard 8: Educational Effectiveness. OIR is also tasked with supporting the University's assessment efforts in addition to its traditional mandatory and compliance reporting tasks and its involvement in providing the data and analyses called for in support of the IBB – all of which are currently being done without a data warehouse. Additional resources may be needed to support this function given its critical juncture between budget, assessment, and the academic program.

STANDARD 3: ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE

Governing Board

The University has clearly articulated policy documents, including a Board of Trustees Policy Manual that provides stated roles for the Board. The process for appointment to the Board of Trustees supports broad representation: legislative (n=9), gubernatorial (n=3), self-perpetuating (n=9 selected by other Board members), two student (non-voting) members, and the Governor

and President, both ex-officio. The Board conducts strategic planning at an annual retreat, and there is orientation for new members. The President reports to, and is evaluated by, the Board.

University policies support interaction among faculty, students, and alumni with the Board of Trustees. In addition to the two student members of the Board, all six standing committees of the Board include two representatives (some committees vary slightly) from the faculty, staff, undergraduates, graduates and alumni. Further, the President of the Alumni Association makes a report at every Board meeting. In meetings with these various constituents during the site visit, it was clear that there is effective interaction between the Board of Trustees and these groups.

As pointed out earlier in this report, the University of Vermont faces a very challenging and uncertain fiscal climate. Given the demographic and revenue challenges of the State of Vermont, increasing state support for UVM seems unlikely. The team and members of the University community therefore recognize the importance of UVM building on the notable success of its recent fundraising campaign in order to garner the required financial resources to maintain its academic excellence and sustain its many contributions to the Vermont economy and to the future of the State. UVM is building an admirable culture of philanthropy that promises to provide significant additional revenues to the University, yet to fully capitalize on this opportunity will require resources to enhance UVM's capabilities for fundraising. One strategy could be to add prominent, successful UVM alumni or friends to the Board of Trustees. While the current composition of the Board serves the University and the State extremely well, its effectiveness, particularly with respect to fundraising, could be strengthened through a modest expansion in members.

Internal Governance

The University also has clearly articulated policy documents, including a University Manual, and a clear administrative organizational structure highlighting the roles for the President, Provost, faculty, and staff. Governance also supports regular interaction among students, faculty, the President, and Provost, and this was confirmed during the site visit. The President and Vice President of the Faculty Senate, the Student Government Association (SGA) President and Vice President of the Undergraduate Student Senate and representatives from the Graduate Student Senate, meet with the President and Provost separately and on a regular basis, typically once a month. Members of the Executive Committees confirmed there was excellent interaction among these three groups. Staff have a separate Council with 34 elected representatives. During the site visit, members of the Staff Council Executive Committee noted strong interaction with the administration, particularly the President.

As documented in the self-study, the organizational structure and function demonstrate that the President serves as the Chief Executive Officer and, as designated by the Board of Trustees, has authority and autonomy to manage the institution. The Provost reports to the President, oversees the academic mission in consultation with the Deans, other academic administrators, and the faculty.

STANDARD 4: THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Assuring Academic Quality

UVM's seven undergraduate-degree-granting Colleges and Schools, the Honors College, Graduate College and Larner College of Medicine provide a range of baccalaureate, master's, master's certificates, doctoral and professional programs in keeping with UVM's mission and vision and the eight Academic Excellence Goals established in 2014. The Office of the Provost oversees an administrative organization that manages and assesses the programs in concert with faculty and staff, and it has also initiated additional processes to support the Academic Excellence Goals.

Faculty participate in shared governance through the Faculty Senate's standing committees, departments, and other academic units. The University's transition to an Incentive-Based Budgeting (IBB) system in FY2015 has led to academic concerns noted in the self-study that include "increased course section size, the loss of valuable...learning models, and...colleges [that are] introducing new courses or programs outside of their own realm...to capture student credit hours." In response, the Office of the Provost and Faculty Senate created a joint Educational Stewardship Committee (ESC) to collect and analyze data to monitor IBB's effects on the student experience and to guard against unintended negative consequences. The latest Data Summary Report for AY2017-2018 encompassed three years of monitoring IBB, plus the prior three years. Analysis of the data by the ESC provides a valuable oversight function across all units that is essential under IBB. For example, the ESC uncovered issues with the implementation of UVM's General Education Requirements and subsequently created an ad hoc subcommittee on General Education with broad representation to assist with planning and implementation.

The system of Academic Program Review (APR) began in 2001. All academic programs underwent review under the first system of APR. The system was revised and approved by the Faculty Senate in 2011 and implemented in Spring 2012. APR requires in-depth internal and external reviews on an eight-year cycle with two-year follow-ups. Twenty-four programs out of 65 have completed their initial reviews; nine of those have completed their two-year follow-up, and all reviews included thoughtful external perspectives. Others are in progress or scheduled. Programs with professional accreditation cycles use those in lieu of the internal APR.

UVM learned through the APR process that data gathering and program assessment have been uneven across departments; therefore, clearer guidelines, including new program proposals, are now in place. Results from these cyclical reviews are invaluable for departmental, school, and institutional planning as they address curriculum, changing student interests, faculty needs, infrastructure, and process. In the team's meetings with faculty, however, conflicting opinions were expressed on whether such time-intensive reviews are sustainable.

In regard to overall assessment efforts across the curriculum, UVM currently has multiple committees that do not appear to be fully coordinated, and a proposed reorganization would

need support and funding to ensure that oversight of the assessment processes is comprehensive. For example, rapid growth of one of the environmental programs (with the number of students jumping from 200 to 450+ in two years) without an increase in faculty, highlights the need for more frequent review of program changes, resources, and student support.

UVM's programs leading to degrees generally have a coherent design, reasonable breadth, and sequential progression based on overall goals of each program. Yet, based on a broad sampling of syllabi across all programs, documentation of learning outcomes, expectations, and student assessment based on those outcomes ranged from exemplary (particularly in programs with external accreditation) to nonexistent. UVM acknowledged in its self-study that the quality of course syllabi was uneven and has taken steps to improve faculty development through the Center for Teaching & Learning. Faculty who availed themselves of this resource affirmed its value. More recently, the faculty oversight process appears to be much improved for newly proposed or revised courses evaluated by the various curriculum committees; however, there is no systematic process to address existing courses.

Undergraduate Degree Programs

UVM aims to provide a well-rounded, liberal education, consistent with its mission, providing students with the knowledge, skills, and communication needed to meet societal needs. UVM offers 121 baccalaureate degree programs that range across the arts, humanities, natural and social sciences, as well as professional programs in business, engineering, education, dietetics, and nursing. There are 96 academic minors, four undergraduate certificate programs, and one online undergraduate degree completion program (RN to BN). Some of the programs offered are interdisciplinary. Flexibility of electives is greater in non-professional programs.

Programs with formal articulation agreements include: BA or BS from St. Michael's College combined with a UVM BSE; 2+3 Baccalaureate/Juris Doctor in collaboration with Vermont Law School; the 3+4 Baccalaureate/Doctor of Pharmacy in collaboration with Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences; and Castleton State University, Vermont Technical College, and Greenfield Community College's associate degree to RN-BS.

UVM has noted a shift in student interest toward the more professional-related areas, which coincides with increased undergraduate courses offered by non-CAS schools under the IBB system. The self-study and some faculty in the team's faculty meetings raised concerns associated with increased demands for introductory level courses and a proliferation of academic minors. For example, external reviewers noted in the 2014 APR report for economics that the high demand for introductory courses in economics by both majors and minors hampered the faculty's efforts to offer required upper-level courses. Additionally, Student Learning Objectives were not clear or coordinated across introductory and intermediate core courses which impeded appropriate sequencing. Consequently, the two-year APR follow-up report for economics in 2017 raised concerns about sufficient faculty capacity. In addition, the

team concurs with the self-study finding that there is a need for reviewing courses after they are initially approved.

The websites for majors and minors don't always present measurable goals and learning objectives or clear course sequencing over a typical four-year plan thereby making it difficult to evaluate the presence of an appropriate mix and progression of learning for students. It was also difficult to match the Majors on the Data First forms with those online.

While the creation of new undergraduate majors and minors by non-CAS schools as incentivized by IBB is allowing UVM to respond to growing student interests in professional areas of study, it is also straining its oversight systems. UVM is expecting the ESC to aid in that oversight along with a reorganization of the Associate Provost for Teaching and Learning office. Careful monitoring of this planned oversight will help to ensure its success.

According to the 2017 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), UVM reports a higher-than-average percentage of seniors engaging in internships and field experiences (67% vs. 53% nationally). UVM is focused on obtaining more internship scholarship funding and improving the learning and assessment of these educational activities. Over the last several years, UVM has made progress to improve the access and quality of its internships by constructing more cohesive requirements, systems and policies across the University and with external partners. UVM plans to launch a pilot program in Spring 2019 to track and promote student engagement in "high impact practices" as defined by AACU. In conjunction with this effort, it will be important for UVM to design and implement a plan to assess the initiative. Clinical practice and practica, such as for Nursing and Secondary Education, respectively, are conducted at supervised sites with established policies and formal agreements that are vetted by legal counsel.

General Education

UVM's general education enterprise has been evolving. In 2011, UVM developed four requirements: Diversity (D), Sustainability (S), Quantitative Reasoning (QR), and Foundational Writing and Information Literacy (FWIL), each of which developed out of broad faculty goals for all undergraduates through a shared governance process. Each of the four goals is overseen by a curricular review committee that certifies courses as meeting one (or more) of these objectives. However, limits on faculty time, noted as a concern elsewhere, have also made it difficult for curricular review committees to review both the backlog of established courses in addition to new courses.

Diversity and Sustainability have separate assessment committees to handle the volume of work. For Foundational Writing and Information Literacy, assessment is being performed by its Director. For Quantitative Reasoning, initiated in AY2017-2018, assessment is expected to begin during Spring 2019. UVM self-reported that General Education Diversity courses have yet to undergo periodic review at the University level.

The NECHE Standard specifies that the institution should ensure that all undergraduates complete a minimum of 40 credits of general education in a typical bachelor's degree program. Currently, UVM's general education system is transitioning to a university-wide model that requires only 15 credit hours with the balance of general education residing in core and distribution requirements in the academic units. Data presented in the self-study show pronounced variation across majors. Most units have broad coverage of many areas and students in most units appear to meet the 40-credit requirement when university-level and unit-defined requirements are combined. There are gaps, though, such as in the College of Engineering and Mathematical Sciences (CEMS) which seems not to have a literature, humanities, or fine arts requirement, and the College of Nursing and Health Sciences (CNHS) in which graduates could, in theory, have as few as 36 credits. Student conversations also suggested that the different requirements constitute a barrier to double-majors and to transferring into a major in a different College. In contrast, College Associate Deans indicated that they felt there were significant supports in place to assist students in these situations. UVM might find it helpful to explore this situation further to ensure compliance with the 40-credit standard.

With inconsistent coverage, labels, and terminologies for general education requirements across units, UVM has yet to create a cohesive, university-wide general education enterprise. The self-study notes that there is no established set of clearly defined outcomes for these requirements at the unit level, which makes unified assessment even more difficult. The development of the four curriculum and assessment committees charged with broad implementation of this vision is a positive step. However, only FWIL is currently centrally resourced, has clearly articulated outcomes, and has recently conducted an assessment of its objectives providing data on student mastery and indications of how to improve the system. The self-study notes that the three other general education groups (i.e., QR, D1 and D2, and SU) have no university-level resources to assess student learning outcomes of their general education objectives and instead rely on faculty providing service and ad-hoc requests for funding. A pilot Faculty Rating Day to assess one of the Diversity outcomes showed wide variation in faculty assessment of student work despite preparatory training with a rubric; this highlights the difficulties in attaining reproducible assessment results. The self-study emphasizes that it will be difficult to sustain these activities without direct institutional-level support, which should be a priority for UVM to ensure it has a modern, cohesive, student-centered general education program across the institution.

Graduate Degree Programs

UVM offers a broad and expanding portfolio of graduate degrees and certificates overseen by the Graduate College and delivered by a comprehensive and well-qualified graduate faculty. Graduate student graduation rates seem good relative to national norms (73-79% for master's students, 64-74% for doctoral students) with very good licensure pass rates where relevant. There are several innovative programs in UVM's portfolio, including interdisciplinary programs that report directly to Directors in the Graduate College, and accelerated master's programs whereby undergraduate students can earn graduate credits before transitioning to a graduate

program. There are strong growth goals for graduate education, with opportunities to support workforce development and regional needs. However, rapid growth could further strain a faculty that, in some areas appear to be already stretched thin.

Some Academic Program Review reports noted degree programs where students feel a relative scarcity of advanced coursework at either the advanced undergraduate or graduate level. Indeed, the team noted the institution's prevalent use of 200-level undergraduate courses for graduate students, which the self-study described as being included in "most graduate programs." Discussions with students, faculty, and administrators reinforced this perception. In a meeting with about 25 graduate students, from a wide range of programs and disciplines, the students described how they have had to be "creative" to find courses either inside or outside the institution that met their requirements; and when they are mixed with UVM undergraduates, described "busy work" or "babysitting undergraduates" rather than having to complete work with graduate-level depth or rigor. Online degree programs seem to have a particular paucity of offerings.

Some department chairs indicated that they simply do not have the resources to deliver a comprehensive portfolio of courses at all levels. The team's review of syllabi echoed these concerns. For example, it was often unclear from the syllabus whether a 200-level course was being offered for undergraduate or graduate credit, or both. Further, many 200-level syllabi lacked clearly differentiated Student Learning Objectives (SLO) and assignments providing evidence that there was an appropriately rigorous graduate experience in the class. Some syllabi did not even present any SLOs, topics to be covered, grading information, and appropriate University policies. There were also examples of 300-level syllabi from multiple disciplines that also failed to contain this basic information. These observations lead to concerns that (a) students may not be getting clear information; and that (b) UVM appears to be struggling to clearly differentiate graduate vs. undergraduate experiences in courses where both groups are present. The policy of allowing graduate students to include up to 6 credits of 100-level coursework in their course of study is out of alignment with peer institutions and suggests that resource limitations may both compromise the ability of UVM to deliver a comprehensive graduate curriculum and undermine UVM's capability to convincingly demonstrate increasing rigor of undergraduate, masters, and doctoral-level work. These observations raise concerns that the planned expansion of graduate education, without significant expansion of faculty and resources, could well exacerbate an already serious situation.

The team noted that many graduate program websites did not provide specific information about the expectations or requirements for the program. However, discussions with graduate students indicated that the vast majority of them felt strongly they knew what was expected of them and that other documents, not readily available to the Team, clearly laid out what the program requirements were. Finally, while a review of graduate degree program requirements found that all graduate programs require a comprehensive exam, capstone, or thesis/dissertation, the requirements for the comprehensive exam in some programs appear to stretch the definition of comprehensive exam. For example, in the Complex Systems degree

program, a student may meet the comprehensive exam requirement by achieving an A- or better on two of the four core courses.

Integrity in the Award of Academic Credit

UVM enrolls 450-550 transfer students per year, mostly in the earlier undergraduate years. Evaluation of transfer credits is performed administratively through the Office of Transfer Affairs. Information is available through its online Transfer Credit Guide and Transfer Admissions. Transfer credits for fulfilling General Education requirements are evaluated by faculty.

Student Integrity policies are posted on UVM's website and are addressed in the FWIL classes required of all undergraduates. Distance learning students are exposed to but not required to formally acknowledge the policies. Currently, online and distance learning students use unique IDs and passwords to confirm student identity. UVM is phasing in 2-factor ID and pedagogical methods to help limit integrity violations.

The Faculty Senate, in 2011, formally adopted a definition of the credit hour that is in line with the federal definition--one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work each week for approximately 15 weeks (or the equivalent amount of work over a different period of time) is the equivalent of one credit hour. This definition is available to students and the public in the University Catalogue. According to the Self Study, the University's policy was revised in 2013 to apply to both traditional (classroom-based) and online courses.

The University has instituted a Course Action Form (CAF) that is required in order to initiate changes to a course or to introduce a new course. Procedures for the CAF are standardized across the University. On the CAF, the submitting faculty member is required to confirm that the course is aligned with the federal credit hour standard. Before this form is completed, courses have been reviewed by the appropriate curricular review committee at the department and/or College level. After meeting with several representatives of curricular committees and discussing these procedures, the team is confident that this process is being followed for new or modified courses. However, as has been noted, the team was unable to identify any similar procedures that address courses that predate the implementation of the Course Action Form.

As part of its review of the institution's academic program, the team reviewed a representative sample of syllabi and found a number provided insufficient information to evaluate whether the course met the federal credit hour standard. Of particular concern were syllabi that had not recently gone through the CAF process. By contrast, syllabi from programs that undergo external, professional accreditation were found to contain enough information for the team to confirm that the coursework involved meets the federal credit hour standard.

STANDARD 5: STUDENTS

Admissions

In 2013, the University of Vermont President established a Strategic Action Plan, which included numerous student-related goals and outcomes. Objectives included expanding undergraduate enrollment incrementally; growing international student enrollment; increasing the quality and diversity of the entering class; affordability; financial access and academic support; and enhancing student retention and graduation rates. After accounting for all student types including certificate, non-degree, and students on other special statuses, overall enrollment at UVM has increased from 12,815 in 2015 to 13,395 in 2019. Undergraduate enrollment increased to a ten-year high of 10,612 in Fall 2018.

Since 2013, UVM has shown progress towards meeting these goals. For example, international student growth has increased to 6.5% of students. Recent growth in enrollment of undergraduate students of color has been modest: a 1% increase in 2018, compared to 10% in 2010. UVM established the Joining the Circle program to further enhance its progress and support of underrepresented admitted students, including first generation students. Programs have also been designed to attract increasing numbers of students of color from outside VT, given the reality of low numbers of such students in Vermont. The mean SAT score of entering freshmen has increased from 1,161 in 2013 to 1,248 in the most recent class.

Graduate enrollments at UVM have also grown in recent years, increasing from 1,360 students in 2016 to 1,579 in the current year. This is consistent with the mission and objectives of the institution, which has established a priority to strengthen its graduate education. The Provost noted that much of the progress has been a result of the addition of new programs.

Admissions supports the mission and objectives of the institution. The institution's Undergraduate Admissions is holistic with processes, criteria, deadlines, and other information clearly articulated on the Undergraduate Admissions website. UVM supports initiatives to enhance student success rates and has established targets for improvement, including raising the first-year retention rate to 90% and the four-year graduation rates to 70%, goals that are broadly communicated. Currently, the first-year retention rate stands at 86% and the four-year graduation rate stands at 64%. A 2018 Student Retention Action Plan, established by the VP for Enrollment Management and the Provost, emphasizes the institution's focus on these initiatives. UVM has acquired the Education Advisory Board's (EAB) Navigate, an advising system utilized by the Student Success Collaborative, which has become an important tool in supporting students from entry through graduation.

Student Services and Co-Curricular Experiences

UVM programming includes a robust set of offerings of co-curricular activities with an 88% rate of engagement; this is well above the national average. The self-study describes the

recreational and athletic programs and, during the site visit, the Athletic Department' leaders clearly articulated how the athletic program fits within the broader mission of the institution and conveyed a strong commitment to integrity in its processes; it places significant emphasis on ensuring that the experience of student athletes is on par with those of the student body at large. Campus recreation also reports to the Athletic Department. It is expected that upon completion of the Multi-Purpose Athletic Facility (currently in planning phases), there will be dramatic improvements in recreation opportunities for student athletes and other members of the student body.

Several tools are described in the self-study that assist students in navigating their undergraduate education. Students expressed satisfaction with the new degree audit tools and they were enthusiastic about Peer Advising support. At the same time, they expressed dissatisfaction with the varied quality in academic advising between the schools and Colleges and also described difficulty in navigating the general education requirements that, according to some students, can prevent them from pursuing dual degree programs and hinder their progress.

Overall, the institution's financial aid programs and procedures are transparent. Students did indicate, though, that they would benefit if the institution were to re-establish a focus on financial literacy as part of First Year Experience (FYE) activities. According to the self-study, loan counseling is provided to students who borrow. The Catamount Scholarship Commitment is noteworthy and lends significant transparency to Vermont residents who are Pell recipients; it also guarantees a given level of financial support throughout their undergraduate education at UVM. The cost of education, including details on tuition, fees, and room and board expenses are presented in publications and on websites. Average default rates and repayment rates, while detailed in the Data First forms in the self-study, are difficult to locate online.

Both the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities and the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards are easily located on the institution's website. While the institution maintains a robust policy site, the components of permanent academic records are difficult to locate but can be found on the Audit and Compliance site. The Division of Student Affairs has clearly articulated, and distributes regularly, policies on academic integrity, drug and alcohol use, and other such policies that are also included on the Dean of Student's site.

The UVM Division of Student Affairs has prominently placed a detailed description of its ethical guidelines for student services on its website. The Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education developed standards are used for self-evaluation. The self-study details the manner in which the Division of Student Affairs ensures that prospective employees are sufficiently trained and qualified to fulfill the needs of students. Student Affairs leaders have made a concerted effort to recruit a talented workforce of professionals, where people of color make up 25% of their employees--well above the average among the students they serve. The Division of Student Affairs has prioritized becoming data driven in the assessment of their programs. Regular self-evaluation and external reviews ensure the quality of student services programs, which include conducting surveys utilizing Project CEO (Co-curricular Experience

Outcomes) and the National Survey on Student Engagement (NSSE). Departments within the Division have established measurable goals for each of the areas and regularly monitor performance against these targets. To assist in this endeavor, the Division of Student Affairs has an individual in its leadership who is primarily responsible for assessment across the Division.

The team confirmed accessibility to the various services for students across all types and modalities. Further, through targeted co-curricular programs sponsored by the Office of International Education (OIE), the institution ensures a positive experience for the growing number of international students. UVM has placed emphasis on cultivating a more inclusive campus. Initiatives to this end include the President's Commission for Inclusive Excellence (PCIE), which was established in 2014. Key campus entities include the Center for Cultural Pluralism (CCP), along with four identity centers: the Interfaith Center, the Prism Center, the Mosaic Center for Students of Color and the Women's Center. These centers actively support students from diverse backgrounds, conduct programming, and provide professional development to faculty and staff.

STANDARD 6: TEACHING, LEARNING, AND SCHOLARSHIP

Faculty and Academic Staff

Excepting the Larner College of Medicine (LCOM), faculty members are covered by collective bargaining agreements--one for full-time faculty and one for part-time faculty. Categories of faculty members are clearly defined in the collective bargaining agreements and, for the LCOM faculty, in the Faculty Handbook. These documents specify workloads; criteria and processes for reappointment, promotion and tenure; grievance procedures; and responsibilities of different categories of faculty members. These documents also support the importance of academic freedom and responsibility.

The faculty of the University of Vermont comprises 1,321 full-time faculty members and 354 part-time faculty members in eight academic Colleges or schools: College of Agriculture and Life Sciences; College of Arts and Sciences; Grossman School of Business; College of Education and Social Services; College of Engineering and Mathematical Sciences; Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources; College of Nursing and Health Sciences; and Larner College of Medicine. These units are all appropriate to the institution given its land grant status and that it incorporates the sole medical school in Vermont. Of the non-medical, tenure-line faculty, 99% hold a doctorate or terminal master's degree and about 40% of the non-medical, non-tenure-track faculty members hold a doctorate or terminal master's degree. According to the Data Sheets, 93% of the library faculty have at least a master's degree and 7% have "Unclassified/Unknown" degrees. One half of the extension faculty hold doctorates or terminal master's degrees. Approximately 83% of research faculty hold a doctorate, and none hold a terminal master's degree. Of the medical faculty, 97% of the tenure-line and 95% of the non-tenure-line faculty hold doctorates.

In 2014, the Provost began an initiative to establish common metrics for faculty productivity and impact with regard to research and scholarship. This initiative grew out of Goal 6 of the Academic Excellence Goals and engaged the entire faculty. Goal 6 states “Increase research and scholarship in areas that generate high impact, recognition and visibility.” The steps in the process and outcomes are documented on the Provost’s website and are used as part of the evaluation process for individual faculty members and of Colleges and schools.

The University has several types of faculty awards that span research, teaching, and service. These awards are under the purview of the Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs. Some of these awards are presented at commencement to enhance visibility. Scholarly achievements in the creative arts are shared via a compilation (on the President’s website) of the photos of the covers of the monographs and creative works published each year by authors at University of Vermont. Faculty recruitment and hiring are carried out by the Colleges. The Provost’s website offers thorough guidelines for all aspects of faculty hires. Diversity recruitment plans are required and are reviewed within the Division of Human Resources, Diversity and Multicultural Affairs. This unit also provides search committee training. Units may augment University processes so that faculty cultures, within units, can be maintained. The search process is open and orderly.

UVM has identified a lack of diversity in its faculty, administrative, and student bodies as an area for improvement, and has taken several steps to address this. The Division of Human Resources, Diversity and Multicultural Affairs (HRDMA) has introduced Diversity Recruitment Plans to the system for faculty hires to try to diversify both the applicant and interviewee pools for tenure-line hires. An additional challenge is that strong minority faculty members are often hired away at the beginning of their second appointment. All faculty and staff members go through an exit interview process, and these data are compiled in an annual report shared with the President and Provost.

The Office of the Provost has developed a broad array of hiring appointment letter templates, each containing information on the nature of the appointment, its term, individual considerations, and a pointer to the collective bargaining agreement and several policy documents that bind the signee. The appointment letter specifies that new faculty members will be subject to annual reviews. This letter is reviewed by the Division of HRDMA for correctness and completeness. The Division of HRDMA is also responsible for the on-boarding process for new faculty and staff employees. The process is now aligned explicitly with the *Our Common Ground* document, which “codifies the principles of the University community”. The new faculty orientation is organized by the Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs.

Reappointment, tenure, and promotion (RTP) guidelines are mandated by the collective bargaining unit, approved by the Dean and the Provost, and reviewed by the department or other unit every five years. The website of the Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs offers information and aids to the preparation of the materials to be reviewed. Emphasis is placed on the expectation that the faculty member’s materials should “systematically and directly link to” ... “as appropriate, the [Academic Excellence Goals] and the Scholarly Productivity and Impact

Metrics.” The Faculty Handbook of the Larner College of Medicine has sections on the process and criteria for evaluations, including a clear statement that the assessment of an individual’s performance must be consistent with University, College and department expectations.

UVM has a designated graduate faculty. Departments review faculty credentials and make recommendations to the Dean of the Graduate College who reviews the recommendations. The Graduate School website holds a list of the graduate faculty.

At the same time, it was not clear how instructors of specific courses, e.g. some of the diversity general education courses, are determined to have the appropriate credentials to offer these courses.

The University has a deep culture of faculty maintaining current and strong scholarship and that this scholarship informs their teaching and mentoring. This culture is reflected in the mission statement of the institution that promotes “an enduring commitment to learning and ethical conduct.” *Our Common Ground* underscores the value placed on ethical conduct and promotes the values of respect, integrity, innovation, openness, justice, and responsibility. This document is widely shared and referenced, appears as the first item on the President’s website, is carved into granite blocks near the entrance to the campus, and is linked to all Blackboard course spaces.

Workload considerations are satisfactorily addressed in the collective bargaining agreements and, for the medical faculty, in the Faculty Handbook. Agreed-upon workloads aspire to balance scholarship, teaching, advising, and service. Units develop workload guidelines that are consistent with the aforementioned documents reviewed by the unit’s Dean. However, the unit-level workload guidelines were found to vary substantially, from unit to unit, in terms of scope and in terms of their most recent review.

The composition of the faculty is assessed in line with disciplinary needs and financial considerations. With the development of Incentive-Based Budgeting (IBB), these decisions made by the Deans are occurring at the unit (College) level. The transparency of IBB budgeting has stimulated innovative academic solutions such as joint programs and teaching across units.

Graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) are trained and supervised in the departments. As of August 2018, an annual, University-wide teaching orientation and training is offered to all GTAs. Over 90% of GTAs took advantage of this opportunity last August. GTAs can also participate in a Graduate Teaching Program offered collaboratively by the Graduate College, the Center for Teaching and Learning, and the Writing in the Disciplines Program.

UVM offers faculty salary and benefits that are at a competitive level. UVM benchmarks non-medical faculty salary data to the Oklahoma State University Faculty Salary Survey (OSU) for Higher Research Activity institutions and the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) survey data for public doctoral institutions.

A broad array of faculty development opportunities is offered through the Professional Development and Training office in the Division of Human Resources, Diversity and Multicultural Affairs. The Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs offers training and workshops and also offers a structured mentoring program for faculty members. The Office of Sponsored Programs offers workshops in grant writing, and a new program to assist faculty members with public articulation of their specialized knowledge was initiated by the Vice President for Research.

Several offices and programs provide support for research and scholarship. The Office of the Vice President for Research maintains a list of all internal funding sources, both campus-wide and unit-specific. For example, the Gund Institute for Environment and the Humanities Center have instituted Faculty Fellows programs for faculty members seeking to develop interdisciplinary programs. The program in the Gund Institute brings in faculty members from many different disciplines spanning philosophy to engineering. The College of Arts and Sciences, in conjunction with the Office of the Vice President for Research, recently created Faculty Development Grants for the Arts. This has been a very successful addition to other research funds.

A professional development opportunity for faculty members interested in administration is the Provost's Faculty Fellows program. Faculty members can work with Provost's Office leadership team members on a particular issue for two to four years as a percentage of their workload. At the faculty forum, individual faculty members, while praising the Faculty Fellows Program, expressed concern over the loss of professional development funds/stipends previously associated with some cohort-based faculty development opportunities.

The library system comprises the David W. Howe Memorial library, the Dana Medical Library, and the Billings Library which includes special collections. Three remote sites house some of the paper holdings. A benchmarking exercise showed the library system to have an appropriate number of library staff of various kinds to meet its current workload. As the types of tasks diversify, there will be a growing need for additional specialized librarians. For instance, the library has recently hired a librarian who has expertise in developing data management plans, and 25% of her time is dedicated to acting as a liaison to science faculty members in this area. Faculty interest in Open Educational Resources is growing and fulfilling this interest could require more support from the library staff.

Instructional designers are employed by both the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) and by Continuing and Distance Education. These resources are shared, and faculty members interested in developing online and hybrid courses can find both workshops and some individual consulting from them. The team found that faculty members do not have difficulty in scheduling time with the instructional designers.

Teaching and Learning

As noted elsewhere, UVM has established a schedule for either an internal or external Academic Program Reviews (APR) of all programs. UVM's requirement for a two-year follow-up report may be very useful. However, when reviewing the two-year follow-up reports, it was occasionally unclear whether the identified concerns in the APR had been addressed. Nearly all programs have developed Program Learning Outcomes, but many have not yet developed assessment plans.

The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) offers faculty members professional help in designing and revising courses, including, the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning initiative (SoTL). This initiative has helped faculty members focus some of their research time on examining the impact of a specific teaching practice. Training and support of faculty members in SoTL have been promoted by a collaboration of the CTL, the CAS, and the Office of the Provost. In addition, the Office of Community-University Partnerships & Service Learning (CUPS) also encourages and supports faculty seeking to do SoTL work in their Service Learning (SL) designated courses.

The CTL also provides information and support on other possible means to enhance student learning. Faculty members who choose to enhance their teaching can access numerous resources. At the faculty forum, individual faculty members praised the offerings of the CTL and the quality of the programming.

The Larner College of Medicine has developed an innovative, active learning medical curriculum to replace much of the lecturing that was used in the past. The Larner College of Medicine Teaching Academy has provided expertise and resources to help develop the various methodologies and has provided training to aid instructors who are learning to work in an active learning environment. The Teaching Academy has developed a membership model that relies on a peer-reviewed portfolio, but one does not need to be a member to use the resources.

According to the Associate Provost for Teaching and Learning, and articulated in a PowerPoint presentation in 2017, UVM students – both first year and seniors - score significantly higher than their peers in a variety of engagement practices. This is a point of pride for the University. To encourage faculty members to build on these findings, the Associate Provost for Teaching and Learning has offered a very successful grant program entitled, *Engaged Practices Innovation (EPI)*, which encourages the use of “high impact educational practices”.

Faculty members across the University embrace the teacher-scholar model and desire to spend more time developing and testing out new or different teaching techniques. However, according to an institutional Faculty Development Needs Assessment Survey carried out in Fall 2018, 60% of the respondents feel that they do not have sufficient time to attend professional development events. To address this, CTL offers one-on-one consulting face-to-face and by video conferencing, e-mail or phone contact. Pedagogical innovation is encouraged by

Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure (RPT) evaluations, and the Provost is working with units to include stronger language about professional development in RPT guidelines.

The implementation of IBB has clarified the relative enrollments of programs to the UVM community. A review of the Data First Form 6-4 shows that a number of departments at the University have small enrollments in degree programs and/or a small number of department faculty members. Deans therefore need to weigh the relative merit of maintaining a small program, perhaps of very high quality, vis-a-vis investing resources in a growing program.

With the development of Program Learning Objectives (PLO), departments are improving coordination across multi-section courses. This outcome emerged in general from the Academic Program Review process, where concerns were raised about the lack of coordination of content in multiple sections of introductory and intermediate courses. In some cases, it remains unclear how these concerns will be addressed. APRs for other units noted that the appointment of a departmental Director of Undergraduate Studies could help coordinate the curriculum.

Academic units vary significantly in how students receive advising. In some units, faculty members offer both general advising and mentoring; other units employ professional advisors. The Center for Academic Success has recently established an Advising Center that is staffed with peer advisors to complement unit-based advising and to answer more general questions. In his December 2018 update on the Academic Excellence Goals, the Provost noted that only “modest progress” had been made on improving student advising. This is a major concern at UVM and of the team. The University has therefore embarked on a partnership with Education Advisory Board’s Student Success Collaborative (SSC) with the hope that this software will provide a shared advising system that will allow coordination of advising across the UVM community.

STANDARD 7: INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES

Human Resources

UVM employs sufficient and qualified personnel to fulfill its mission. The Division of Human Resources, Diversity, and Multicultural Affairs (HRDMA) policies are readily available, consistently applied, periodically reviewed, and provide for the fair redress of grievances.

Terms of employment are clear, and compensation is adequate to ensure that the institution can attract and retain qualified administrators, faculty, and staff. UVM employs effective procedures for the regular evaluation of all personnel. The University ensures sufficient opportunities for professional development for administrators, faculty, and staff. UVM has a stable workforce, as evidenced by the longevity of their faculty and staff. As reported in the self-study, average length of employment of faculty is 12.4 years; for full-time staff is 10.8 years.

UVM's Human Resource Services (HRS) resides within the Division of Human Resources, Diversity and Multicultural Affairs (HRDMA). The HRS website includes the collective bargaining agreements, federal and state employment information, benefits, and ethics and compliance reporting instructions. The HRS website also maintains a series of readily-available policies, procedures, and other resources for its faculty and staff and links to the University's central institutional policy website maintained by the Office of Audit and Compliance Services. Under its coordination, University policies are reviewed on a three-year cycle. Particularly given the wealth of resources available on the website, the University's continued commitment to improve web accessibility is important.

During its open forum with staff, the team heard substantial positive feedback about the many offerings made available by UVM's HRS. Attendees noted frequent usage of new hiring and onboarding materials, manager trainings, employee wellness, work-life balance, and retirement resources. HRDMA also plays an integral role in hosting Staff Appreciation Week and the Blackboard Jungle Symposium that are designed to support UVM faculty, staff, and all others seeking to develop skills, knowledge, and a deeper understanding of diversity that supports excellence in teaching, service, and research.

HRDMA implemented a new electronic performance management system in 2016, developed in conjunction with the UVM Staff Council. The system's implementation has resulted in a 92% completion rate for performance evaluations for staff, compared to approximately 40% before its implementation. In our open forum with staff, the group reported being pleased with revisions to refine the form by making it more concise and easier to use. Staff indicated that it would be valuable to incorporate a career planning component into the evaluation process.

UVM's policies provide for the fair redress of grievances. Approximately 31% of UVM's employees are covered by one of four collective bargaining agreements, and approximately 42% of all faculty are represented by the United Academics. For non-represented staff, the University recently established a Grievance and Peer Advisor Policy and a Whistleblower Policy, which includes the Ethics and Compliance Reporting and Helpline, an anonymous hotline. The University maintains an onsite consultant as part of their Employee Assistance Program for faculty and staff who feel they have been treated unfairly. Non-represented staff can also leverage the UVM Staff Council. HRDMA is incorporating these and other University operating procedures into a comprehensive employee handbook for all non-represented staff.

As described in the self-study in Standard 6, the University plans to review the current organization for faculty development. The review is expected to include recommendations for increasing faculty participation in training and professional development opportunities, including a central web location for faculty development. Staff can find a range of learning opportunities through the University's Professional Development and Training (PDT) initiative, a dedicated in-house resource. Staff reported increasing usage of PDT that has partnered with colleagues in Sponsored Project Administration and the Division of Finance to support the rollout and training of new financial systems and applications. While training was welcomed by

the staff, there were reports of unevenness with regard to receiving the flexibility needed in order to participate in such opportunities.

Financial Resources

UVM has the financial resources sufficient to support its mission. It manages its financial resources and allocates them in a way that reflects its mission and purposes. It demonstrates the ability to respond to financial emergencies and unforeseen circumstances. The University is financially stable. Financial stability is not achieved at the expense of educational quality. Its stability and viability are not unduly dependent upon vulnerable financial resources or a historically narrow base of support. UVM's multi-year financial planning is realistic and demonstrates adequate revenue capacity to ensure the advancement of educational quality and services for students.

The Board of Trustees reviews and approves UVM's financial plans based on multi-year analysis and financial forecasting. The Board retains appropriate autonomy in all budget and finance matters. All, or substantially all, of UVM's resources are devoted to the support of its education, research, and service programs. UVM and its governing board regularly and systematically review the effectiveness of its financial aid policy and practices in advancing the University's mission and help to ensure that it enrolls and supports the student body it seeks to serve.

The team found that UVM has sufficient professionally qualified finance staff, led by a capable chief financial officer and that UVM displays prudent financial management; has a well-organized budget process; has adopted appropriate internal control mechanisms and risk assessment; and completes timely financial reporting to internal and external constituency groups. These factors provide a basis for sound financial decision-making. The University establishes and implements its budget after appropriate consultation with relevant constituencies in accord with realistic overall planning that provides for the appropriate integration of academic, student service, fiscal, development, information, technology, and physical resource priorities to advance its educational objectives.

UVM's fiscal year 2019 budget totals approximately \$686M. The University's unrestricted operating budget represents \$370M, or 54% of the total, and includes tuition, State appropriations, facilities and administrative cost recovery from sponsored projects, and other general income. The remaining elements of the budget are income/expense activities (such as the Residence Halls and University Store, which generate income to directly offset their costs), gifts, grants, and contracts. UVM focuses its budget efforts on the General Fund and income/expenses, as the institution believes they are areas directly influenced by institutional policy and management decisions and can be budgeted closely.

As reported in the self-study, the University's liquidity, in the form of cash, cash equivalents, and operating investments has grown significantly in the past decade from \$120M in 2009 to over \$300M in 2018. The Board of Trustees maintains a provision in the Cash Management and

Liquidity Policy that requires that the University keep available a minimum of \$30M in unrestricted, unencumbered cash. The current balance is \$34M.

UVM is well aware of the financial challenges it is facing. The climate for public higher education, especially in the northeast, has challenged undergraduate enrollments and limits tuition growth. This is particularly pronounced since UVM is more dependent on out-of-state students than its public peers, with 78% of its enrolled students coming from outside of Vermont (compared to 15% for its public peers). At the same time, UVM, which is Vermont's flagship public research institution, receives among the lowest State appropriations in the country, representing just 11.7% of General Fund revenues. The University's endowment market value at \$540M is about half the size of its private peers, though the University's renewed focus on philanthropy is a potential bright spot and is discussed in more detail below.

As a result of these financial challenges, members of the University community reported to the team significant impacts on their budgets, many of which have been reduced over the last few years. As learned in the self-study, budget constraints have also prevented the University from allocating the level of funding recommended by its campus asset management consultant to stem the growth in the deferred maintenance backlog.

These challenges have been an issue of concern and have motivated University efforts to further diversify both its revenue and student base. As described in Standard 5, the President's Strategic Action Plan aims to attract students from outside of UVM's traditional markets in the northeast, as well as international enrollments. Toward the University's goal of an institutional commitment to efficiency and effectiveness, it will be important for the University to remain committed to reviewing and eliminating programs, when appropriate.

UVM also aims to diversify its revenue. Grants and contract revenues of \$180.5M represent 24% of total revenues for fiscal year 2018, of which \$27.6M represents the recovery of indirect costs. Efforts of the Office of the Vice President for Research have supported the expansion of intellectual property, with rising numbers of patents and licenses. To support this translational research, the University has invested in its largest-ever capital project, a \$104M STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) complex of laboratories, classrooms, and research facilities.

A major component of the University's financial health is its current comprehensive Move Mountains Campaign. This Campaign, only the third in the institution's 228-year history, met its \$500M goal in July 2018, a year early, with fundraising planned to continue through June 2019. Leading this ambitious campaign is the UVM Foundation, a separately incorporated 501(c)3 governed by a 26-member Board of Directors that was launched at approximately the same time as the Move Mountains campaign. The establishment of the UVM Foundation represents a renewed focus on developing a "culture of philanthropy", which will be important to the University's financial future. UVM's endowment has increased 66% in the last 10 years, to \$543M, which provides a \$19M revenue stream to support academic programs, financial aid, and faculty.

UVM is relatively highly leveraged, with outstanding debt of \$556M, approximately twice Moody's median for all public universities. Despite the overall balance, UVM's current debt service ratio is 5.25% and is within the University's debt service cap of 5.75%. The University benefits from a fixed-rate debt portfolio, which avoids uncertainty associated with variable rate debt. As discussed in the section below, the University's only future borrowing plans are to initiate funding for deferred maintenance before the operating budget builds capacity to do so. If projected operating margins are not achieved to support the deferred maintenance needed, it will put pressure on the University's debt capacity.

The University employs a multi-year strategic financial planning tool that enables oversight of the institution's finances. The Board, through its Budget, Finance, and Investment Committee (BFI), annually reviews multi-year projections resulting from the strategic financial planning model. UVM's Vice President for Enrollment Management annually reviews the financial aid procedures and policies with the BFI in conjunction with the development of the annual budget. The proposed approach to awarding aid is a result of the Division of Enrollment Management staff working with external consultants.

A new budget system was implemented in 2017 that was reported by the University Business Advisors to have significantly enhanced the ability of local-level budget managers to plan and monitor their resources. As described in Standard 2, the President released his Strategic Action Plan in 2013. The most transformational component of the plan was the implementation of the incentive-based budget (IBB) that was designed to more directly link strategy with resources at the academic-unit level. The implementation of IBB has enabled local strategic planning discussions to occur against the backdrop of financial realities. By creating new funding streams at the local-level, IBB has advanced the President's Strategic Action Plan by spurring the creation of innovative new majors, undergraduate certificates, and master's degrees, all of which are critical components towards the University's goals of diversifying revenue and students.

As Chief Academic Officer and Chief Budget Officer, the Provost oversees the connection of resource allocations to the educational mission. He leads a budget group, including the Vice President for Finance and Treasurer, the University Budget Director, the Assistant Provost, and leaders from other parts of the University. Some key guidance is set centrally; since the implementation of IBB, the academic-unit budgets have been developed locally by the Deans.

UVM has a robust risk assessment process led by the University's Chief Risk Officer. The University's most recent risk heat map has appropriately yielded such challenges as deferred maintenance and the higher education funding model, with undergraduate enrollment and net tuition revenue among the highest risks. Accordingly, it will be important to continue to develop plans to diversify revenue, achieve efficiencies, and monitor the University's financial performance.

Libraries

UVM's libraries – the David W. Howe, Billings, and Dana Medical Library – are easily accessible resources for the University's teaching, research, and public service missions. The libraries are actively involved in the University's Information Literacy component of general education requirements; have created an institutional repository that brings together the University's research called ScholarWorks@UVM; house the University's Center for Teaching and Learning; and engage library users on an on-going basis to gain feedback to inform services and resources. The Howe Library's physical space is emblematic of this engagement, which includes a bridge-connection to the Central Campus Residence Hall and Dining Facility creating a dynamic intersection for UVM's undergraduate students.

Physical Resources

As noted above, the University's deferred maintenance has grown to an estimated \$374M due to historical budget constraints. UVM has recently increased its allocation to address the deficiencies, from \$6M in 2015 to \$11 million in 2018. While significant, this increase does not yet meet the \$20M annual need reported by an external consultant to slow growth in the backlog and make progress in reducing it. The University has developed an action plan to incrementally increase funding for this purpose over the next 5 years, including adding \$14M of debt in the near-term. Increases thereafter are projected to be provided from the University's base budget, and the availability to do so will be dependent on the success of the University's strategies to diversify revenue. If these goals are not achieved, it may (a) further pressure the University's ability to mitigate its deferred maintenance backlog, or (b) pressure the University's debt capacity to address the backlog.

As reported in the self-study and earlier in this report, UVM's 2006-2015 Campus Master Plan (CMP) still serves as a guide to help set priorities for campus development and deferred maintenance funding. While the CMP was only designed to directly address the growth of the campus through 2015, the University reported that the underlying planning principles remain strong and various supplemental studies including transportation, parking, and housing have been undertaken in the interim. A new master planning process is anticipated in 2020. To better monitor the University's deferred maintenance, the Physical Plant Department is also conducting more regular and precise facilities condition assessments. The Physical Plant team remains focused on addressing the particular challenges presented by the University's 68 historic single-family houses, many of which need significant renovation. While a robust capital projects approval process exists, in fact the process is often more ad hoc, directed by the President and Board of Trustees. Having a multi-year capital plan that is fully incorporated into the strategic financial plan would further assist UVM.

Technological Resources

The University's faculty and staff reported uneven technical support levels across the University, and the self-study identified concerns regarding digital deferred maintenance.

Despite these concerns, UVM is well aware of its needs regarding technological resources. Under the leadership of the University's new Chief Information Officer, these needs were identified and prioritized in the recently completed Information Technology Strategic Plan and Priorities 2018 – 2023. IT governance has been refined, including the formation of an executive committee, security council, and an operational IT committee that includes connections between the University's central Enterprise Technology Service (ETS) directors with approximately 100 distributed staff with IT-related job titles. Working with the Board of Trustees, the new Chief Information Officer and his team are reviewing the University's IT personnel.

The University's deferred maintenance challenges also strain UVM's information technology. For example, necessary networking upgrades are only achievable through capital project funds as buildings are built or renovated. The University's Telecommunications and Network Services (TNS) also has limited dedicated resources of its own for these upgrades. The self-study spoke candidly of these challenges and plans to review the funding models are underway.

The University's Catamount Data Center hosts the Vermont Advance Computing Core (VACC), a significant asset to the University's research computing capabilities. The VACC's funding model does not cover equipment replacement, however, which limits the University's ability to leverage its purchasing power. The University has deployed one-time funding, when available, while the development of a more sustainable renewal plan is being developed.

STANDARD 8: EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Standards of Achievement

The institution has several programs that are externally accredited and, as reported in the Data First forms, students in these programs are successful in passing national examinations and earning professional credentialing across the various disciplines (e.g. nursing, education, athletic training). The team's evaluation of the syllabi of these programs, as well as meetings with faculty, staff, and administrators, documented that the University has standards of achievement in place that meet expectations of the various degrees awarded.

The development of Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes (SLO) are a key component of the Assessment Initiative (launched in 2016). This initiative resulted in a 40% appointment of a temporary Fellow within the Office of the Provost dedicated to assessment. The individual currently holding this position is a faculty member (10%) and also serves as the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) director (50%). This position supports assessment work across the institution by providing regular workshops and seminars for faculty and department chairs, as well as disseminating information via assessment peers functioning as ambassadors within their Colleges and departments. SLOs have been developed for the general education core. In addition, UVM data indicates that SLOs have been developed or are under development for most programs.

As noted in Standard 2, a review of UVM program websites found an uneven picture of how readily available SLOs are to students and to the public. For example, some UVM program websites do not post their SLOs on the program landing page, but rather 3-4 clicks in making them difficult to find. Other programs do have their SLOs posted on their landing pages (e.g., Biology), providing a possible model for others.

Assessment

UVM began the Assessment Initiative in January 2016 with two primary goals: a) establishing an infrastructure of assessing student achievement in general education and b) developing Program Learning Outcomes (PLO) across the institution for all programs. Both are laudable goals and there are indications of steady, yet slow, progress. To date, efforts are still at a relatively early stage with a need for a more developed infrastructure and consistency across both general education and academic programs. UVM cites, within the self-study, the Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources and the College of Nursing and Health Sciences as examples of strongly integrated assessment practice that could provide positive models.

Staff and faculty involved in the Assessment Initiative indicated to the Team that implementation of Program Assessment Leaders (PALS) was the most effective feature in disseminating assessment skills across the institution, and the program is being expanded to five additional programs in AY 2018-2019. Each of these units has a Unit Assessment Coordinator who serves as a liaison between departments/faculty, the Dean's offices within the College, and the Office of the Provost. The role appears to include assisting with resources for SLOs as well as assisting with establishing and deploying assessment plans. These individuals also track information to be provided on the E- Series Forms. To ensure the advances made in assessment over the past three to four years can be sustained, adequate resources will need to be provided.

UVM uses the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) on a three-year cycle to assess student perceptions of engagement; several academic and career-oriented skills; the quality of student-faculty relationships; and exposure to diverse perspectives. The most recent report in 2017 (NSSE participation response rate was noted as 26.6% but total N of sample was unclear) suggested that UVM first-year and senior students responded similarly regarding speaking and writing clearly and effectively, being an informed and active citizen, and thinking critically and analytically. The Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE) is also administered once every three years to learn from students before they enter the institution what resources they are expecting and/or need from the institution.

In addition to the BCSSE, the Division of Student Affairs, in partnership with the Division of Enrollment Management, distributes an annual survey to all first-year students, transfer students, and sophomores with the goals of understanding the student experience and identifying opportunities for the institution to improve the services it provides. Representatives

from the Division of Student Affairs offices clearly described several innovative programs and services that they have implemented such as ‘thought leadership’ summits established this year to collaborate with students on issues of mental health and stigma, cannabis, and alcohol use/misuse.

The establishment of Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes was the second goal of the assessment initiative. As was recognized throughout the team’s interviews, the non-externally accredited programs have made less progress to date toward embracing and implementing SLO’s across all programs.

The Academic Program Review (APR) process was recently revised to include assessment of learning and educational effectiveness measures, but only 79 of the 121 undergraduate programs (65%) that do not hold professional accreditation have assessment plans in place. New programs, including new accelerated programs such as the Accelerated Master’s in Civil and Environmental Engineering, also tend not to have review plans in place. Within the APR documents reviewed by the team, several departments did note that they were developing surveys as well as other qualitative measures to measure student success. Given that UVM plans to continue to grow its graduate programs rather aggressively over the next several years, it will be particularly important to ensure that appropriate assessment mechanisms are established as part of the development and review processes.

Retention and Graduation Rates

In 2010, UVM revised its institutional reporting process to be more data-centric in support of its planning efforts and decision making. For example, the Office of Institutional Research is developing dynamic visualization tools that will better serve UVM’s stakeholders. OIR staff reported that they are working on centralizing and improving access to data through the new Catamount Data Center. This tool will also benefit the institution’s enrollment and retention efforts as well as provide access to student outcome data that can be used for APRs and program promotion.

Meetings across campus with faculty, staff, administrators and students found a deep and committed concern for students at UVM. Undergraduate graduation rates have been steady in the 74-76% range over the four years prior to the self-study. Graduate Students’ rates range from 68% to 98%. Students report employment rates at 70% or higher post-graduation. Several institutional reports describe and track students, including IPEDS and enrollment/retention reports for the institution as a whole, as well as analyses at the level of Colleges and departments. Several examples of how these data are used to inform institutional activity were provided, for example the tracking of enrollment trends paired with attrition particularly in the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) which has initiated efforts to identify reasons for leaving the institution as well as possible interventions. The newly implemented EAB tracking and advising tool (Student Success Collaborative), as well as increased numbers of Residential Learning Communities (RLC), are also expected to assist in retention efforts within CAS and across the University.

Improving retention to 90% is one of the Strategic Action Plan goals, and several steps including increasing the number of Residential Learning Communities (RLC) and targeted support of students from lower socioeconomic and minority backgrounds have been initiated (e.g., the Catamount Commitment and the Urban Partnership Program). In addition, the self-study reported plans to enhance the First-Year Experience as an additional retention tool. Current trend data suggest that UVM is modestly increasing domestic and international diversity of both its undergraduate and graduate students. For example, international students increased threefold (2% to 6%) approaching UVM's objective of 7% last year. However, given the current national climate, these numbers are expected to decrease. The self-study also noted concern about the changing enrollment demographics in the Northeast and the fact that UVM has fewer in-state students in proportion to out-of-state students.

Common challenges to retention reported, across the institution, were the lack of a centralized electronic advising system, a lack of access to student data for predictive analytics, as well as limited financial assistance for lower income students. Steps taken to ameliorate these challenges include the acquisition of the Student Success Collaborative tool noted above and the efforts in process to improve data collection and sharing across the University.

Other measures of student success

The Division of Student Affairs and the Office of Institutional Research gather other data of student success at UVM. The institution notes successful graduation rates among athletes at or above UVM's overall graduation statistic, and the average GPA of athletes increased to above 3.2 in January 2018. Moreover, 71% of all Catamount student-athletes were named to the America East Academic Honor Roll in AY 2017-2018. The student-led Focus Group Initiative, launched in Spring 2016, also provides an important source of information for the effective assessment of student learning, and UVM provides further co-curricular learning experiences through Project CEO 2017 that involved 83% of the students. The Division of Student Affairs plans to generate learning outcomes that align with the University's established learning domains and, in meetings with the team, staff described aspirations to collaborate even more fully in supporting the academic side of the institution.

Loan default rates are described as low and occur mostly among those who do not complete degrees. The Career Outcomes survey, given 6 months post-graduation, collects information about further education plans and early employment that is posted for public view on the OIR website. This survey replicates the First Destination survey. UVM notes that 93% of the 2017 graduating class respondents reported being employed or continuing in graduate programs; 90% are working or studying within their major area of study; and 94% are satisfied/very satisfied. Ninety-nine percent of all Honors student graduates reported employment or attendance in graduate school. The Graduate College and the Larner College of Medicine have recently been added to institutional analyses of careers/employment.

UVM provided evidence that all of its externally-accredited programs use some form of student success metrics to understand how their students were performing after graduation. For several of these programs such as Nursing, pass rates on national examinations are high and posted on program webpages. Data on student success in licensing, job placement and other measures, can be found for all of the externally-accredited programs sampled.

STANDARD 9: INTEGRITY, TRANSPARENCY, AND PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

Integrity

The University has extensive policies and procedures that clearly articulate the institution's expectations regarding integrity, including academics, research, facilities, management of staff and students, freedom of speech, and academic freedom. These are presented in documents such as the Mission Statement, Our Common Ground Statement, and the President's Ethics Statement. UVM's principles are further emphasized in its Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards which was updated in 2017, as well as in its Conflict of Interest and Conflict of Commitment statement. There are clearly described mechanisms to report suspected violations, including a Research Misconduct policy, Complaint Procedure, and Whistleblower Policy, as well as descriptions of potential disciplinary actions. Academic freedom is addressed in a Faculty Senate statement, and freedom of speech has been addressed by the President. The University has a number of policies and procedures to safeguard against discrimination and harassment and information on how to address issues that arise. Expectations for students to act "responsibly, ethically and with integrity" occur in numerous venues, for example, during June Orientation, Opening Weekend, and in the *Know the Code* pamphlet. There is a website that describes the policies dealing with integrity issues that affect students.

The institution has authority to grant degrees from the Vermont General Assembly and does so in compliance with all NECHE Commission Standards, based on reports submitted to NECHE.

Transparency

The University of Vermont communications are largely shared online through various policy pages and the UVM Catalogue. Extensive information is available for students and prospective students which, for the most part, is readily accessible, the exception being loan default rates and repayment rates, which are difficult to find. However, these statistics included on the Financial Aid Shopping Sheet that is part of the aid package for entering students.

The Office of University Creative Communications Services has established a schedule for regular review of information presented in publications, the website, and other materials. The office has established design standards and deployed a common branding template for the University's web presence, initiated a more robust social media presence, and established University committees dedicated to improving communication among various units at UVM.

Through these efforts, the office of University Creative Communication Services has made considerable progress to improve transparency at the institution.

UVM presents information for prospective students and their families via the Admissions, Financial Aid, Registrar webpages, and on other sites. This includes a University of Vermont Catalogue, accessible on the Registrar site that presents detailed information on the University's academic programs, degrees, degree requirements, academic policies and procedures, faculty, and courses. It also includes the institution's mission, vision, values, and accreditation information. Archived Catalogues are also available online and go back to 1938.

The Admissions and Financial Aid sites include extensive information regarding processes, procedures, and deadlines that students must follow for consideration for admission, scholarships, and financial aid support. The steps for submitting the FAFSA, the admissions application, Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP), and other aid policies are also included. Via the Admissions site and the main UVM site, only one-to-two clicks are needed to locate information on outcomes statistics, such as graduation rates and professional school acceptance rates, as well as highlights of current students, faculty and alumni.

The institution provides its most recent financial statements but finding this information from the main UVM site is a challenge, requiring five clicks. The methods for which an individual might submit an inquiry or complaint are easily accessible via the Office of the President site.

Public Disclosure

The University of Vermont presented its mission, vision, and values in the self-study and this information can also be found online in the Catalogue and other administration websites. Extensive information describing the institution is available on the website, and its goal for educating students is included as a central point of the mission of UVM. The institution's goals for student success rates are articulated in a recent document issued by the VP for Enrollment Management and the Provost, and this information is available on the website. This document details current and desired outcomes, along with inputs and methods designed to achieve the outcomes.

The Catalogue and institutional website include information on its accreditation status and non-profit, public affiliation with the State of Vermont. The Office of Student Financial Services presents information regarding the cost of attendance and aid for all student types. The Registrar site describes enrollment processes and student procedures for withdrawal, degrees and their requirements, and academic programs. Also accessible from the Admissions site, and offered directly from the Registrar page, is information about transfer credit procedures and course equivalencies. In addition, detailed descriptions of institutional articulation agreements are available in the Catalogue.

The Catalogue also includes a listing of all faculty and their departmental affiliations, institutional leadership, administration, and Board membership. The institution does cite that it

is a challenge in keeping the Catalogue's listings for active courses up to date, and the Registrar, Provost, Deans, and others are establishing processes for maintaining this information.

AFFIRMATION OF COMPLIANCE

To document the institution's compliance with Federal regulations relating to Title IV, the team reviewed the University's Affirmation of Compliance form signed by the CEO. UVM publicly discloses on its website and in its Catalogue its policy on transfer of credit and articulation agreements. Public notification of the evaluation visit and of the opportunity for public comment was made by the University prior to the visit in The Burlington Free Press and the Rutland Herald, and on the College's website. Copies of the institution's grievance procedures for students can be found in the University's Catalogue, and online on the President's Webpage and the University Policy Page. A secure, password-protected learning management system (Blackboard) is used to verify a student's identity. The team's discussion of UVM's credit hour policy can be found in the Integrity of the Award of Academic Credit section in Standard 4: The Academic Program.

INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHS

- UVM benefits from strong, committed Board leadership and engagement with its members who are devoted to the best interests of the University, its faculty and staff, and to its students and their futures.
- The faculty of UVM exemplify an admirable commitment to the success of the University's students and to its mission.
- Faculty widely and productively participate in shared governance of the University, as exemplified by their participation in Board committees, Standing Committees of the Faculty Senate, and frequent engagement with multiple units of the University's leadership and administration.
- The staff of UVM are strongly mission-driven and invested in supporting the University's priorities and aspirations.
- The Student Affairs Division, its programs, and its focus are simply outstanding.
- The current IBB budget model has provided highly desirable transparency to the University's budgeting processes.
- There exists a strong collaborative and collegial culture among the Deans and Associate Deans of the University.
- UVM has benefitted enormously, and will continue to benefit from, a highly successful Foundation that is effectively creating a sustained culture of philanthropy.

INSTITUTIONAL CONCERNS

- University-wide general education is still relatively undeveloped and complicated by college and program specific distribution requirements that deter student mobility across the curriculum potentially creating obstacles to student success.
- Advising across UVM is inconsistent, frustrating to students, and may be an impediment to student progress towards graduation.
- Although recent progress is encouraging and commendable, assessment continues to lag NECHE standards and needs to be prioritized and adequately funded.
- In a number of academic areas there are inadequate resources to provide appropriate coursework for advanced undergraduate and graduate students.
- Given the current climate for public higher education, especially in the northeast, The University of Vermont should continue to focus on financial sustainability.
- The syllabi reviewed by the team did not provide sufficient evidence to confirm consistent compliance with the Department of Education's regulations on the awarding of academic credit. This was more of an issue for those programs that are not externally accredited.