4.A - Core Component 4.A

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.
2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.
3. The institution has policies that assure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.
4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It assures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.
5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.
6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution assures that the degree or certificate programs it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission, such as employment rates, admission rates to advanced degree programs, and participation rates in fellowships, internships, and special programs (e.g., Peace Corps and Americorps).

Argument

Program Review

Columbia College Chicago has implemented a cycle of program review since the early 2000s. The current schedule of past and future program reviews can be found here.

Program Review at the College is guided by the Program Review Purposes and Responsibilities document, which provides an overview of the process and the responsibilities of the various offices. In general, the primary purpose of Program Review is to generate conversations between the Department Chair and the school Dean about the viability, performance, and future direction of a department and its programs. Academic Support Units (the Library, Center for Black Music Research, Global Education, Digital Learning) also undergo a cycle of Program Review. The current process for Program Review (outlines, schedules, calendars) was implemented in the 2016-17 academic year.

The revised Program Review Calendar expanded the timeframe for the entire process, from nine months to the beginning of the Fall semester to the end of the Fall semester of the subsequent year. This extra time provides the departments, especially large, complex ones, with the ability to manage the process more efficiently and thoughtfully.

The Program Review Self-Study Outline provides the department with a range of questions and opportunities for reflection. To seek more individualized insight in the Self-Studies, the outline asks the department to identify "critical questions you would like to see addressed in this program review." In addition, the Outline identifies a range of data and other information generated on an annual basis by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, including: Enrollment; NSSE, YFYC, and Graduating

Senior Survey Results; Student Evaluations of Teaching; Retention and Graduation Rates; Annual Assessment Reports; Faculty to Student Ratios; and Average Class Size.

Program Review provides an option for the department to engage external reviewers to visit and offer their perspectives on the department and its programs. In addition to the Self-Study, the departments produce a background and general information report that provides the reviewers with context. The reviewers use an outline to guide their report.

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness provides a data pack for each department undertaking Program Review.

Most recent Program Review Self-Studies and External Review Files here.

Prioritization

From 2011 to 2013, Program Review was formally halted as the College committed to an institution-wide process of "Prioritization." Columbia engaged the services of Robert Dickeson and colleagues at Academic Strategy Partners. The focus of Prioritization was to work towards creating an objective measurement of a program's value to the institution. Towards this end, every major and minor at the College created a Program Information Request (PIR) that discussed the internal and external demands for the program, enrollment, quality of outcomes, revenues, and expenses. The respective deans and the Interim Provost used these to assess each program and assign it to one of three categories: 1) Maintain resources; 2) Increase resources; 3) Reduce resources or Eliminate Program. Non-academic units and programs underwent a similar level of scrutiny.

The two final stages in the process resulted in a report issued by the Academic Review Team (a group of eleven faculty and two staff) titled "One Columbia" and a response to that document and the deans' recommendations by President Warrick Carter, "Blueprint Prioritization." In addition, the Support and Operations committee released its own report and recommendations.

The entire process created a highly polarized environment at the College and local news reported on the discussions and possible decisions that would result from the self-examination, all in the context of decreasing enrollment. While the actual process yielded very little in terms of change at Columbia, the Prioritization experience did identify a number of programs and departments that the College could no longer justify supporting.

Transfer Credit

The Degree Evaluation unit in the Registrar's Office is responsible for reviewing transfer courses; the College accepts transfer courses from other institutions that are accredited by one of the six U.S. regional accreditors and, per HLC Assumed Practices C2, those that "will … apply to its own programs" and which thus have a rough equivalent at Columbia. In addition, students need to earn a minimum grade of C.

Transfer courses and their Columbia equivalencies are entered into the Transfer Evaluation System (TES), a database that allows the College to automatically accept any future transfer requests for a course.

Faculty are highly engaged in the review of transfer courses. Each department has a faculty "Articulation Designate" who leads the review and provides input and guidance for transfer questions.

Columbia is a participant in the Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI), a statewide agreement that allows

transfer students coming from participating Illinois institutions who meet certain criteria to complete the General Education Core Curriculum (GECC) in lieu of the Columbia College Chicago Liberal Arts and Sciences Core. Transfer students who are accepted to Columbia College Chicago and have successfully completed 30 or more transferrable credits from one or more IAI institutions are eligible for the agreement. Transfer students who complete the GECC package in lieu of Columbia College Chicago's general education core must still complete college-wide degree requirements.

The College has formal articulation agreements with four community colleges: Ivy Tech Community College (Indiana), College of DuPage (Illinois), Kalamazoo Valley Community College (Michigan), and Moraine Valley Community College (Illinois).

To facilitate and provide information to potential transfer students, the College offers planning tools on its website to students interested in transferring to Columbia. One of these tools is a 2-year (or more if necessary) plan, identifying the major courses a student transferring in with an AA would need to complete to earn the bachelor's degree. These have been created for all majors. An example is the guide for the BA in Acting. Another tool provided to potential transfer students is a 2 + 2 planning guide for a host of local community colleges for many specific majors. An example is 2 + 2 in Photography with the College of DuPage.

The College accepts AP credit and publishes an Equivalency Guide on its web site. I.B. credits are also accepted for scores of 4 or higher. Other transfer policies (CLEP, Military, Life Experience) are discussed in the catalog.

Curriculum Process and Oversight

The Curriculum and Academic Policy Review Manual (the CPM) articulates the processes by which all curricular matters are initiated, reviewed and vetted, and approved. This document also identifies and defines the participants in the curriculum process: Full-Time Faculty, Part-Time Faculty, Department Curriculum Committees, School Curriculum Committees, Department Chairs, Registrar, Deans/Associate Deans, the Core Curriculum Committee, the Academic Affairs Committee, the Graduate Council, and the Provost.

The CPM also defines and provides credit limits and distributions for Bachelor degrees (BA, BFA, BS, BMus) and Masters degrees (MA, MFA, MAM).

The curriculum approval process for a new academic program (Major, Minor) goes through review and approval by the Department Curriculum Committee and to the Department Chair, then to the School Curriculum Committee and the School Dean. The new program proposal then goes to the Academic Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate (undergraduate programs)) or to the Graduate Council (graduate programs) for a vote, and then to the Faculty Senate, which will vote and then recommends to the Provost. This entire process is very deliberate and inclusive and takes approximately ten months to complete.

New course and revisions of courses and program requirements go from the Department Curriculum Committees to the School Curriculum Committees and then to the Dean.

Specialized Accreditation

Three of Columbia's programs at Columbia have specialized accreditation:

The American Sign Language/English Interpretation Program is accredited by the Commission on

Collegiate Interpreter Education.

The Interior Architecture Program in the Design Department is accredited by the Council for Interior Architecture Accreditation.

The Dance/Movement Therapy Program is accredited by the American Dance Therapy Association.

Success of Graduates

Prior to 2017, the College administered an alumni survey every three years. The 2014 Alumni Survey reported on responses (N=1,197, an 8.2% response rate) from three separate cohorts: "Older Alumni" (graduated more than five years out), "Newer Alumni" (graduated five to two years out), and 2011 graduates. Approximately 80% of all three groups responded positively to the question as to whether or not they would recommend Columbia to someone with similar interests. Gap analysis identifying the difference between a perceived skill's need and the actual amount to which Columbia contributed to the development of this need showed relatively larger difference in "Business Skills" and "Time/Project Management." These needs are specifically addressed in the "Student Success" Goal in the Strategic Plan; Columbia students will "acquire foundational business and marketing skills and technological fluency, and complete a significant entrepreneurial experience." In addition, alumni satisfaction was lowest with the "Quality of Career/Placement Services." In Fall 2016, the College hired a new Director of the Career Center and he was charged with transforming this unit so it would be more responsive to the needs of students and alumni.

Beginning in 2017, the College committed to survey cohorts of 1, 3, 6, 9, and 12 years out from graduation. The survey covered a range of topics, including: satisfaction with the Columbia experience, employment status, skills development and level of importance in the workplace, and connectedness to Columbia. The survey was completed by 567 alumni, a 12.4% response rate.

Key findings included:

1. Approximately 3 out of 4 alumni are working in a field related to their field of study
2. There is a need to further develop business, organizational, and problem solving skills
3. Average income is slightly higher than the national average income in related fields

Using data from the National Student Loan Clearinghouse, the College is able to track the progress of students who left the college prior to earning their degrees. Of the 1,239 students who left the College (55% of the original Fall 2010 cohort), only 282 (12.5% of the original cohort) received a degree from another institution.

Sources

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- Blueprint Prioritization President's Recommendations June 29 2012
- CCC 2018 COA Program Letter Self Study
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- PIR for American Sign Language BA
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- Program Review Purpose and Responsibilities 2017-18
- Program Review Schedule - Past and Future (as of June 2018).pdf
- Program Review Self-Study Outline 2018-19
- Support and Operations Team Report
- Theatre_Acting_TransferPlan_16
- Transfer College List from CCC Website

4.B - Core Component 4.B

The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.

1. The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.
2. The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.
3. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.

Argument

Learning Outcomes

Learning Outcomes for all programs appear in the College Catalog.

Assessment

Columbia's history with assessment of student learning outcomes is typical of many institutions: there have been periods of sustained engagement due to leadership and support; conversely, there have also been periods of inattention in some departments, typically due to leadership and support, but, in many cases, due to structural changes (mergers of departments and programs) and college-wide efforts at institutional inquiry and change (Prioritization, Strategic Planning). In the Fall of 2016, the College replaced its Associate Vice President for Accreditation, Compliance, and Assessment with the Associate Provost for Accreditation and Assessment, and one of his priorities was to provide leadership and to re-engage faculty in assessment activity.

The College has adopted the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment's (NILOA) *Transparency Framework* for its web site, sharing virtually all of its assessment processes, activities, and results with both internal stakeholders and with the public. The Assessment Web Site is organized into six different sections:

1. Student Learning Outcomes: This page provides a link to the list of SLOs for all majors in the catalog and also includes a link to the College's Universal Learning Outcomes.
2. Assessment Plans: Descriptions of prior year assessment plans are placed here.
3. Assessment Resources: This page contains resources, such as outlines for annual reports, guides for writing outcomes and assessing outcomes, and links to external organizations (AALHE, NILOA, AAC&U)
4. Current Assessment Activities: This page contains the documents that outline the current AY's assessment activity for each department.
5. Evidence of Student Learning: This page has the most recent annual reports for each department.
6. Use of Student Learning Evidence: This section has summaries of how assessment results have been used across the campus.

Columbia has adopted a distributed model in its assessment of student learning efforts. There is no central body, such as a college-wide Assessment Committee. Instead, assessment at the College is led and supported by the Associate Provost for Accreditation and Assessment (APAA) and the Project Manager for Assessment and Faculty Development Initiatives (PMA). Departmental efforts are led by the Department Associate Chairs, who convene regularly as part of their respective Associate Deans Councils (one in each school), where assessment is frequently an agenda item.

The Assessment calendar and process follow the following protocol:

1. Prior to the start of or early in the semester, the APAA and PMA work with the departments to identify program outcomes that the department feels important or in cycle to assess, and they identify the courses and the artifacts that will be used in assessment in the upcoming academic year. The College's universal learning outcomes serve as potential guides for choosing program outcomes to assess during a given year. For instance, the majority of program outcomes assessed AY17-18 relate to the ULOs of "Communication" and "Career Readiness." Additional ULOs assessed are noted on the department annual assessment reports. When creating the semesters' assessment plans, the department and APAA and PMA will also agree on logistics (who is responsible for what). Philosophically, and as a matter of practicality, the APAA and PMA typically provide the entirety of logistical support (drafting rubrics, creating exams in the LMS, aggregating data, norming panels, and drafting the annual reports). The expectation is that the associate chair leads the discussion of the dissemination of the results within the department at subsequent faculty meetings.
2. The assessment activities are carried out.
3. The PMA works with the raw data and drafts a report of all activity, and share with the associate chair and other participating faculty.
4. The draft of the report is presented at a faculty meeting where notes are taken. This is a distinctive feature of assessment at Columbia. These notes serve as a valuable documentation of the faculty responses reaction to the results, a critical feature of assessment practice at Columbia. These notes are included in the annual report submitted to the department chair and to the associate dean. These serve as rich opportunities to record faculty and staff observations and comments on the implication and meaning of the results and opportunities to articulate possible next steps. Three excellent examples are from [Cultural Studies](#), [Cinema and Television Arts,](#) and [Art and Art History/Foundations](#).
5. Programs undergoing Program Review are exempted from undertaking assessment activity. In fact, summarizing the results of assessment and their use is a part of the [Outline for Program Review Self Study.](#)

The College employs a wide range of assessment approaches and tools. Among the most utilized are faculty and/or professional panels to assess student work using rubrics crafted to reflect program and course learning outcomes. These panels are valued because of the real-world perspective they bring to the process. Examples of these include fashion professionals assessing Fashion majors' clothing designs, garment analyses, and resumes. Advertising majors have their advertising campaigns assessed by creatives from Chicago advertising firms. Graphic Design majors have their work assessed by design professionals, who also serve as adjunct faculty at Columbia. Television majors have their work in their culminating sketch comedy Practicum class assessed by local comedy professionals, including two from Second City.

Beyond professional panels, the College also utilizes item-analysis of mid-term and final exams, term papers and class projects assessed by teaching faculty using rubrics, student self-reflection and critique, departmental surveys, college surveys, and student portfolios. The Design Department recently implemented a required feature for their majors where students contribute specific artifacts

from specific major courses that demonstrate to the department (and to the student) growth in their design skills.

The Columbia Assessment Manager (CAM) is a locally developed assessment tool that was created to allow for longitudinal assessment of students. Originally created in 2008 for the Theatre Department, it has been used by Theatre faculty to assess student growth in its Acting sequence (Acting I, II, and III). Theatre employs a similar approach with student development across the Voice course sequence. The Dance Department and the Cinema and Television Visual Arts Departments have also used CAM. The tool will be phased out, beginning Fall 2018, due to the Theatre department's increasing dedication to assessing student performances with external faculty panels and to the College's shift to utilizing its new LMS, Canvas, as the primary archive for assessment rubrics.

Information yielded by direct and indirect assessment activities has led to program and course-sequencing changes, such as:

- Visual Arts Foundations Program combining previously separated Making I and Making II courses into one;
- All Business and Entrepreneurship Practicum courses introducing budget projection and pitch projects to receive departmental funding for the academic year;
- In Dance, assessment activities affirmed that the department's increase in West African training improved students' physical skills overall and gave a significant number of students in the department a greater sense of belonging and excitement about their voice in dance, and led to further broadening of the Hip-Hop offerings in the department and made Hip-Hop I a requirement for all majors.

Annual Assessment Reports

The most current Annual Assessment Reports:

Big Chicago (First-Year Experience) Assessment Report FA17

Art and Art History Assessment Report AY17-18

Business and Entrepreneurship Assessment Report AY17-18

Design Assessment Report AY17-18

Fashion Studies Assessment Report AY17-18

Music Assessment Report AY17-18

Photography Assessment Report AY17-18

Theatre Assessment Report AY17-18

American Sign Language Assessment Report AY17-18

Creative Writing Assessment Report AY17-18

English (Program in Writing and Rhetoric) Assessment Report AY17-18

English (Literature) Assessment Report AY17-18

HHSS (Cultural Studies) Assessment Report AY17-18

HHSS (History) Assessment Report AY16-17

Science and Mathematics Assessment Report AY17-18

Audio Arts and Acoustics Assessment Report AY17-18

Cinema and Television Visual Arts Assessment Report AY17-18

Communication Assessment Report AY17-18

Interactive Arts and Media Assessment Report AY17-18

Survey Instruments

The College regularly administers survey instruments as additional means to gain insight into student learning, development, and perceptions of their experience at Columbia. These are both internal (Graduating Student Survey, Alumni Survey) and external, nationally-normed instruments (National Survey of Student Engagement, Your First College Year).

National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)

The College administered NSSE every other year, beginning in 2004; the final administration was 2014, as the College believed the Your First College Year would better serve its interests.

Results from the 2014 administration of the NSSE were more or less consistent with results from previous administrations. In comparison with the results from Art and Media Institutions, Columbia First-Year students reported a greater degree of working with other students, including diverse perspectives on their work, and connecting their learning to societal problems or issues. They reported lower levels of preparing for exams with other students, asking other students to gain understanding of course material, and working with student services staff.

Senior students reported greater levels of using learning support services, attending campus activities, and encouraging contact among students of different backgrounds. These same students reported lower levels of asking other students to help them understand course material, learning something that changed their perspective on an issue or concept, and general quality of interaction with other students.

The College's Office of Institutional Effectiveness (IE) presented an analysis of NSSE results by department. First-year student responses for each item were compared to the College's mean and the mean response from the respective school. Cells where student response differences were statistically significantly higher than the College mean were colored green; those that were statistically significantly lower were colored red.

Your First College Year (YFCY)

The College has administered UCLA's Your First College Year Survey since 2015. IE produced a summary of the three-year trends (2015-2017), which also included comparisons to a comparison group of private, non-sectarian institutions. Overall, Columbia students reported higher levels of adjustment to academics and for pluralistic orientation. They reported lower levels of health and well-being and overall satisfaction with the institution.

Similar to the NSSE results, IE also produced a [report with the results displayed for each department.](#) In addition, IE produced an [Infographic](#) for display on the College's web site, comparing Columbia to its peer group.

Graduating Student Survey

The College surveys its graduating undergraduate and graduate students every spring. In 2017, it was completed by 1,070 undergraduates and 64 graduate students, a 75% response rate. IE produces a number of reports on these results. The [Infographic](#)highlights notable findings and includes a comparison to the results from the previous year. It also produces a report that analyzes student responses based on student major for both [undergraduate](#) and [graduate](#) programs and compares these to the College means. Finally, it created a [document with student comments](#) with individual names of faculty and staff redacted so it could be more widely distributed.

Many of the findings were positive and provided affirmation of the effectiveness of college units. Students reported fairly strong satisfaction with the quality of instruction, technology, and knowledgeable faculty. In addition, that 72% of graduating students reported that they would be "working at a job related to their major upon graduation" is significant at an arts and media institution.

However, students also reported relatively low levels of participation in internships (49% reported having an internship, and only 25% reported finding one through Columbia). Thus the focus on "expanding internship and practicum opportunities" for students in the Strategic Plan (p. 7) The Career Center completely overhauled the internship process in the 2016-17 AY. It created an [Employers Guide](#)for internships, moved towards a centralized model (away from the prior distributed model the College had developed), and completely revised the [internship course](#), offering 3, 1, and 0 credit options. One of the Career Center's long-term goals is to increase student internships by 10% per year. In Fall 2016, the first year of its existence, there were a total of 196 internships. In Fall 2017, there were 251, a 28% increase. In addition, as part of the Curriculum Review process mandated by the Strategic Plan, every department was strongly encouraged to ensure that a required internship or practicum was a part of the degree requirements; virtually every department/program complied.

Another area that necessitated the College's focus related to student perceptions of their entrepreneurship abilities and preparation for a career. While 73% of graduating students reported that they planned to freelance or start a business, only 64% of students reported they felt prepared to interview for a job and only 35% felt prepared to bid on a freelance project. Again, the Strategic Plan's Goal of Student Success addresses this: "all students acquire foundational business and marketing skills and technological fluency, and complete a significant entrepreneurial experience" (p. 7). The new general education program, the Columbia Core, will include a requirement in Communication, Business, and Technology.

Sources

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- Internship Course Descriptions
- NSSE14 Frequencies and Statistical Comparisons (Columbia College)
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- Program Review Schedule - Past and Future (as of June 2018).pdf
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- Student Learning Outcomes Statements Web Site
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- Use of Student Learning Evidence Web Page

4.C - Core Component 4.C

The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

1. The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence, and completion that are ambitious but attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations, and educational offerings.
2. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs.
3. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs reflect good practice. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)

Argument

Quality Initiative Project and Strategic Plan

Improving student retention and persistence has long been a priority at the College. In fact, improving the College's retention rates is the focus of its Open Pathways Quality Improvement Project, Enhancing Pathways to Completion. This QI has three primary components:

1. A centralized, "intrusive" student advising model that is actively informed by data from the Educational Advisory Board's (EAB) *Student Success Collaborative*.
2. The implementation of a holistic student financial planning model (including early completion of aid applications and financial literacy education).
3. A streamlining of major requirements, to increase the number of students receiving bachelor degrees in four years. (See discussion "Curriculum and Strategic Plan" in 3A.)

This QI project represents significant elements of the College's Strategic Plan, most notably Goal 1: Student Success: "We will design a curriculum that ... facilitates clear and timely progress to degree completion" and "provide comprehensive academic and career advising to all students."

The Financial Planning model includes active outreach to engage students in financial aid literacy. SFS has hosted multiple workshops, webinars, other campus events, focusing on increasing knowledge in financial aid. They also developed targeted strategic messages to students during key points in the academic year (such as prior to early registration). SFS partnered with IT to integrate the billing system with the SIS and also to provide real-time billing and payment information. Finally, SFS staff embarked on a proactive telephone and email campaign to reach students with high balances to provide timely counsel.

An ad hoc group of college administrators (Provost, VP Student Success, AVP for Institutional Effectiveness) convened over the course of the 2017-18 AY as the Retention Committee and produced a summary of retention initiatives. This group identified the three primary reasons for

attrition at the College: "poor academic performance, perception that a Columbia education lacks quality and value, and inability to pay." While it acknowledged that the committee would not be able to address these broad issues (issues which, in fact, are targeted by the Strategic Plan), the committee proposed initiatives that bring important and "marginal returns in improving the overall retention and graduation rates."

The three primary reasons for attrition (noted above) notwithstanding, the committee identified additional reasons for attrition (p. 2), which included uncoordinated communication to students, a lack of cross-training of staff, a fairly reactive approaches to advising, and others. Thus, the Retention Committee proposed nine initiatives with goals to address issues:

Initiative One: Engage in the Five Persistence Campaigns. These five campaigns are:

1. Registration: Increasing the number of eligible students who take full advantage of early registration;
2. First Year Advising: Goal for Advising Staff to meet with every student during their first year;
3. Support for At-Risk Students: Enhancing support and communication to academically at-risk students, especially those on Academic Warning or Probation;
4. Graduation Application and Completion: Increasing the percentage of seniors who apply to graduate by identifying and communicating to students with high numbers of credits, providing tactical course advising to hasten degree achievement;
5. Earned Credit Hour Per Year: Increasing the percentage of students who register for at least 30 credits, in order to produce a higher number of students who graduate in four years.

Descriptions of Initiatives two through nine are here.

Student Advising

As discussed more fully in 3D, the College reorganized the College Advising Center (CAC). Beginning in the 2015-16 AY, the College completely revised the advising model, shifting to a professional case-management based model. Academic staff in some departments moved to the CAC to serve as advisors, increasing the number of advisors. The CAC was also reorganized, from one director supervising 14 individual advisors to a structure with one Director, four Assistant Directors, with each of these leading a team of four academic advisors, for a total of 20 advisors.   Caseload ratios were reduced to approximately 400:1. The advising teams were also organized to align to general academic disciplines (the film/television team, the performing arts team, the visual/fine arts team, and the business/communication team) to allow for greater crossover. In addition, a new unit was created within the CAC, the Persistence Team. This unit of three focuses on working with the Student Success Collaborative and other data systems to positively impact student success.

Office of Institutional Effectiveness

Much of the work of the College's Office of Institutional Effectiveness (IE) is devoted to reporting on retention and graduation and analyzing the effects of various enrollment and retention strategies. A document prepared to encapsulate much of their recent reporting and analysis provides a comprehensive summary of many of these efforts.

Every year, IE produces a Fact Book, organized around five areas: 1) Student Profile; 2) Instructional and Non-Instructional Staff; 3) Retention and Graduation; 4) Student Financial Aid; 5) Finance.

Among the retention analysis reported on in the Fact Book is the retention and graduation rates for the

Graduate Programs and the most recent six-year graduation rates for the Undergraduate Programs. One notable feature in the undergraduate analysis is that it identifies the initial major for students and whether or not that student graduated from the College with that major.

Over the years, the overall preparedness of Columbia's incoming freshmen has improved significantly. This increase has significant implications for academics and the College has recognized the need to offer courses with greater rigor. Thus the creation of the Honors Program, the replacement of the First Year Seminar with Big Chicago, and the revision of curriculum in virtually every department due to the Strategic Plan's call for a 21st century curriculum.

Graduation Rates

Columbia has seen a very positive upward trend in its graduation rates over the past ten years. For the freshman cohort entering the College in 2003, the 4, 5, and 6-year graduation rates were 22.4%, 34.3%, and 37.4%, respectively. These figures for the 2011 cohort (the most recent to calculate 6 year graduation rate) were 33.3%, 42.1%, and 44%. In addition, the past three years has seen a dramatic increase in the four year graduation rate:

Year	4 Year Graduation Rate
2011	33.3%
2012	37.4%
2013	41.2%

Thus, the College has experienced nearly an 8 point increase in its four year graduation rates in three years, a remarkable gain.

Improvements in Advising and Degree Evaluation have contributed to increased graduation rates. The SSC system allows for more detailed analysis of student progress towards degree and more proactive communication with students (and records of these communications) to provide accurate advising. In addition, SSC allows the CAC to run reports of students in given conditions (for example, students who have completed 120 credits yet have not applied for graduation) and this creates opportunities for targeted advising.

Taken together, improvements in student advising and degree audit systems have contributed to a sharp increase in the number of fourth-year students who get across the finish line to graduation in four, five, or six years. These efforts have been supported by targeted financial aid initiatives such as the Degree Completion Assistance Grant and the Student Success Award. The Degree Completion Assistance Grant, first offered in the 2016-17 academic year, provides need-based supplementary tuition grants to juniors and seniors who are approaching graduation and who can demonstrate that assistance from the grant will help them in taking the final steps to degree completion. Up to $3,000 per semester can be awarded. The Student Success Award is used as a tool to get students over a one-time financial problem that prevents enrollment. Each semester, students who did not early register for classes and who owe a balance are contacted by SFS, inviting them to learn about the program. Students receiving these funds sign an agreement that they will complete the upcoming term if they receive the award. Up to $2,000 can be awarded to underclassmen, and up to $3,000 can be awarded to seniors. Both of these programs represent strategic reallocation of college aid dollars, with $236,734 awarded in the 2016-17 AY and $268,435 awarded in the 2017-18 AY. Every one of the Student Success Award recipients has been retained after receipt of the award. Out of the 41 students who received the Degree Completion grant in 2016-17, 31 (76%) had graduated, and six remained

enrolled and on the paths to their degrees.

Fall-to-Fall Retention has also been increasing at a fairly steady pace. Ten years ago (2008), the Fall-to-Fall retention rate for first year students was 63.3%. For the FA13 to FA15 entering classes, it reached 71.0%, 69.1%, and 70.4%, respectively. (The drop-off to 65.9% for the FA16 entering class stemmed primarily from a reduction in financial aid in the FY17 operating budget, the burden of which fell on that entering cohort; the higher aid levels were restored for the FA17 entering class and fall-to-spring retention figures suggest that fall-to-fall retention for that cohort should rebound to FA13-FA15 levels.) Looking at these rates on a 3-year moving average, which smooths out the effects of year-to-year variability, the positive trends are apparent: the 2008 rate is 64.3%; the 2016 rate is 68.6, more than four points higher.

The Fall-to-Fall retention for Transfer students is has increased, as well. In 2008, it was 76.6%; in 2016 it was 81.8%, more than five points higher.

Using data from the National Student Loan Clearinghouse, the College has been able to track incoming first year students and their ultimate degree outcomes. The report created in 2017 examined the paths for the two cohorts entering in 2009 and 2010. This report demonstrates a relatively small percent of students who start as freshmen (13%) leave Columbia and earn their degrees elsewhere.

2013 Attrition Study

In 2013, the offices of the Dean of Liberal Arts and Sciences and Institutional Effectiveness collaborated on a qualitative study of first year students who had left the College (2009-2011). A total of 65 students were interviewed. (Students who had left the College with GPAs less than 2.00 were excluded from this pool, and it should be noted that roughly one-half of all students who do not return in the following fall after their first year leave the College due to poor academic performance.). Interviewees were asked why they came to Columbia, what they liked and didn't like about the College, and ultimately their reasons for leaving. In terms of reasons for leaving Columbia, cost was the most frequently cited reason (57%), followed by perceived value of academic program (43%), and personal experiences (28%). Not surprisingly, the more affluent, better prepared students were less likely to cite cost as a reason for leaving and more likely to cite academics as a reason they did not return.

Retention Alert Systems: Academic Progress Reporting/Mandatory Attendance Reporting/EASE

The College has implemented three systems to identify at-risk students: Academic Progress Reporting (APR), Mandatory Attendance Reporting (MAR), and "Every Advantage for a Successful Education" (EASE).

In an effort to confirm enrollment and increase student success, the College conducts a Mandatory Attendance Reporting (MAR) process each semester. All faculty teaching undergraduate students are required to report if any students failed to attend at least once during the add/drop period for the course. Each non-attending student is administratively withdrawn from the class within 72 hours of the report and receives an NS (no-show) grade and an email notification from the Registrar. SFS regularly pulls reports of NS grades in support of their processing. Students can petition to be reinstated into a course with instructor permission. In Fall 17, 147 students received NS grades and complete schedules for 25 students were voided via this process. The figures for Spring 18 were 131 and 7, respectively.

In the middle 2000s, the College implemented Academic Progress Reporting (APR). During the 5th week of the semester, all faculty are required to access their class lists and label all students according to one of three categories: "Exceeds basic expectations," "Meets basic expectations," or "Does not meet basic expectations." If a student is identified in the final category, that student receives an email notification from the College. During the 2017-18 AY, NEED DATA FROM CAC.

Finally, the College also implemented the EASE system to identify potential student behavior issues. These notices can be submitted by faculty or staff and, in general, are used to alert the College about non-academic behaviors.

Sources

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