

STANDARD I: Mission and Goals

Group Final Report. December 2025

Date: December 2025

Standard I: Mission and Goals

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Standard Brief Overview:

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

Line of Inquiry 1:

How are the Mission and Goals Developed, Assessed, Approved, and Publicized?

SFC's mission is developed through inclusive, participatory, and iterative processes. During major planning cycles (e.g., the SFC-170 Strategic Plan (2017–2022) and the ongoing 2025 Middle States Self-Study), faculty, staff, students, alumni, and trustees engage in dialogue, reflection, and consultation. Common elements of the process include Campus forums and open discussions, Department conversations, Surveys and feedback sessions, Review and refinement by the Office of the President and Cabinet, Final approval by the Board of Trustees, as required by the college bylaws. While this practice is consistent and effective, the college does not yet have a formal written procedure specifying the stages, timelines, and roles for mission revision. The Working Group recommends the creation of a Board-approved Mission Review Policy to ensure continuity and transparency in future cycles. Role of Students: As a student-centered institution, SFC ensures that students contribute to mission discourse through participation in accreditation working groups, involvement in shared governance committees, and campus-wide surveys capturing perspectives on belonging, well-being, and mission fulfillment. Publicizing the Mission: Once approved, the Mission is widely disseminated through the college catalog, student handbook (*The Cord*), college website ("History & Mission"), faculty syllabi, new student orientation, onboarding for faculty and staff, digital signage, posters, campus messaging, and presidential communications and newsletters. These distribution channels ensure that the mission is visible, accessible, and deeply embedded in the college community's culture.

Line of Inquiry 2:**To what extent do the mission and goals align with SFC's Strategic Plan?**

A review of the mission, goals, and the SFC-170 Strategic Plan (SP) shows a strong and intentional alignment. The college's mission emphasizes academic excellence, holistic development, inclusion, global citizenship, and Franciscan values. These themes are reflected throughout the SP's four pillars: (a) academic excellence, (b) student experience and development, (c) community and mission, and (d) sustainability.

(a) Academic Excellence: The SP's commitment to innovative pedagogy, integrated technological resources, strengthened assessment, and interdisciplinary learning aligns directly with the mission's emphasis on high-quality education and intellectual formation.

(b) Student Experience and Development: The mission's focus on nurturing the whole person--mind, body, and spirit--is enacted through strategies that prioritize wellness, belonging, mentoring, advising, and career preparation. These efforts demonstrate that SFC's approach to student success extends beyond academics to personal, ethical, and social growth.

(c) Community and Mission: The SP reinforces the Franciscan ethos through initiatives related to service, global engagement, ethical leadership, and diversity. Strategies focused on cultivating a sense of belonging, expanding cross-cultural experiences, and strengthening community partnerships mirror the mission's core commitments.

(d) Sustainability: The college's dedication to sustainability, responsible stewardship, and future-focused operations reflects Franciscan values of care for creation and prudent decision-making. Taken together, the SP serves as the operational pathway through which the mission is enacted institution-wide. It does not revise or reinterpret the mission; rather, it brings it to life through concrete initiatives and measurable outcomes.

Line of Inquiry 3:**How are the mission/goals communicated broadly and periodically evaluated?**

SFC employs a broad and continuous approach. As such, it communicates its mission through multiple platforms: Digital and Print Communication - Website pages detailing the Mission, Strategic Plan, and institutional history, Fast Facts annual report, Course Catalog, Student handbook, Presidential messages, newsletters, and email communications. Campus Engagement and Visual Communication: Digital signage, Hallway posters and banners, Mission-focused displays in common areas. Academic Integration- Required inclusion on course syllabi, Emphasis during new faculty orientations, Departmental mission statements, and assessment reports. Events That Embody the Mission; Annual traditions--such as Franciscan Month, St. Clare & St. Francis Week, the Interfaith Appreciation Breakfast, and Franciscan Spirit Awards--make the mission a vibrant and lived part of campus culture.

Periodic Evaluation of Mission Effectiveness - SFC systematically evaluates its mission through institutional assessment mechanisms coordinated by the Office of Institutional Research, Effectiveness, and Accreditation, including annual administrative mission-alignment surveys; academic program assessment reports; external program reviews; campus climate surveys (2017, 2019, 2021, 2025); strategic plan progress reviews; and focus groups, student interviews, and questionnaires. These evaluations inform continuous improvement, guide resource allocation, and ensure fidelity to the mission.

Line of Inquiry 4:

How do we ensure that SFC's mission/goals remain appropriate?

SFC ensures that its mission remains relevant through continuous reflection, assessment, and policy alignment. Institutional Practices Rooted in Mission; Recent institutional policies, such as the Religious Organization Policy (2025), ensure that external engagement aligns with Franciscan principles of hospitality, ethical leadership, and respect for religious diversity. Campus-wide programs such as Franciscan Month, the Assisi/Rome Pilgrimage, and the service requirements of the Franciscan Service Program all strengthen community identity and provide regular opportunities for mission-focused reflection. Academic and Programmatic Adaptation – The College continuously evaluates its academic portfolio to ensure that new programs support both workforce needs, mission, and goals. Recent approvals across cybersecurity, computer science, health science, and education reflect the college's commitment to expanding opportunities for diverse, first-generation, and underrepresented students. The development of the Ph.D. in Information Technology, focused on AI governance, data ethics, and digital equity, illustrates SFC's efforts to prepare scholar-practitioners who can positively impact society through ethically informed leadership. Continuous Assessment Cycles – WGGP documentation shows sustained efforts to gather feedback, analyze trends, and integrate findings from: campus climate surveys, self-study discussions, trustee and cabinet deliberations, and community engagement results. These cyclical mechanisms ensure the mission is regularly revisited and applied to institutional planning.

Line of Inquiry 5:

How do the mission/goals guide decision-making for planning, resource allocation, program and curricular development, faculty and staff professional development, and student services and community outreach?

The mission and goals guide institutional decisions across academic, administrative, and student-facing divisions. Their influence is evident in planning frameworks, resource allocation models, program creation, faculty development, and student services. Planning and Resource Allocation. The Mission is explicitly embedded in the SP's key strategies, including: promoting an ethical culture of belonging, leadership, globalization, and environmental sustainability; supporting faculty in teaching, mentoring, advising, and innovating pedagogically through technology; prioritizing students' mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical well-being; fostering belonging for students of all backgrounds, including students with disabilities through an ADA-compliant

campus; and empowering students to contribute meaningfully to their communities through lifelong service.

Institutional resources are allocated toward initiatives aligned with these commitments, such as: technology equity programs (e.g., iPad Tech Grant), expansion of learning resources and research capacity (e.g., STEM Resource Center), experiential learning and global education opportunities, mission-centered student programming and service initiatives. Curricular and Program Development: Academic programs demonstrate mission alignment through departmental mission statements; program learning outcomes tied to ethical leadership and social responsibility; Honors Program integration of justice, fairness, and service; and curriculum committee review processes requiring alignment with institutional mission.

Recent program expansions--e.g., the MS in Cybersecurity, MS in Computer Science, AS in Chemical Engineering, AS in Health Science, and the doctoral-level Ph.D. in Information Technology--reflect intentional alignment between mission commitments (e.g., opportunity, equity, community impact) and workforce needs. Faculty and Staff Professional Development. Professional development offerings, including those from the Education Innovation Factory, emphasize inclusive pedagogy, mentorship, and student-centered teaching, reinforcing mission values. Student Services and Community Outreach: Student support units embody the mission through holistic advising, academic mentorship, spiritual and emotional support, career coaching and professional preparation, service-learning opportunities through the Franciscan Service Program, and civic-engagement projects such as voter-registration initiatives. Through these efforts, the college ensures that mission principles shape both academic and co-curricular experiences.

Method, Results, Analysis, and Interpretation of Evidence:

Method: The Working Group for Guiding Principles (WGGP) conducted a comprehensive qualitative review of institutional evidence related to the College's mission and goals. This review included analysis of foundational documents such as the institutional mission and goals statements, the SFC-170 Strategic Plan, College bylaws, and relevant institutional policies. The group also examined narrative analyses, assessment reports, strategic planning documents, program approval materials, and evidence tables prepared for Standard I. In addition, the WGGP reviewed documentation related to mission communication and evaluation, including catalogs, handbooks, websites, campus programming materials, climate surveys, accreditation self-study materials, and records from governance and planning bodies. This multi-source approach ensured that evidence reflected both stated intentions and operational practices across the institution.

Results: The evidence demonstrates strong and intentional alignment between the College's mission, institutional goals, and the SFC-170 Strategic Plan. Mission themes, academic excellence, holistic student development, Franciscan values, inclusion, global engagement, and sustainability, are consistently reflected across the Strategic Plan's pillars and institutional initiatives. The mission is developed and reaffirmed through inclusive, participatory processes involving faculty, staff, students, administrators, and trustees, with final approval vested in the Board of Trustees. The mission is widely publicized through academic, administrative, and student-facing channels and is integrated into planning, curriculum development, faculty development, student services,

and community engagement. Evidence also shows that the mission is periodically evaluated through assessment cycles, surveys, and strategic plan reviews.

Analysis: Analysis of the evidence indicates that the mission and goals function as a central organizing framework for institutional decision-making. Strategic planning, resource allocation, program development, and student services consistently reflect mission priorities, demonstrating coherence between purpose and practice. Communication of the mission is broad, consistent, and embedded in both formal documentation and lived campus traditions. Assessment practices, such as climate surveys, program reviews, and strategic plan evaluations, provide meaningful data on mission effectiveness. However, while mission development practices are well established, the absence of a formal, written Mission Review Policy presents an opportunity to strengthen clarity, consistency, and long-term continuity in future mission review cycles.

Interpretation of Evidence: Taken together, the evidence supports the conclusion that the College meets Standard I expectations. The mission and goals are clearly defined, widely communicated, actively used to guide institutional priorities, and regularly evaluated for effectiveness and relevance. The mission is not merely aspirational but operationalized across academic programs, student services, community engagement, and institutional planning. Continuous assessment and reflection ensure that the mission remains appropriate and responsive to changing student needs and societal demands. Addressing identified opportunities for improvement, particularly formalizing mission review procedures and enhancing structured student feedback, will further strengthen mission stewardship and institutional effectiveness.

Analysis of Inquiry:

The inquiry shows that the College's mission and goals are clearly defined and strongly aligned with the SFC-170 Strategic Plan, with mission themes consistently reflected in planning priorities and institutional initiatives. Evidence also indicates that the mission is developed and sustained through inclusive participation and is widely communicated through academic, administrative, and campus-wide channels. Ongoing assessment activities, such as strategic plan reviews, program assessment, and climate surveys, support periodic evaluation of mission effectiveness and continued relevance. An opportunity for improvement is to formalize the mission review process through a written policy to strengthen consistency and transparency over time.

Strengths:

The College demonstrates strong alignment between its mission, goals, and the SFC-170 Strategic Plan, with clear mission themes reflected across the plan's pillars and initiatives. The mission is developed and reaffirmed through inclusive, participatory processes that engage faculty, staff, students, administrators, and trustees, supporting shared ownership and institutional coherence. The mission is also widely and consistently communicated through multiple platforms—catalogs, handbooks, websites, orientations, syllabi, campus messaging, and mission-centered events—making it visible and embedded in campus culture. Finally, the College uses ongoing assessment practices (e.g., climate surveys, strategic plan progress reviews, and program assessment) to evaluate mission effectiveness and ensure it remains relevant over time.

Areas of improvement:

The Working Group recommends establishing a formal Mission Review Policy, strengthening structured student-feedback mechanisms via mixed-data questionnaire, deepening mission-centered community partnerships, and aligning future initiatives with the SP's long-term priorities.

Recommendations:

To further strengthen mission stewardship and effectiveness, the College should develop and adopt a formal, Board-approved Mission Review Policy that clearly outlines roles, timelines, and procedures for periodic mission review and reaffirmation. The College should also enhance structured student feedback related specifically to mission understanding and impact by incorporating targeted questions into existing surveys and assessment tools. In addition, deepening mission-centered community partnerships and more explicitly linking future initiatives to long-term strategic plan priorities would further reinforce the mission's role in guiding institutional planning, decision-making, and continuous improvement.

STANDARD II: Ethics and Integrity

Group Final Report

Date: December 12, 2025

Standard II: Ethics and Integrity

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Standard Brief Overview:

Ethics and integrity are foundational to the institution's mission, governance, academic practices, and relationships with internal and external stakeholders. The institution is committed to fostering a culture of honesty, fairness, transparency, and accountability that supports academic freedom, intellectual inquiry, and respect for diverse perspectives. Policies and procedures governing academic integrity, research conduct, institutional operations, and decision-making are clearly articulated, consistently applied, and communicated to the College community. Through ethical leadership, responsible governance, and compliance with applicable laws and accreditation expectations, the institution ensures that its actions and communications reflect integrity and promote trust, credibility, and institutional effectiveness.

Line of Inquiry 1:

How does the institution demonstrate a commitment to academic freedom, intellectual freedom, freedom of expression, and respect for diversity of perspectives?

The institution demonstrates a strong commitment to academic freedom, intellectual freedom, freedom of expression, and respect for diverse perspectives through clearly articulated policies, inclusive governance practices, and a campus culture that encourages open inquiry and dialogue. These commitments are embedded in institutional policies such as the Faculty Handbook, student codes of conduct, and governance documents, which affirm the rights of faculty and students to explore, discuss, and present ideas without undue restriction while upholding professional and

ethical standards. Academic programs and co-curricular activities intentionally promote critical thinking, respectful debate, and engagement with multiple viewpoints, and the institution supports this environment through curricular design, faculty development, campus events, and shared governance structures. Together, these practices foster a learning community grounded in mutual respect, intellectual rigor, and appreciation for diverse perspectives across all educational offerings and modalities.

Line of Inquiry 2:

How does the institution ensure ethical and transparent governance, leadership, and administrative practices?

The institution ensures ethical and transparent governance, leadership, and administrative practices through clearly defined policies, shared governance structures, and regular communication across all levels of the organization. Roles and responsibilities of the governing board, senior leadership, and academic and administrative units are formally articulated in bylaws, policy manuals, and governance documents, ensuring accountability and appropriate oversight. Decision-making processes are documented through published agendas, minutes, and reports, and leaders regularly communicate institutional priorities and outcomes through campus forums and official communications. Ongoing evaluation of governance and leadership effectiveness, through board reviews, administrative assessments, and accreditation processes, further reinforces ethical conduct, transparency, and a commitment to continuous improvement.

Line of Inquiry 3:

How does institution promote honesty, truthfulness, and fairness in institutional policies, procedures, and communications?

The institution promotes honesty, truthfulness, and fairness through clearly articulated policies, consistent procedures, and transparent communication practices that guide all aspects of institutional operations. Institutional policies, outlined in official publications such as the Faculty Handbook, Student Handbook, and administrative policy manuals, establish expectations for ethical conduct, academic integrity, equitable treatment, and due process for students, faculty, and staff. Procedures for admissions, grading, evaluation, grievances, and appeals are clearly defined and applied consistently, ensuring fairness and accountability. In addition, the institution communicates decisions, policies, and expectations through official channels, maintains accurate

and up-to-date public information, and encourages open dialogue and feedback, reinforcing a culture of integrity and trust across the campus community.

Line of Inquiry 4:

How does the institution ensure that policies related to academic integrity, research integrity, and responsible conduct are clearly defined, communicated, and enforced?

The institution ensures that policies related to academic integrity, research integrity, and responsible conduct are clearly defined, communicated, and enforced through comprehensive policy documentation, consistent education, and established enforcement procedures. Expectations for ethical behavior are formally articulated in the Faculty Handbook, Student Handbook, research policies, and codes of conduct, which outline definitions of misconduct, reporting procedures, and consequences. These policies are communicated through orientations, course syllabi, institutional websites, and training programs for students, faculty, and staff. Enforcement is supported by clear reporting and review processes, due process protections, and oversight by designated academic and administrative offices, ensuring that standards are applied consistently and fairly while reinforcing a culture of accountability and ethical responsibility.

Line of Inquiry 5:

How does the institution ensure compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and accreditation expectations?

The institution ensures compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and accreditation expectations through clearly defined policies, oversight structures, and ongoing monitoring processes. Compliance responsibilities are assigned to designated offices and administrators who track federal, state, and local regulatory requirements, as well as accreditation standards, and ensure they are integrated into institutional policies and procedures. Regular reviews, audits, and training help maintain awareness and adherence across the campus, while governance and

assessment processes, such as board oversight, internal reporting, and accreditation self-studies, provide systematic evaluation of compliance. Through documentation, transparent communication, and continuous improvement efforts, the institution demonstrates accountability and sustained compliance with legal, regulatory, and accreditation requirements.

Method, Results, Analysis, and Interpretation of Evidence:

Method: The institution reviewed policies, procedures, and documentation related to governance, academic affairs, administration, compliance, and accreditation. Evidence included institutional policy manuals, handbooks, governance records, accreditation materials, compliance reports, training documentation, and communications from administrative and academic leadership. The review also considered the roles of designated compliance officers, governance bodies, and assessment units responsible for monitoring adherence to legal, regulatory, and accreditation requirements.

Results: The evidence shows that the institution has clearly defined structures and policies to support compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and accreditation expectations. Responsibilities for compliance are formally assigned, policies are regularly reviewed and updated, and required information is communicated through official publications, training sessions, and institutional reporting processes. Accreditation requirements are addressed through systematic self-study processes and ongoing assessment activities.

Analysis: Analysis of the evidence indicates that compliance efforts are embedded within institutional governance and operational practices rather than treated as isolated activities. Regular monitoring, documentation, and oversight contribute to consistency and accountability. While compliance mechanisms are effective, opportunities exist to further strengthen coordination across units and improve centralized tracking of compliance-related activities and outcomes.

Interpretation of Evidence: Overall, the evidence demonstrates that the institution effectively ensures compliance with legal, regulatory, and accreditation expectations through structured oversight, clear policies, and continuous review. These practices support institutional integrity, accountability, and transparency, and they provide a strong foundation for ongoing compliance and continuous improvement.

Analysis of the Inquiry:

The inquiry demonstrates that the institution has a comprehensive and well-integrated approach to ethics and integrity that is embedded across governance, academic practices, and administrative operations. Evidence from institutional policies, governance structures, and campus practices confirms a strong commitment to academic freedom, intellectual inquiry, freedom of expression, and respect for diverse perspectives. These values are clearly articulated in faculty and student policies and are reinforced through inclusive governance, curricular design, co-curricular programming, and open forums that encourage respectful dialogue. Ethical leadership and transparent decision-making are supported by clearly defined roles, documented processes, and regular communication from institutional leaders, fostering trust and accountability across the campus community.

Analysis further indicates that standards of honesty, fairness, and responsible conduct are consistently promoted through well-defined policies, equitable procedures, and systematic communication. The institution maintains clear expectations and enforcement mechanisms for academic integrity, research conduct, and ethical behavior, supported by education, due process, and oversight. Compliance with legal, regulatory, and accreditation requirements is integrated into ongoing institutional operations through assigned responsibilities, regular monitoring, and continuous review. While these practices are effective and aligned with Standard II expectations, the inquiry identifies opportunities to enhance coordination and centralized tracking of compliance-related activities, which would further strengthen institutional effectiveness and sustainability.

Strengths:

The institution demonstrates strong compliance practices supported by clearly defined policies, assigned oversight responsibilities, and active governance involvement. Compliance with legal, regulatory, and accreditation requirements is integrated into institutional operations through regular reviews, training, and documentation. Accreditation expectations are addressed through systematic self-study and assessment processes, reflecting a culture of accountability and continuous improvement. Clear communication and established reporting structures further strengthen transparency and institutional integrity.

Areas of improvement:

While the institution has effective compliance structures in place, opportunities exist to strengthen coordination and documentation across units. Centralizing compliance-related records and tracking processes would improve efficiency and ensure consistent access to evidence.

Additionally, expanding regular training and communication on compliance responsibilities for faculty and staff could enhance awareness and consistency, particularly as regulations and accreditation expectations evolve.

Recommendations:

The institution should develop a more centralized compliance tracking and documentation system to improve coordination, accessibility, and consistency of evidence across units. Regular, structured compliance training for faculty, staff, and administrators should be expanded to reinforce roles and responsibilities and ensure awareness of changing regulations and accreditation expectations. In addition, establishing periodic cross-unit compliance reviews would strengthen communication, promote shared accountability, and support continuous improvement.

STANDARD III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience Group Final Report

Date: 12/12/2025

Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience

Co-Chair: Dr. Isa Camyar (acting chair on behalf of Dr. Halyna Lemekh who is on sabbatical in Fall 2025)

Co-Chair: Ms. Kennitha Allahar

Committee Members: Dr. Isa Camyar, Dr. Halyna Lemekh, Dr. Michelle Steven, Ms. Jennifer Graham, Ms. Kennitha Allahar, Ms. Vanessa Rivera

Standard Brief Overview:

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

Line of Inquiry 1:

What practices do we currently implement to ensure that faculty members are qualified and provided with professional development experiences to design, maintain, and assess high quality learning environment?

The College ensures faculty are appropriately qualified and supported through a coordinated set of policies and professional development structures aligned with Middle States Standard III. Faculty qualifications and instructional expectations are clearly established in the Faculty Handbook, which outlines credential requirements by level (e.g., appropriate graduate credentials for undergraduate teaching and terminal degrees or equivalent distinction for graduate instruction), as well as expectations for course design, syllabus standards, assessment participation, accessibility, and ethical conduct. These guidelines support consistent hiring and evaluation practices and reinforce faculty responsibility for aligning course objectives with program learning outcomes and institutional proficiency goals.

To sustain high-quality learning environments over time, the College provides robust professional development and instructional support through the Education Innovation Factory (EIF), the Office

of Online Faculty Certification, and the Information and Instructional Technology Committee (IITC). EIF offers workshops, consultations, and faculty learning communities focused on evidence-based pedagogy, inclusive teaching, assessment literacy, and technology-enhanced instruction. For online and hybrid delivery, the Office of Online Faculty Certification requires structured training in course design, engagement strategies, accessibility, and outcomes-based assessment using Canvas, with ongoing updates to keep faculty current. IITC supports this ecosystem by guiding instructional technology priorities and ensuring equitable access to the digital tools and classroom resources needed for effective teaching and learning across modalities.

Line of Inquiry 2:

What evidence demonstrates that all academic programs are designed for coherence and synthesis of learning with clearly defined Program Learning Outcomes, and what is the process for their periodic review and assessment?

Inquiry Line 2 examines how the College ensures academic programs are coherent and designed for synthesis of learning through clearly defined Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs), and how those outcomes are periodically reviewed and assessed in alignment with Middle States Standard III. Evidence shows a coordinated governance and quality-assurance framework involving the Curriculum Committee, General Education Council, Director of Assessment, Registrar, Education Innovation Factory (EIF), and Faculty Handbook, all of which reinforce faculty-driven curriculum design, outcome alignment, and consistent academic standards across programs and modalities. Overall, the evidence demonstrates that programs are built around explicit learning outcomes that are mapped from course-level outcomes to PLOs and aligned to institutional and general education goals through structured proposal templates, rubrics, and multi-step review processes (including EIF support and final Curriculum Committee approval). Periodic review and assessment occur through the College's Assurance of Learning cycle, in which programs gather direct and indirect evidence of student learning, submit regular assessment reports, and document "closing-the-loop" improvements based on results. The Registrar operationalizes approved curricula through the CIM workflow and maintains accurate catalogs and degree-audit systems, while EIF and Faculty Handbook expectations support faculty capacity to design, assess, and refine coherent programs—ensuring continuous improvement and transparency in how learning outcomes are achieved and evaluated.

Line of Inquiry 3:

To what extent are academic programs and degree requirements clearly and accurately described in official publications using language that enables students to understand their

options, register for appropriate courses, track their progress, and anticipate their time to completion?

This line of inquiry examined how clearly and accurately the College communicates academic programs and degree requirements through official publications and student-facing systems so students can understand options, register correctly, track progress, and plan time to completion. Evidence highlights the central role of the Registrar's Office, working in coordination with faculty governance bodies (e.g., Curriculum Committee and General Education Council), to ensure that published information reflects current, approved curricula and is presented in accessible language and formats that support student decision-making.

Overall, the evidence indicates a strong, student-centered communication system. The Registrar maintains the academic catalog as the official source of program requirements through an annual review and verification cycle, supported by workflow tools that reduce errors and preserve catalog-year requirements for accurate advising. In addition, integrated online registration and degree-audit tools provide real-time, individualized progress tracking—showing completed and remaining requirements, supporting “what-if” scenarios, and helping students anticipate time to completion. Registrar-led training for departments and advisors further promotes consistent interpretation and use of these resources, strengthening clarity, transparency, and timely degree completion in alignment with Standard III.

Line of Inquiry 4:

What learning opportunities, resources, and course scheduling systems does the institution provide to support students' academic progress and ensure the timely completion of their programs of study?

Inquiry Line 4 examines how the College supports academic progress and timely completion through coordinated learning opportunities, student resources, and course-scheduling systems consistent with Middle States Standard III. Evidence from the Registrar, the Education Innovation Factory (EIF), the Student Handbook, and the Undergraduate Support Hub shows an integrated approach that combines accurate scheduling and registration processes with tutoring, advising referrals, and faculty-development efforts to ensure students can access needed courses and supports in a coherent, equitable way.

Results indicate that the Registrar's Office anchors timely completion by coordinating course schedules with departments, using enrollment and degree-audit trends to plan rotations, reduce conflicts, and maintain transparent online registration and progress tracking. EIF strengthens academic progress by supporting faculty with inclusive, high-impact teaching practices and experiential learning design that improve engagement and persistence. The Student Handbook clearly communicates academic policies, expectations, and available services, while the

Undergraduate Support Hub provides centralized, proactive support (e.g., tutoring, coaching, early alerts, and flexible in-person/online help), helping remove barriers that could delay student progress toward graduation.

Line of Inquiry 5:

What evidence is there that SFC's required core general education outcomes are designed to be expansive in scope and meet the College's general proficiency outcomes?

This line of inquiry examines whether SFC's required core General Education curriculum is intentionally designed to provide expansive, integrative learning and to meet the College's general proficiency outcomes, consistent with Middle States Standard III. The review draws on evidence and oversight roles from the General Education Director and Council, the Curriculum Committee, the Director of Assessment, the Registrar, and the Education Innovation Factory to determine how the core curriculum is structured, approved, supported, and assessed for rigor, coherence, and proficiency-based learning. Evidence shows that SFC's General Education Program is broad in scope and explicitly mapped to institutional proficiencies through a structured curriculum (48–49 credits) that combines First Year Foundations with Bodies of Knowledge across multiple disciplines. The General Education Council defines core proficiency outcomes (e.g., communication, critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, ethical reasoning, and global/intercultural awareness) and requires Gen Ed courses to align with these outcomes through policy documents, rubrics, and proposal templates. Course approval and review processes—supported by the Education Innovation Factory and finalized through the Curriculum Committee—ensure coherence and rigor, while systematic assessment and faculty development support continuous improvement. The Registrar further reinforces transparency and alignment by ensuring accurate catalog and degree-audit mapping of Gen Ed requirements to outcome areas, enabling students to track progress and ensuring the curriculum remains consistent across institutional systems.

Method, Results, Analysis, and Interpretation of Evidence:

The Working Group for Standard III adopted a systematic and evidence-based approach to evaluate the extent to which the institution provides students with rigorous, coherent, and high-quality learning experiences across all academic programs, certificates, and instructional modalities. To achieve this, the group designed a data collection process grounded in the following principles: representation of all relevant academic and support units involved in curriculum development, teaching innovation, and student learning assessment; and alignment of collected evidence with the core criteria of Standard III, including curricular rigor, coherence, learning outcomes assessment, faculty qualifications, and institutional support for effective pedagogy. The Working Group started

consultation with key stakeholders and data collection in Fall 2024. It identified at least ten institutional sources of evidence, each providing distinctive forms of documentation, data, or policy materials that collectively illustrate the design and delivery of the student learning experience at the college. The Curriculum Committee provided valuable evidence on program and course development, approval, and revision processes. The group reviewed committee minutes, policy guidelines, and sample approved proposals. These documents demonstrated how academic rigor, learning outcomes alignment, and coherence within programs are ensured through systematic faculty governance review. Additionally, the committee's procedures were examined to confirm that curricular quality is maintained across all degree programs. The General Education (Gen Ed) Council contributed documentation on the design, goals, and assessment of the General Education Program. The group analyzed Gen Ed policy statements, course approval rubrics, and sample course proposals to evaluate how the program contributes to institution-wide learning outcomes and coherence across disciplines. These materials also served as evidence of curricular integration and alignment between Gen Ed learning goals and program-specific outcomes, illustrating the institution's commitment to providing a rigorous and broad-based learning experience consistent with higher education expectations. The Education Innovation Factory provided data on faculty development programs, workshops, and resources supporting instructional quality and pedagogical innovation. The group reviewed annual activity reports, participation data, and program evaluations to assess institutional support for effective teaching and learning. This evidence demonstrated the college's efforts to promote innovative, evidence-based instructional practices, to integrate technology effectively, and to sustain academic rigor across delivery modalities. The Director of Assessment supplied institutional assessment procedures, plans, reports, and summaries. The Working Group examined how learning outcomes are defined, measured, and used to inform curricular improvement. The evidence reflected systematic processes for evaluating student achievement of learning goals at both the course and program levels. These reports also highlighted the use of multiple assessment measures and faculty engagement in continuous improvement of the student learning experience. The Faculty Handbook served as a key reference for institutional policies governing faculty qualifications, responsibilities, instructional expectations, and academic freedom. The group reviewed sections related to course design, syllabus standards, academic rigor, and evaluation of teaching effectiveness. The Handbook provided evidence of clear institutional expectations for maintaining academic standards and ensuring that all faculty, regardless of modality or appointment type, deliver coherent and rigorous learning experiences. The Registrar's Office contributed evidence related to academic integrity, course scheduling, and consistency of program delivery across modalities. Data reviewed included academic catalogs, registration policies, and degree audit systems. These materials confirm that the institution's administrative processes reinforce academic coherence and ensure that student learning outcomes are achieved consistently, regardless of instructional format or calendar. The Student Handbook provided insight into how the institution communicates academic expectations, learning responsibilities, and rights to students. The group reviewed sections pertaining to academic policies, integrity standards, and student learning responsibilities

to verify that expectations for rigor and engagement are transparent and consistent. The Handbook also offered evidence of institutional mechanisms—such as advising, academic support, and grievance procedures—that uphold the quality and integrity of the learning experience. The Director of Online Faculty Certification provided documentation on the institution’s standards and processes for preparing faculty to teach in online and hybrid environments. Evidence included certification requirements, training curricula, and faculty participation records. These materials demonstrated that faculty teaching in online formats receive comprehensive preparation in instructional design, accessibility, assessment, and engagement strategies, ensuring equivalence of learning outcomes across modalities. The Information and Instructional Technology Committee supplied reports on digital infrastructure, classroom technology, and support services available to faculty and students. The Working Group examined documentation regarding the integration of learning management systems, instructional technology standards, and ongoing technological enhancements that facilitate effective teaching and learning. This evidence confirmed that technology resources are aligned with pedagogical goals and support consistent, high-quality instruction across modalities. The Undergraduate Support Hub provided data on academic advising, tutoring, and student success initiatives. Reports and usage data were reviewed to determine how support services contribute to learning coherence, persistence, and achievement. The Hub’s evidence

demonstrated that the institution’s academic support infrastructure complements the curricular framework and ensures equitable learning experiences across diverse student populations and delivery modes.

Analysis of Inquiry

The College demonstrates a deep and sustained commitment to academic excellence, coherence, and continuous improvement in all facets of the student learning experience.

Evidence collected through this self-study under Standard III highlights a comprehensive system of governance, assessment, and support that collectively ensures that learning experiences are rigorous, coherent, and consistent with the expectations of higher education. Across all programs and modalities, the institution exhibits a strong culture of collaboration among faculty, administrators, and staff dedicated to student success and institutional integrity.

Strength:

Faculty Excellence and Professional Development: One of the College’s greatest strengths lies in its highly qualified, engaged, and innovative faculty. The Faculty Handbook articulates clear standards for academic and professional qualifications, ensuring that all instructors possess the credentials and disciplinary expertise necessary to sustain academic rigor. This foundation is

continuously reinforced by robust professional-development opportunities offered through the Education Innovation Factory (EIF). Faculty participate in workshops, teaching circles, and certification programs that promote excellence in pedagogy, inclusivity, and assessment literacy. The College's structured approach to online teaching certification and technology integration—supported by the Director of Online Faculty Certification and the Information and Instructional Technology Committee—ensures instructional quality across all modalities.

Coherent and Evidence-Based Curriculum Design: The College maintains a well-structured governance framework for curriculum oversight, with the Curriculum Committee and General Education Council ensuring that all academic programs are intentionally designed, coherent, and aligned with institutional learning goals. Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) are clearly articulated, mapped to institutional competencies, and regularly reviewed through the Assurance of Learning (AoL) cycle led by the Director of Assessment. This culture of evidence-based decision-making ensures that program design and delivery remain dynamic, relevant, and responsive to student needs and disciplinary developments.

Strong Assessment Infrastructure and Data-Informed Improvement: A defining institutional strength is the College's well-established approach to assessment. The Director of Assessment coordinates a comprehensive framework for evaluating student learning across programs, including General Education. Assessment results are systematically analyzed, disseminated, and used to inform curricular refinements and faculty-development initiatives. Regular feedback loops among the Curriculum Committee, General Education Council, and Registrar guarantee that assessment findings translate into concrete improvements in course design, delivery, and documentation. This continuous-improvement ethos reflects a deeply embedded culture of accountability and reflection.

Robust Student Support and Advising Systems: Student success is reinforced through an integrated network of administrative and academic supports. The Registrar's Office ensures accurate communication of curricular requirements, while the Undergraduate Support Hub provides individualized tutoring, academic coaching, and early alert interventions. The Student Handbook serves as a transparent guide to policies, resources, and rights, empowering students to navigate their academic journey effectively. Additionally, scheduling flexibility and accessible course offerings—day, evening, hybrid, and online—promote equity and timely degree completion for all learners.

Institutional Integration and Collaboration: Finally, a hallmark of the College's strength is its collaborative governance model. Academic and administrative units work in concert to maintain consistency, clarity, and coherence in the student learning experience. From curriculum design to faculty development, from assessment to student support, the College's processes reflect a unified institutional commitment to quality and continuous enhancement.

In sum, the College's strengths lie in its integrated ecosystem of qualified faculty, coherent curricular design, data-informed assessment, robust student support, and a pervasive culture of

collaboration, which ensures that every learning experience meets the highest standards of academic rigor and institutional integrity envisioned by Middle States Standard III.

Areas for Improvement:

While the College demonstrates strong institutional performance and clear alignment with the expectations of Middle States Standard III, the self-study process has also identified several areas where continued attention and development will further enhance the quality and coherence of the student learning experience.

Strengthening the Use of Assessment Data: Although the College has a well-established assessment infrastructure, there remains an opportunity to deepen the systematic use of assessment findings at the program and course levels. Some departments could benefit from additional support in linking assessment results directly to curricular change, resource allocation, and pedagogical innovation. Continued investment in faculty training on data interpretation and closing-the-loop documentation would ensure consistent, evidence-based improvement across all programs.

Enhancing Communication and Integration Across Units: As the College continues to expand its offerings across modalities, it will be important to maintain robust communication between academic departments, the Registrar, and student- support offices. Streamlining information flow—particularly around scheduling, advising, and policy updates—will promote greater institutional coherence and student understanding of academic requirements.

Expanding High-Impact Learning Opportunities: Building on the Education Innovation Factory’s initiatives, the College could further integrate internships, undergraduate research, and community-engaged learning into program curricula to enhance relevance and student engagement.

Sustaining Equity and Access: Finally, the College should continue monitoring and addressing equity gaps in student achievement and access to support services. Expanding data-driven strategies to identify and support underrepresented and nontraditional students will further strengthen the institution’s commitment to inclusion and student success. Through these targeted enhancements, the College is well positioned to build on its existing strengths and sustain continuous improvement in alignment with the principles of Standard III.

Recommendations:

Based on the analysis of evidence gathered for Standard III, the Working Group recommends the following strategic actions to strengthen the College's capacity to sustain academic quality, coherence, and continuous improvement in the design and delivery of the student learning experience.

Deepen the Integration of Assessment into Decision-Making: To further enhance the use of assessment data, the College should expand training and resources that help faculty and program leaders interpret results and link findings directly to curricular and pedagogical changes. Establishing more formal mechanisms for reporting how assessment outcomes inform resource requests and faculty development would reinforce a culture of evidence-based decision-making.

Improve Communication and Coordination: Given the interconnected nature of curriculum, scheduling, and advising, the College should explore mechanisms—such as regular cross-unit meetings or shared digital dashboards—that strengthen communication among the Registrar, academic departments, and student-support units. Improved information flow will enhance consistency in policy implementation and promote a seamless student experience across modalities.

Expand Experiential and Applied Learning Opportunities: Building on the Education Innovation Factory's success in fostering innovative teaching, the College should prioritize the development of additional high-impact learning experiences, such as internships, service learning, undergraduate research, and project-based coursework. These initiatives will reinforce integrative learning and improve student engagement and post-graduation readiness.

Continue Advancing Equity and Student Access: The College should maintain a sustained focus on closing achievement and access gaps by expanding data-informed interventions and ensuring equitable access to advising, tutoring, and academic support. Collectively, these recommendations affirm the College's ongoing commitment to continuous improvement, academic excellence, and equitable student learning outcomes in alignment with Middle States Standard III.

STANDARD IV: Support of the Student Experience

Group Final Report

Date:12/12/2025

Working Group Co-Chair: Dr. Natasha Edwards

Working Group Co-Chair: Dr. Melissa James

Members: Mr. Jive Poetic (Mr. Melvin Stokes), Dr. Melissa James, Dr. Candice Birthwright-Philip, Ms. Natasha Edwards Dean of Students, Mr. Robert Oliva

Standard Brief Overview

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

Line of Inquiry 1:

What student support services and programs does SFC offer? How are the programs assessed, and results reported?

St. Francis College (SFC) offers a variety of student support services and programs designed to enhance academic success and personal well-being. Below is a list of the services provided to students:

Student Services	Description
Accessibility and Accommodations - https://www.sfc.edu/student-life/accessibility-and-accommodations	Coordinates services to assist students with disabilities in obtaining reasonable accommodations

Alumni Association - https://www.sfc.edu/alumni/alumni-association	Fosters relationships with former students Organize networking events, and provide support for alumni looking to stay connected with the College and contribute to its growth
Bursar's Office and Student Accounts - https://www.sfc.edu/admissions-aid/student-accounts-office	Manages student billing, payments, and refunds.
Campus Dining	provide meal options for students
Campus Life - https://www.sfc.edu/student-life/student-activities	Coordinates space reservations, including for student club meetings, events, and gatherings Houses many of the central student affairs offices and services along with recreational facilities
Center for Entrepreneurship Program	Offers students resources and mentorship to develop business ideas and start their own ventures
Center for Learning and Leadership - https://www.sfc.edu/student-life/cll	Provides academic support for students who need help with coursework
Center for Career and Exploration - https://www.sfc.edu/student-life/center-for-career-exploration	Assists students with career exploration, internships, resume writing, job searches, and interview preparation Organize career fairs, networking events, and connect students with potential employers.
Conduct	Handles issues of student behavior, discipline, and upholding community standards
E-Sports Center	Dedicated space for competitive gaming and digital sports
Financial Aid	Processes and administers federal loans, institutional grants/scholarships, and federal work study
Fitness Center	offers students access to exercise equipment

Grad Central	Centralized office for graduate students that provides a variety of services, including registration and academic advising
SFC Library	Provides resources for research and study including access to academic journals, books, digital resources, and study spaces.
SFC Global and International Student Services - https://www.sfc.edu/why-sfc/sfc-global https://www.sfc.edu/student-life/international-student-programs-and-services	Provides support specifically for international students, offering services such as visa guidance, cultural integration programs, and advice on academic and legal matters related to studying in a foreign country
Undergraduate Support Hub - https://www.sfc.edu/student-life/center-for-student-success	Assist students in selecting courses, understanding degree requirements, and creating a plan for academic success
Opportunity Programs - https://www.sfc.edu/student-life/opportunity-programs	
Food Pantry	Provides services to address student food insecurity via a pantry
Counseling Health and Wellness https://www.sfc.edu/student-life/student-health	Offers comprehensive counseling, consultation, and referral assistance to students
Registrar - https://www.sfc.edu/student-life/registrar	Manages transcripts, degree/enrollment verification for students and alumni and degree conferrals
Residence Life and Housing - https://www.sfc.edu/student-life/residence-life	Offers fully furnished apartments near campus for rent to students.
Student Union	central gathering place for students to relax, socialize, and participate in campus events and programs

Mission, Ministry and Interfaith Office - https://www.sfc.edu/student-life/mission-ministry-interfaith-dialogue	offers space for spiritual and religious practices, welcoming students of all faiths
Security	Provides safety and security services
Service Desk - https://www.sfc.edu/student-life/technology	provides technical support for students, faculty, and staff

We assess the effectiveness of these programs through various methods, including direct student feedback and usage tracking. One key tool used is Navigate, which students can use to schedule appointments with the different school offices. This platform helps us track how often services are accessed, enabling us to identify areas for improvement and to ensure that students are receiving the support they need. Additionally, we utilize online forms (eg JotForm) to gather and track requests submitted by students for support services.

Programs are assessed through surveys, student feedback, and performance data. Results are analyzed and shared with stakeholders to inform improvements in curriculum, services, and support. Reports are typically made available to faculty, administrators, and governing bodies.

Line of Inquiry 2

What policies and procedures are used to evaluate and accept transfer credits and credits awarded through various learning approaches?

In addition to the catalogs, policies and procedures for making decisions about the transfer of credits earned at other institutions are publicly disclosed on the college's website (<https://www.sfc.edu/admissions-aid/transfer>) Transfer policies and procedures can be found on St Francis College accepts up to 98 credit hours of transfer credits toward a bachelor's degree. Transfer credits are assessed on a course-by-course basis.

For transfer credits, students must submit **official transcripts** from previously attended institutions to transcript@sfc.edu, afterwards an Admission Counselor will get in touch with the student through the credit evaluation process.

Although the Registrar is the primary contact regarding the posting and initial evaluation of transfer credit, final determination of course equivalency rests with individual academic departments.

Sources of transfer credit can include:

- Studies successfully completed at recognized post-secondary institutions, including regionally accredited U.S. institutions; post-secondary, degree-granting institutions recognized by the NYS Education Department; equivalent Canadian institutions; and/or non-U.S. institutions evaluated by one of four approved international academic credential evaluation services.
- Standardized college-level examinations such as CLEP, CXC CAPE, AP, DSST, and TECEP.
- Professional learning evaluations (PLE) of educational and/or training experiences conducted by agencies
- Individualized prior learning assessment (PLA), a process through which students present their experientially gained learning to the college for evaluation, including Industry certifications, military coursework, employer certification, volunteer experience and/or community service.

Line of Inquiry 3

What policies and procedures are used for safe and secure maintenance and appropriate release of student information and records?

The IT Department manages network and system security to ensure all student data and information about employees, alumni and others is secured. St. Francis College (SFC) follows strict policies and procedures to ensure the safe and secure maintenance and appropriate release of student information and records, in compliance with applicable privacy laws such as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), in addition to accessing the SFC Portal, the one-stop online portal where students can access grades, billing, and financial aid information.

The release of student records follows strict protocols to ensure that information is only shared with authorized parties and under appropriate circumstances. These procedures include

- Student consent for release, wherein student information cannot be disclosed without the student's written consent. This includes sharing personal details, grades, or any other educational records
- The Registrar's Office and other administrative units regularly monitor access to ensure that information is only available to authorized users.
- Multi-factor authentication (MFA) was also introduced through OneProtect, requiring an additional verification step for system access, enhancing data protection in an interconnected world.
- All staff and faculty members who handle student information receive training on FERPA compliance and data security to ensure that they understand how to protect student records.
- For students, with SFC-sponsored F-1 visas, all pertinent data resides with International Student Services through SEVIS and only the Designated School Officials (DSO) have administrative access to view student data.
- Students must use credentials (user ID and password) connected to the SFC Portal to access any web-based school resource, including SFC's learning management system, Canvas and Student data platform, Ellucian/Self Service which allows students to register for classes, access and manage their data and perform various tasks related to their education. As an additional security layer, SFC utilizes two-factor identity authentication.

The policy on Access to Student Records (FERPA) can be found on

<http://www.sfc.edu/student-life/registrar/ferpa>

Resources: CORD (pg 36) = [https://assets.sfc.edu/content/documents/student life/CORD-as-of-02-26-2025.pdf#page=36](https://assets.sfc.edu/content/documents/student_life/CORD-as-of-02-26-2025.pdf#page=36)

Line of Inquiry 4:

What third-party platforms are used in supporting the student experience? How do they impact student success and how is their effectiveness assessed?

St. Francis College (SFC) leverages several third-party platforms to support the student experience, enhancing academic success, student engagement, and overall well-being. These platforms provide a range of services, from academic advising and tutoring to career development. All student support services provided by third-party providers undergo institutional review and approval. Here's is a list of key third-party platforms used at SFC:

- Canvas (under student e-services <https://www.sfc.edu/student-life/technology>)
- Ellucian Colleague (<https://www.ellucian.com/solutions/ellucian-colleague>) - The college contracts with this information technology solutions company for technology-related solutions and operations support across the institution.
- Handshake - <https://www.sfc.edu/student-life/center-for-career-exploration/handshake>
- LinkedIn Learning - <https://www.sfc.edu/student-life/technology> - Students are able to develop skills needed to advance their careers and receive personalized course recommendations based on their experiences.
- Forage (accessed through Handshake)
- Going Global (accessed through Handshake)
- Parker Dewey (accessed through Handshake)
- Office 365 (under student e-services <https://www.sfc.edu/student-life/technology>)
- Navigate Student App (under student e-services <https://www.sfc.edu/student-life/technology>)
- Library (under student e-services <https://www.sfc.edu/student-life/technology>)
- Campus Bookstore (under student e-services <https://www.sfc.edu/student-life/technology>)
- Touchnet (<https://transactcampus.com/solutions/campus-id>) - centralized payment platform for students
- Transact Campus ID (<https://transactcampus.com/solutions/campus-id>) (used for digital/mobile campus IDs)

The effectiveness of these third-party platforms is assessed through:

- **Usage Analytics:** Platform usage statistics (e.g., logins, appointments scheduled, interactions) are regularly reviewed to assess engagement levels.

- **Surveys and Feedback:** Student and staff feedback surveys through JotForms are used to gather direct insights into the user experience and identify areas for improvement.
- **Academic and Retention Data:** Data such as grades, graduation rates, and job placement rates provide a comprehensive measure of their effectiveness.

Resources: **CORD (pg 23)** = https://assets.sfc.edu/content/documents/student_life/CORD-as-of-02-26-2025.pdf#page=23

Line of Inquiry 5:

Where is the data about the student experience stored? What is the process by which the data is secured, and what controls are in place to access the data?

The different departments regularly solicit feedback from students and the SFC community about how we are meeting the needs of our student, including tracking student program participation and usage of services and facilities through information collected primarily through 3rd party platforms like JotForm, Handshake and Navigate to measure student participation and usage to students' institutional records. This allows departments to better understand who engages with programs and services and to obtain contact information to administer follow-up evaluations. Additionally, large-scale surveys and assessments are administered to better attend to the health and wellbeing of SFC students, like the Climate Study.

At St. Francis College, we utilize the SFC 170 approach to effectively use assessment data in strengthening student support services and enhancing the overall student experience. This approach involves regular collaboration between different offices, where reports on student engagement are submitted and reviewed. Through the SFC 170 approach, we reflect on the data, evaluate our progress, and identify areas for improvement. The insights gathered allow us to either create new programs or enhance existing ones. Additionally, we use this data to set or adjust learning goals, ensuring that our student support services are always aligned with the evolving needs of students, fostering a supportive and impactful learning environment.

Specifically:

- The College regularly analyzes usage data from platforms such as Navigate, Handshake, JotForm, and Canvas to identify trends, service gaps, and student engagement patterns that inform program adjustments.
- Feedback from surveys, focus groups, and the Campus Climate Study is used to evaluate the effectiveness of support services and guide improvements in communication, outreach, and resource allocation.
- Retention, persistence, and completion data are reviewed by Institutional Research and shared with departments to inform targeted interventions for specific student populations.
- Through the SFC 170 reporting process, departments meet to review assessment results, evaluate progress toward goals, and collaboratively determine needed changes or enhancements to student support services.

Line of Inquiry 6:

How does the College use assessment data to consistently strengthen student support services and enhance the student experience? Based on a review of the College's current evidence, what are the data gaps and what are the opportunities for improvement?

The IT Department manages network and system security to ensure all student data and information about employees, alumni and others is secured. The following are platforms being used by St. Francis College to store data about the student experience.

- Microsoft Network Drives
- Ellucian Colleague (<https://www.ellucian.com/solutions/ellucian-colleague>) - The college contracts with this information technology solutions company for technology-related solutions and operations support across the institution.
- JotForms are utilized extensively across various departments to streamline processes and enhance efficiency. Student Affairs uses JotForms for managing student club event management, conducting surveys, and tracking requests submitted by students for support services. Additionally, JotForms can be configured to be HIPAA compliant if needed, ensuring the secure handling of sensitive information.
- TheraNest (<https://theranest.com/>) adheres to HIPAA regulations, which are designed to protect sensitive patient information. The counseling office uses TheraNest to manage

and store student data securely, ensuring that all data is handled and stored in compliance with these regulations.

- Docuware is used by the Registrar's Office to digitize, organize and securely store documents related to student information.
- Assessment findings are used to redesign existing programs, develop new initiatives, and refine learning outcomes to ensure support services remain aligned with the evolving needs of students.
- Cross-departmental data sharing facilitates coordinated approaches to student success, ensuring that interventions are informed by multiple perspectives and consistent across student-facing offices.

Inquiry Line 7:

How are the policies and practices integrated through the entire student experience, including recruitment, admission, academic success, completion, and post completion placement for all educational offerings and modalities?

The College integrates its policies and practices across the full student lifecycle, recruitment, admission, academic success, completion, and post-completion placement, through coordinated planning, shared governance, and cross-functional collaboration that spans all educational offerings and modalities. During recruitment and admission, institutional policies ensure transparent communication of program requirements, learning outcomes, and delivery formats, enabling prospective students to make informed decisions. Admissions, advising, and academic units work together to align placement, orientation, and onboarding processes with program expectations, ensuring students begin their studies prepared for success regardless of modality.

Throughout enrollment and toward completion, academic policies, advising structures, and student support services are intentionally aligned to promote persistence and timely graduation. Degree requirements are clearly communicated through official publications, degree-audit systems, and advising tools, while academic success is supported through tutoring, mentoring, accessibility services, and flexible course scheduling across in-person, hybrid, and online formats. Assessment and program review processes ensure instructional quality and coherence, and career services and experiential learning opportunities support post-completion placement. Together, these integrated

policies and practices create a seamless, student-centered experience that supports achievement, completion, and successful transitions beyond graduation in alignment with institutional goals and Middle States expectations.

Method, Results, Analysis, and Interpretation of Evidence:

Method: The College reviewed institutional policies, procedures, and practices that span the full student lifecycle, including recruitment, admission, academic advising, student support services, degree completion processes, and post-completion placement. Evidence examined included admissions and enrollment materials, academic policies, advising and degree-audit systems, student support resources, program review and assessment reports, and documentation related to career services and experiential learning. Input from academic affairs, student success units, and administrative offices was considered to evaluate how policies are implemented consistently across programs and instructional modalities.

Results: The evidence demonstrates that the College has an integrated framework that supports students from entry through post-completion outcomes. Recruitment and admissions processes provide clear, accurate information about programs, delivery modalities, and expectations. Academic progress is supported through coordinated advising, tutoring, accessibility services, and transparent degree requirements communicated via official publications and progress-tracking systems. Policies governing course scheduling, assessment, and program review promote timely completion, while career services, internships, and experiential learning opportunities support career readiness and placement after graduation.

Analysis: Analysis indicates that policies and practices are intentionally aligned across units to create a cohesive student experience. Communication and coordination among admissions, academic affairs, student success services, and career development ensure continuity and reduce barriers as students move through different stages of their academic journey. While processes are effective and consistently applied, opportunities exist to further strengthen data integration across units to more clearly track student outcomes longitudinally from recruitment through post-completion placement.

Interpretation of Evidence: Overall, the evidence supports the conclusion that the College effectively integrates policies and practices throughout the entire student experience for all

educational offerings and modalities. This integrated approach promotes transparency, academic success, timely completion, and positive post-graduation outcomes. Continued emphasis on cross-unit collaboration and enhanced data use will further strengthen the College's ability to assess impact and continuously improve student success across the full lifecycle.

Analysis of the Inquiry

The inquiry indicates that St. Francis College provides a broad, coherent, and increasingly data-informed system of support that advances student success across educational settings and modalities. Evidence across the lines of inquiry shows that student services are comprehensive (e.g., advising, tutoring, counseling, accessibility, financial aid guidance, career development, and specialized support for graduate and international students) and supported by clear policies governing transfer credit, FERPA, and record security. The College also leverages multiple third-party platforms (e.g., Navigate, Canvas, Handshake, Ellucian) to expand access, streamline services, and track engagement, with assessment practices supported by usage analytics, feedback surveys, and institutional studies such as the 2025 Campus Climate Study.

At the same time, the inquiry highlights opportunities to strengthen consistency, integration, and equity in implementation. Platform adoption and utilization (especially Navigate and Handshake) vary across offices, and student awareness of some services appears uneven, which can reduce the effectiveness of an otherwise strong support ecosystem. In addition, while the College collects retention, persistence, and completion data, deeper disaggregation and more systematic cross-unit analysis are needed to better understand outcomes for specific student populations and to strengthen longitudinal tracking from recruitment through post-completion placement. Clarifying centralized data governance across multiple systems (e.g., JotForm, TheraNest, DocuWare) would further improve efficiency, compliance, and institutional capacity to use evidence consistently to strengthen the student experience.

Strengths

St. Francis College demonstrates a strong institutional commitment to supporting the full student experience from recruitment through post-completion. Clear, ethical, and accessible recruitment and admissions policies ensure that students enter the institution with a reasonable

expectation of success. The College maintains a comprehensive network of student support services including academic advising, tutoring, counseling, career development, financial aid guidance, accessibility services, and specialized opportunity programs that reflect best practices and are guided by qualified professionals. The availability and effectiveness of these services are strengthened by transparent communications, structured processes, and well-defined pathways for student engagement.

The College has also established robust assessment practices. Evidence-based decision-making is supported through usage analytics from Navigate, Handshake, JotForm, and Canvas; retention and completion data; and significant feedback from the 2025 Campus Climate Study. The Climate Study results reveal strong perceptions of belonging, interpersonal validation, cross-cultural engagement, and institutional commitment to student success across both undergraduate and graduate student populations. Additionally, policies governing transfer credit evaluation, FERPA compliance, and data security reflect adherence to federal guidelines and demonstrate careful stewardship of student records.

Finally, SFC's integration of third-party platforms enhances student access and engagement. Systems such as Ellucian Colleague, Navigate, LinkedIn Learning, Handshake, Forage, and Canvas streamline academic support, skill development, and student services. Regular assessment of these systems and strong interdepartmental collaboration—exemplified by the SFC 170 approach—strengthen institutional capacity to monitor and improve student support services.

Areas for Improvement

Although student support services are comprehensive, the effectiveness and consistency of implementation vary across offices and departments. Adoption of third-party platforms, particularly Navigate and Handshake, is inconsistent, which may limit the College's ability to deliver a unified student experience or fully leverage available analytics. Student awareness of certain services especially lesser-known programs, support hubs, or digital tools appears uneven, suggesting a need for clearer communication and more coordinated outreach.

The College has made progress in collecting retention and completion data, but further disaggregation is needed to understand the experiences of specific student populations, including first-generation students, international students, transfer students, and those participating in

opportunity programs. More systematic reporting, documentation, and cross-functional analysis would strengthen institutional insight into persistence barriers and student needs.

Additionally, while data security systems such as MFA and secure platforms are in place, processes for centralized data governance and ownership across departments may require clarification. As multiple systems store student information (e.g., JotForms, TheraNest, DocuWare), standardizing protocols for data storage, access controls, and interdepartmental communication would further strengthen institutional compliance and reduce inefficiencies.

Recommendations

Increase consistency in the use of third-party student support platforms

Establish clear expectations, training, and accountability measures to ensure departments uniformly adopt systems such as Navigate and Handshake. This will enhance service delivery, strengthen communication, and increase the reliability of usage analytics.

Enhance communication and visibility of student support services

Develop a coordinated communications plan—including orientation modules, targeted outreach campaigns, and centralized resources—to ensure that all students understand how to access available support services, opportunity programs, and digital tools.

Expand data disaggregation and strengthen cross-functional analysis

Improve the depth of retention, persistence, and completion analyses by examining subpopulations and specific student pathways. Share findings across departments regularly to align interventions and ensure equitable student outcomes.

Standardize data security, storage, and governance protocols

Create institution-wide guidelines for how student data is stored, accessed, and shared across systems (e.g., JotForm, TheraNest, DocuWare). Ensure consistent staff training on data management and FERPA compliance.

Leverage assessment results to redesign or enhance student support initiatives

Use Climate Study findings, usage data, feedback surveys, and the SFC 170 review process to continuously refine services. Consider expanding high-impact practices—such as intrusive advising, academic success coaching, and career readiness integration—across more programs.

STANDARD V: Education Effectiveness Assessment

Group Final Report

Date: December 12, 2025

Standard V: Education Effectiveness Assessment

Co-chair: Dr. Amal Biscaino

Co-chair: Dr. Anthony Desiderio

Committee Members: Dr. Lavinia Ciungu, Ms. Noemi Rivera, Dr. Raeann Kyriakou, Dr. Lisa Paolucci, Dr. Anthony Desiderio, Dr. Amal Biscaino

Standard Brief Overview:

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

Line of Inquiry 1:

Does the institution have a comprehensive assessment of the student learning plan and use results for improvement of educational effectiveness consistent with the mission.

The institution uses the assessment website tool: assessment.sfc.edu, which serves as a centralized and effective assessment tool that supports St. Francis College's commitment to meaningful, consistent, and sustainable assessment practices. The website functions as a comprehensive repository for assessment guidance, documentation, and resources, enabling faculty and academic leaders to design, implement, and evaluate assessment activities in a structured and accessible manner. The platform is intentionally designed to align assessment practices with institutional learning outcomes, program objectives, and accreditation standards. It provides clear frameworks, templates, rubrics, and examples that help ensure assessment methods are purposeful, measurable, and directly connected to student learning. By standardizing key assessment processes while allowing flexibility at the program level, assessment.sfc.edu promotes consistency without limiting academic autonomy. Importantly, the website is actively maintained and continuously improved based on faculty feedback. Enhancements, such as offline accessibility, have been implemented to ensure equitable access for faculty teaching online, in-person, and hybrid courses. This responsiveness to faculty needs increases usability and reinforces faculty engagement in assessment activities. The website tool: assessment.sfc.edu is professionally maintained by

consultant partners who are recognized experts in assessment, ensuring that content reflects current best practices, evolving accreditation expectations, and effective assessment methodologies. Regular updates and quality oversight contribute to the reliability and effectiveness of the platform as an institutional assessment tool. Through its centralized design, faculty-informed improvements, and expert maintenance, assessment.sfc.edu plays a critical role in supporting data-informed decision-making and continuous improvement in student learning at St. Francis College.

Almost all faculty have completed training in using the new electronic assessment platform and inputting data, and over 90 percent of course sections entered assessment data into the system. The new system has created a stronger and more unified campus wide approach to assessment. Faculty report that the platform is easier to use and produces more meaningful data. Training sessions were offered to all faculty, full-time and part-time through our Faculty Development Program. The sessions are recorded, and available online. Students benefit because instructors now have clearer evidence of what supports learning and where additional scaffolding is needed

Line of Inquiry 2:

How does the institution periodically assess the effectiveness of assessment processes?

As part of its ongoing evaluation of assessment effectiveness, the institution also reviews the functionality and usefulness of its assessment resources, including the assessment website selected to support faculty and programs. The assessment website is carefully maintained and continuously improved based on faculty feedback, ensuring that it remains accessible, practical, and aligned with instructional needs. For example, in response to faculty input regarding accessibility and ease of use, the institution is now accessible offline. This enhancement ensures that faculty teaching in online, in-person, and hybrid modalities can easily access assessment materials, templates, and guidance regardless of instructional format or connectivity constraints. These improvements reflect the institution's commitment to equitable access and consistent assessment support across all teaching environments. The assessment website is professionally maintained by consultant partners who are recognized experts in the field of assessment, ensuring that content remains current, accurate, and aligned with best practices and accreditation standards. Regular updates and maintenance, informed by faculty experience and institutional needs, further support the effectiveness and sustainability of the institution's assessment processes.

Line of Inquiry 3:

How are assessment results and their impact on policy documented and clearly and timely communicated to the college community, as well as appropriate external stakeholders?

Assessment results, and the ways those results inform policy and practice, are documented and communicated through a structured, transparent process designed to ensure consistency, timeliness,

and broad access across the College community and relevant external stakeholders. Faculty use the College's new electronic assessment platform, which has strengthened assessment reporting by making it simpler, clearer, and more consistent across instructional modalities and academic units. Reporting occurs systematically at the course, program, and departmental levels, allowing results to be aggregated and reviewed in a way that supports both local improvement (e.g., a single course or sequence) and broader program-level decision-making. This approach improves comparability across sections and supports shared expectations for evidence quality and documentation. To ensure assessment findings lead to meaningful change, department chairs and program leaders review results as part of routine academic planning and program oversight. Chairs across the College are actively using assessment findings to revise curriculum, update or refine learning outcomes, and adjust pedagogy in response to evidence of student performance. Early indicators suggest increased alignment between learning outcomes and instructional practice, reflecting stronger coherence between what faculty intend students to learn, what students are asked to demonstrate, and how learning is evaluated. Documentation is maintained in multiple secure and accessible locations to support internal review, institutional planning, and external reporting needs. Assessment reports and supporting materials are stored in the College's ShareDrive repository folder, ensuring continuity, version control, and access for appropriate personnel. In addition, key documents and summaries are posted on the dedicated Middle States Canvas page, which serves as a centralized space for accreditation-related evidence and communication. To strengthen accountability and continuity, the institution also relies on two designated point-persons who receive assessment submissions, consolidate reporting artifacts, and store and organize all assessment data and documentation to ensure information is preserved, retrievable, and ready for institutional reporting cycles. Communication to the College community occurs through regular departmental and committee channels, including chairs' meetings, program discussions, and assessment or curriculum-focused reviews, where findings and improvement actions are shared and discussed. For external stakeholders—such as accreditors and other appropriate audiences—the institution is able to provide organized documentation that demonstrates both results and impact, including evidence of decision-making, implemented changes, and follow-up review. Through these coordinated systems for reporting, storage, and dissemination, the College ensures that assessment results are not only collected, but also clearly documented, meaningfully used, and communicated in a timely and transparent manner.

Line of Inquiry 4:

Based on a review of the College's current evidence, what are the data gaps and what are the opportunities for improvement?

Opportunities remain to strengthen communication, ensure adjunct faculty receive adequate training, and promote consistent sharing of results across the College community. Need to establish a simple and consistent process for sharing assessment findings with faculty, staff, students, and

external partners. Need to develop a standard practice for documenting how assessment results lead to specific curricular or pragmatic changes.

Line of Inquiry 5:

How does the college review assessment practices to determine how effective they are and areas for improvement?

The institution ensures that its assessment methods are meaningful and effective through a deliberate, faculty-driven process focused on alignment, validity, and continuous improvement. Assessment methods are selected based on their direct alignment with stated Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs), ensuring that the evidence collected accurately reflects the knowledge, skills, and competencies students are expected to demonstrate.

Faculty play a central role in the selection and evaluation of assessment methods. Commonly used methods—such as signature assignments, capstone projects, case analyses, presentations, and standardized rubrics—are designed to measure higher-order learning and applied competencies rather than isolated content knowledge. Rubrics are regularly reviewed and refined to promote consistency, clarity, and reliable scoring across sections and modalities. Effectiveness is further ensured through periodic review of assessment results, during which faculty examine whether assessment data provide actionable insights into student learning. When assessment findings indicate unclear results, misalignment, or limited usefulness, assessment tools and methods are revised accordingly. This iterative review process helps confirm that assessment activities generate meaningful data that can inform instructional and curricular improvements. In addition, the institution supports assessment effectiveness by providing guidance, training, and shared resources, including templates and exemplars housed on the assessment website. Faculty feedback is used to improve both assessment tools and support resources, reinforcing a culture of evidence-based decision-making. Through alignment, faculty oversight, and continuous refinement, the institution ensures that its assessment methods remain purposeful, credible, and effective in measuring student learning outcomes.

Method, Results, Analysis, and Interpretation of Evidence:

Method: The College collected and reviewed assessment evidence using assessment.sfc.edu, drawing on faculty-submitted assessment data and department chairs' contextual input regarding program structure, course sequencing, and departmental priorities. Faculty entered outcome-level

results and supporting information through the platform, while chairs provided additional departmental details to support accurate interpretation of results and ensure that findings reflect program context rather than isolated course performance.

Results and Analysis: Assessment results are presented on assessment.sfc.edu in a clear and consistent format, including visual displays that summarize performance by outcome and highlight patterns across sections and courses. The platform supports analysis by organizing results in ways that allow departments and academic leadership to quickly identify trends, compare outcomes, and review evidence across reporting periods.

Interpretation of Evidence: The interpretation component clearly identifies which SLOs did not meet expected performance levels and specifies where students struggled most. It also indicates priority areas for improvement, guiding departments toward targeted actions such as refining instruction, adjusting assignments or rubrics, strengthening scaffolding in earlier courses, or revisiting curriculum alignment to improve student achievement of the identified outcomes.

Analysis of the Inquiry:

Collectively, the evidence demonstrates that St. Francis College has developed a comprehensive, structured, and increasingly effective approach to the assessment of student learning, one that is aligned with the institutional mission and focused on continuous improvement of educational effectiveness. The adoption of assessment.sfc.edu as a centralized assessment platform represents a significant institutional strength. The tool provides consistency, clarity, and accessibility across courses, programs, and departments, enabling faculty and academic leaders to design, implement, analyze, and interpret assessment in a coherent and sustainable manner. High levels of faculty participation—supported by widespread training and strong usage rates—indicate broad engagement and growing assessment capacity across the College. The evidence further shows that assessment results are actively used for improvement, particularly at the departmental level. Chairs and program leaders are reviewing data to revise curricula, refine learning outcomes, and adjust pedagogical approaches, with early indicators pointing to stronger alignment between outcomes, instruction, and assessment. The institution has also established clear mechanisms for documentation and communication, including centralized repositories (ShareDrive and the Middle States Canvas page), designated point-persons for data stewardship, and routine use of governance and departmental channels to share findings and actions. These practices support transparency, accountability, and readiness for external review. At the same time, the inquiry highlights opportunities for continued improvement. While assessment processes are functioning effectively, greater consistency in College-wide communication of results and more standardized documentation would strengthen institutional coherence and evidence of impact. Overall, the College is well positioned to build on its current assessment infrastructure by formalizing

communication practices and documentation standards, thereby strengthening its culture of evidence and continuous improvement.

Strengths:

1)Centralized assessment infrastructure: The College's use of assessment.sfc.edu provides a consistent, structured platform for collecting, organizing, and reviewing assessment evidence across courses, programs, and departments.

2)Strong alignment and usability: The platform supports alignment with SLOs/PLOs and accreditation expectations through common templates, rubrics, and reporting formats, producing clearer and more comparable results.

3)High faculty engagement and participation: Nearly all faculty have completed training on the platform, and over 90% of course sections have entered assessment data, indicating broad campus-wide adoption.

4)Improved consistency and quality of evidence: Faculty report that the new system is easier to use and generates more meaningful, actionable data, strengthening reliability and consistency across academic units.

5)Built-in analysis and interpretation: Results are presented with clear visuals and analysis, and the interpretation component highlights which SLOs are not meeting expectations, helping departments target improvements.

6)Use of results for improvement: Department chairs and program leaders are using assessment evidence to revise curriculum, refine learning outcomes, and adjust pedagogy, with early indications of stronger outcome–instruction alignment.

7)Accessible, continuously improved resource: The assessment website is carefully maintained and improved based on faculty feedback, including enhanced offline accessibility to support online, in-person, and hybrid teaching.

8)Professional maintenance and expertise: The platform is maintained by consultant partners with expertise in assessment, supporting quality control, best-practice alignment, and sustainability.

9)Clear documentation and evidence storage: Assessment reports are stored in multiple institutional locations (e.g., ShareDrive repository and Middle States Canvas page) and managed by designated point-persons, supporting continuity, retrieval, and external reporting.

Areas of improvement:

While assessment processes at the College are functioning effectively, opportunities remain to strengthen consistency and transparency across the institution. In particular, the College would benefit from establishing a more standardized, College-wide process for communicating assessment results and improvement actions to faculty, staff, students, and appropriate external stakeholders. Additional focus on consistent documentation of “closing the loop”, clearly recording how assessment findings lead to curricular, pedagogical, or operational changes, would strengthen evidence of impact over time. Finally, continued efforts to enhance adjunct faculty training and engagement will help ensure consistent application of outcomes, rubrics, and reporting practices across all course sections and instructional modalities.

Recommendations:

To strengthen assessment documentation and support continuous improvement, the College should organize assessment evidence on the Middle States Canvas page so that each Standard and Line of Inquiry has its own module, with all corresponding documentation uploaded in a clear and consistent structure. In addition, department chairs should communicate assessment findings more systematically with their departments, clearly identifying strengths and areas for improvement based on SLO and PLO results and outlining specific actions to address gaps. Finally, the College should encourage cross-department collaboration to ensure that gateway courses and other high-enrollment foundational courses provide consistent coverage of essential skills and concepts, reducing gaps that may affect student performance in advanced courses that build on that knowledge.

STANDARD VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement

Group Final Report

Date: December 12, 2025

Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement

Co-chair: Ms. Jovana Terzic

Co-chair: Ms. Nouran Ishmail

Co-chair: Dr. Louis D'Elia

Committee Members: Ms. Jovana Terzic, Dr. Louis D'Elia, Dr. Emily Herstoff, Dr. Sunghun Kim, Dr. Chang Xia, Ms. Allison Eastwood, Mr. Mark Sanders, Mr. Manfred Krueger, Mr. Kevin O'Rourke

Standard Brief Overview:

Planning, resource allocation, and institutional improvement are guided by the institution's mission, strategic priorities, and commitment to continuous improvement. The institution engages in systematic, integrated planning processes that align academic, financial, human, physical, and technological resources with institutional goals and student success outcomes. Decision-making is informed by assessment results, data analysis, and evidence of effectiveness, ensuring transparency, accountability, and fiscal sustainability. Through ongoing evaluation of planning and resource-management processes, the institution demonstrates its capacity to adapt, strengthen institutional performance, and support long-term stability and mission fulfillment.

Line of Inquiry 1:

How does the institution engage in ongoing, systematic, and integrated planning that is aligned with its mission and strategic goals?

The institution engages in ongoing, systematic, and integrated planning through a structured framework that aligns institutional decision-making with its mission and strategic goals. Strategic planning provides the overarching direction, while unit-level planning, program review, and assessment processes ensure that academic and administrative priorities support institutional objectives. These planning activities are coordinated across divisions through shared governance structures and leadership oversight, allowing data from assessment, accreditation, and student

outcomes to inform priorities and resource allocation. Regular review of progress toward strategic goals, combined with broad stakeholder participation and transparent communication, ensures that planning remains mission-driven, evidence-based, and responsive to institutional needs.

Line of Inquiry 2:

How does the institution allocate and manage financial, human, physical, and technological resources to support mission fulfillment and institutional effectiveness?

The institution allocates and manages its financial, human, physical, and technological resources through integrated planning and budgeting processes that are aligned with its mission and strategic priorities. Financial resources are allocated through transparent budgeting practices informed by strategic goals, assessment data, and enrollment and program needs, with oversight by senior leadership and the governing board. Human resources are managed through intentional hiring, evaluation, and professional development practices that ensure qualified personnel support academic and operational functions. Physical and technological resources are planned and maintained to provide safe, accessible, and effective learning and working environments, including instructional spaces, campus infrastructure, and information technology systems. Together, these coordinated resource-management practices support institutional effectiveness, promote sustainability, and ensure that resources are used responsibly to advance student success and mission fulfillment.

Line of Inquiry 3:

How does the institution assess the effectiveness of planning and resource allocation processes and use results for continuous improvement?

The institution allocates and manages its financial, human, physical, and technological resources through integrated planning and budgeting processes that are aligned with its mission and strategic priorities. Financial resources are allocated through transparent budgeting practices informed by strategic goals, assessment data, and enrollment and program needs, with oversight by senior leadership and the governing board. Human resources are managed through intentional hiring, evaluation, and professional development practices that ensure qualified personnel support academic and operational functions. Physical and technological resources are planned and maintained to provide safe, accessible, and effective learning and working environments, including instructional spaces, campus infrastructure, and information technology systems. Together, these

coordinated resource-management practices support institutional effectiveness, promote sustainability, and ensure that resources are used responsibly to advance student success and mission fulfillment.

Line of Inquiry 4:

How does the institution ensure fiscal sustainability, transparency, and accountability?

The institution ensures fiscal sustainability, transparency, and accountability through sound financial planning, clear oversight structures, and regular monitoring of financial performance. Budget development and resource allocation are aligned with the institution's mission and strategic priorities, informed by enrollment trends, assessment data, and long-term financial planning. Financial oversight is provided through established governance processes, including review and approval by senior leadership and the governing board, along with regular financial reporting and audits. Transparent communication of financial decisions and outcomes, combined with internal controls and compliance with applicable regulations, promotes responsible stewardship of resources and supports long-term institutional stability and effectiveness.

Line of Inquiry 5:

How does the institution use assessment results, data, and evidence to inform planning, decision-making, and institutional improvement?

The institution uses assessment results, data, and evidence as central tools for planning, decision-making, and continuous institutional improvement. Data from student learning assessments, program reviews, enrollment and retention analyses, surveys, and accreditation processes are systematically collected and reviewed at the unit and institutional levels. These findings inform strategic planning, budget priorities, curriculum development, and the enhancement of academic and student support services. Assessment results are discussed through shared governance and leadership forums, ensuring broad engagement and accountability, and are used to identify areas of strength, address gaps, and “close the loop” by implementing and evaluating improvements. Through this evidence-based approach, the institution ensures that decisions are aligned with its mission, strategic goals, and commitment to institutional effectiveness.

Method, Results, Analysis, and Interpretation of Evidence:

Method: The institution reviewed a range of qualitative and quantitative evidence used to support planning, decision-making, and institutional improvement. This included assessment reports, program and unit reviews, enrollment and retention data, survey results, strategic planning documents, budget reports, and accreditation materials. Evidence from academic affairs, institutional research, student success units, and administrative offices was examined to understand how data are collected, analyzed, shared, and applied across the institution.

Results: The evidence indicates that the institution systematically collects and uses data related to student learning outcomes, operational effectiveness, enrollment trends, and resource utilization. Assessment findings are documented through regular reporting cycles and are incorporated into program reviews, strategic planning updates, and budget discussions. Results are shared with leadership and governance bodies, demonstrating that data inform decisions related to curriculum, services, staffing, and resource allocation.

Analysis: Analysis shows that assessment and data use are embedded in institutional processes rather than isolated activities. Multiple feedback loops exist between assessment, planning, and implementation, supporting continuous improvement. While data are regularly collected and reviewed, opportunities remain to further integrate and streamline data across units to enhance consistency, longitudinal tracking, and ease of access for decision-makers.

Interpretation of Evidence: Overall, the evidence demonstrates that the institution effectively uses assessment results, data, and evidence to guide planning, inform decisions, and improve institutional effectiveness. This evidence-based culture supports alignment with the mission and strategic goals, promotes accountability, and enables the institution to respond proactively to emerging needs. Strengthening coordination and data integration will further enhance the institution's capacity for continuous improvement.

Analysis of the Inquiry

The inquiry demonstrates that the institution engages in coherent, mission-driven planning processes that effectively integrate strategic priorities with resource allocation and institutional improvement. Evidence across the lines of inquiry shows that planning is systematic and ongoing, supported by shared governance, leadership oversight, and regular assessment cycles. Financial, human, physical, and technological resources are allocated through transparent and aligned budgeting and planning processes, with decisions informed by enrollment trends, assessment data,

and program needs. These practices reflect a strong commitment to institutional effectiveness, fiscal responsibility, and sustainability. Analysis also indicates that the institution has established a culture of evidence-based decision-making, in which assessment results and data are routinely used to inform planning, evaluate effectiveness, and guide improvements. Feedback loops connecting assessment, planning, and implementation support continuous improvement and accountability. At the same time, the inquiry identifies opportunities to strengthen coordination and integration of data systems across units to enhance longitudinal tracking, accessibility, and documentation of outcomes. Addressing these areas will further strengthen the institution's capacity to demonstrate impact, adapt to changing conditions, and sustain long-term mission fulfillment in alignment with Standard VI.

Strengths:

The institution demonstrates a strong culture of evidence-based decision-making, with systematic collection and use of assessment data across academic and administrative units. Assessment results are regularly incorporated into planning, program review, and budgeting processes, ensuring alignment with the institution's mission and strategic goals. Clear reporting structures and shared governance discussions support transparency and accountability, while established feedback loops enable the institution to "close the loop" and implement improvements based on data and evidence.

Areas of improvement:

While the institution regularly collects and uses assessment data, opportunities exist to further strengthen coordination and integration across units. Data systems could be better aligned to support more consistent longitudinal tracking of outcomes and to improve accessibility for faculty and administrators. Additionally, more systematic documentation of how assessment results directly inform specific decisions and improvements would enhance clarity and strengthen evidence of continuous institutional improvement.

Recommendations:

The institution should enhance integration of data systems across academic and administrative units to support more consistent, longitudinal analysis and easier access to actionable information. Establishing clearer documentation practices that explicitly link assessment results to planning

decisions, resource allocation, and implemented improvements would strengthen evidence of continuous improvement. In addition, providing ongoing professional development on data interpretation and assessment use for faculty and staff would further reinforce an institution-wide culture of evidence-based decision-making.

STANDARD VII: Governance, Leadership and Administration

Group Final Report

Date: December 12, 2025

Standard VII: Governance, Leadership and Administration

Co-chair: Ms. Hayley Dryer

Co-chair: Dr. Filomena Califano

Committee Members: Dr. Allen Burdowski, Dr. Filomena Califano, Mr. Jason Dubow, Ms. Ali Scott, Ms. Hayley Dryer

Standard Brief Overview:

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

Line of Inquiry 1:

How does the College's governance structure ensure transparency, accountability, and broad stakeholder engagement in shared governance decisions, and to what extent is this structure clearly articulated and communicated across the institution?

The College's governance structure ensures transparency, accountability, and broad stakeholder engagement through multiple, clearly defined forums for communication and shared decision-making. The Board of Trustees conducts regular meetings where institutional policies, strategic priorities, and major decisions are discussed and recorded, with agendas and outcomes shared to ensure transparency and accountability. The President regularly addresses the campus during assembly meetings, providing updates on institutional goals, decisions, and progress, and creating opportunities for open dialogue. The Vice Presidents of Academic Affairs engage faculty and staff through dedicated meetings for undergraduate and graduate studies, ensuring academic policies and curricular decisions are discussed with appropriate stakeholders. In addition, chair meetings facilitate communication between academic leadership and department heads, while departmental meetings allow faculty and staff to discuss initiatives, provide feedback, and participate directly in shared governance. Together, these interconnected structures clearly articulate decision-making

processes and ensure consistent communication and meaningful engagement across all levels of the institution.

Line of Inquiry 2:

Does the institution have a legally constituted governing body with clearly defined roles and oversight responsibilities?

Yes. The institution has a legally constituted Board of Trustees that serves as the governing body with clearly defined roles and oversight responsibilities. The Board is responsible for setting institutional policy, ensuring fiduciary oversight, approving strategic plans and budgets, and hiring and evaluating the President. These responsibilities are formally established through governing documents, bylaws, and policies, which clearly delineate the Board's authority in relation to institutional administration and shared governance bodies. Through regular, documented meetings and established reporting structures, the Board provides effective oversight while supporting transparent and accountable institutional governance.

Line of Inquiry 3:

How does the College periodically evaluate the effectiveness of institutional governance, leadership and administration?

The College periodically evaluates the effectiveness of institutional governance, leadership, and administration through a combination of formal assessment processes and ongoing feedback mechanisms. The Board of Trustees conducts regular evaluations of its own effectiveness and formally evaluates the President based on clearly defined goals and performance criteria. Institutional leadership is assessed through annual reviews, strategic planning progress reports, and accountability measures tied to institutional outcomes. Governance effectiveness is further examined through accreditation self-studies, program review processes, and campus-wide surveys that gather feedback from faculty, staff, and students. Findings from these evaluations are used to inform improvements in decision-making processes, communication, and organizational effectiveness, ensuring continuous improvement in governance and leadership.

Line of Inquiry 4:

What systematic procedures are in place in evaluating leadership, shared governance, and administrative units to support the mission and strategic priorities of the college and to continuously evaluate their performance?

The College has systematic procedures to evaluate leadership, shared governance, and administrative units in ways that support its mission and strategic priorities and promote continuous improvement. Leadership is evaluated through formal performance review processes, including the Board of Trustees' regular evaluation of the President and supervisory evaluations of senior administrators aligned with institutional goals and strategic initiatives. Shared governance effectiveness is assessed through standing committee reviews, documented governance processes, accreditation self-studies, and periodic campus-wide surveys that gather feedback on participation, communication, and decision-making. Administrative units are evaluated through ongoing planning and assessment cycles, including annual unit plans, program and unit reviews, and analysis of key performance indicators related to institutional effectiveness and student success. Results from these evaluations are reviewed by senior leadership and governance bodies and are used to inform planning, decision-making, resource allocation, and continuous improvement across the College.

Line of Inquiry 5:

Based on a review of the College's current evidence, what are the data gaps and what are the opportunities for improvement?

Opportunities for improvement include implementing standardized governance and leadership effectiveness surveys, developing clearer metrics and dashboards tied to strategic goals, improving documentation of assessment results and follow-up actions, and strengthening feedback loops to ensure evaluation findings are consistently used to support continuous institutional improvement.

Method, Results, Analysis, and Interpretation of Evidence:

Method

To conduct this review, we collected and examined key institutional documents that define and guide governance and decision-making across the College. This included the College's bylaws and governing policies, along with the organizational chart, to confirm that roles, reporting lines, and oversight responsibilities are formally established and clearly delineated. These documents were used to understand how authority is structured, how responsibilities are assigned, and how shared governance is intended to function in practice. In addition, we reviewed evidence of governance operations and stakeholder engagement through meeting documentation. Specifically, we examined minutes from chairperson meetings, Board of Trustees meetings, and faculty committee meetings to assess the regularity of communication, the transparency of discussions and actions, and the extent to which shared governance bodies participate in institutional decision-making. This

review provided insight into how governance processes are implemented, documented, and communicated across the institution.

Results

The evidence shows the College has a functional and responsible Board of Trustees that provides appropriate oversight and guidance. College leadership demonstrates clear alignment with the mission and communicates priorities in support of institutional goals. The College consistently follows established policies and procedures in its decision-making processes, and decisions reflected in meeting records support students and staff. Overall, the documentation indicates resources are managed responsibly and transparently through established planning and governance processes.

Analysis

The inquiry indicates that the College demonstrates strong leadership that meets Middle States expectations for effective governance and administration. Leadership practices reflect sound judgment and a clear focus on supporting students and staff through informed, mission-driven decision-making. In addition, the presence of clearly articulated and consistently followed policies strengthens institutional effectiveness by providing clarity, stability, and accountability in governance and administrative processes.

Interpretation of Evidence

Overall, the evidence indicates that the College meets expectations for having governance and evaluation structures in place, but there are opportunities to strengthen effectiveness by improving data collection, consistency, and use of results. Enhancing systematic assessment and closing the feedback loop will better demonstrate how governance, leadership, and administrative evaluations actively support the College's mission and strategic goals.

Analysis of the Inquiry:

The inquiry examined how effectively the College evaluates leadership, shared governance, and administrative units in support of its mission and strategic priorities. Analysis of the available evidence indicates that the College has established structures and procedures that promote transparency, accountability, and participation, including regular governance meetings, leadership evaluations, and unit planning and review processes. These practices demonstrate institutional commitment to effective governance and continuous improvement. However, the analysis also reveals that evaluation efforts are not always applied consistently across the institution and are often focused on process compliance rather than measuring effectiveness and impact. Opportunities exist to strengthen the inquiry by developing more systematic assessment tools, improving documentation of outcomes and follow-up actions, and more clearly linking evaluation results to strategic planning and resource allocation.

Strengths:

The College demonstrates several strengths in governance, leadership, and administrative evaluation. It has a clearly defined and legally constituted governing board with well-established roles and oversight responsibilities. Leadership maintains regular and transparent communication through Board of Trustees meetings, presidential assemblies, academic affairs meetings, and departmental forums, ensuring broad stakeholder engagement. Shared governance structures provide multiple avenues for faculty, staff, and students to participate meaningfully in decision-making. In addition, the College has established planning, program review, and assessment processes that support alignment with the mission and strategic priorities. These structures reflect a strong institutional commitment to transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement.

Areas of improvement:

While the College has well-defined governance and evaluation structures, opportunities exist to strengthen their effectiveness and impact. The College could improve by implementing more consistent, institution-wide assessments of leadership and shared governance effectiveness, including regular surveys or evaluation tools that capture stakeholder understanding and engagement. Documentation of how evaluation results lead to specific improvements, decisions, or resource allocations could be strengthened to better demonstrate continuous improvement. Additionally, clearer communication and training related to governance roles, processes, and decision-making authority, particularly for new faculty, staff, and students, would enhance shared understanding and participation across the institution.

Recommendations:

The College should strengthen how governance evidence is organized and accessed by creating a more centralized, standardized system for maintaining and sharing key documents such as meeting minutes, bylaws, and policies. This could include a single governance repository (e.g., an internal portal or shared drive) with consistent naming conventions, clear folders by governance body/committee and year, and a defined process for posting agendas, minutes, and supporting documents within a set timeframe after each meeting. In addition, the College should periodically review and update bylaws and policies and maintain version control (dates, revisions, and approvals) so the campus community can easily identify the most current documents. These steps

would improve transparency, support continuity, and make it easier to demonstrate governance effectiveness for ongoing planning and accreditation.