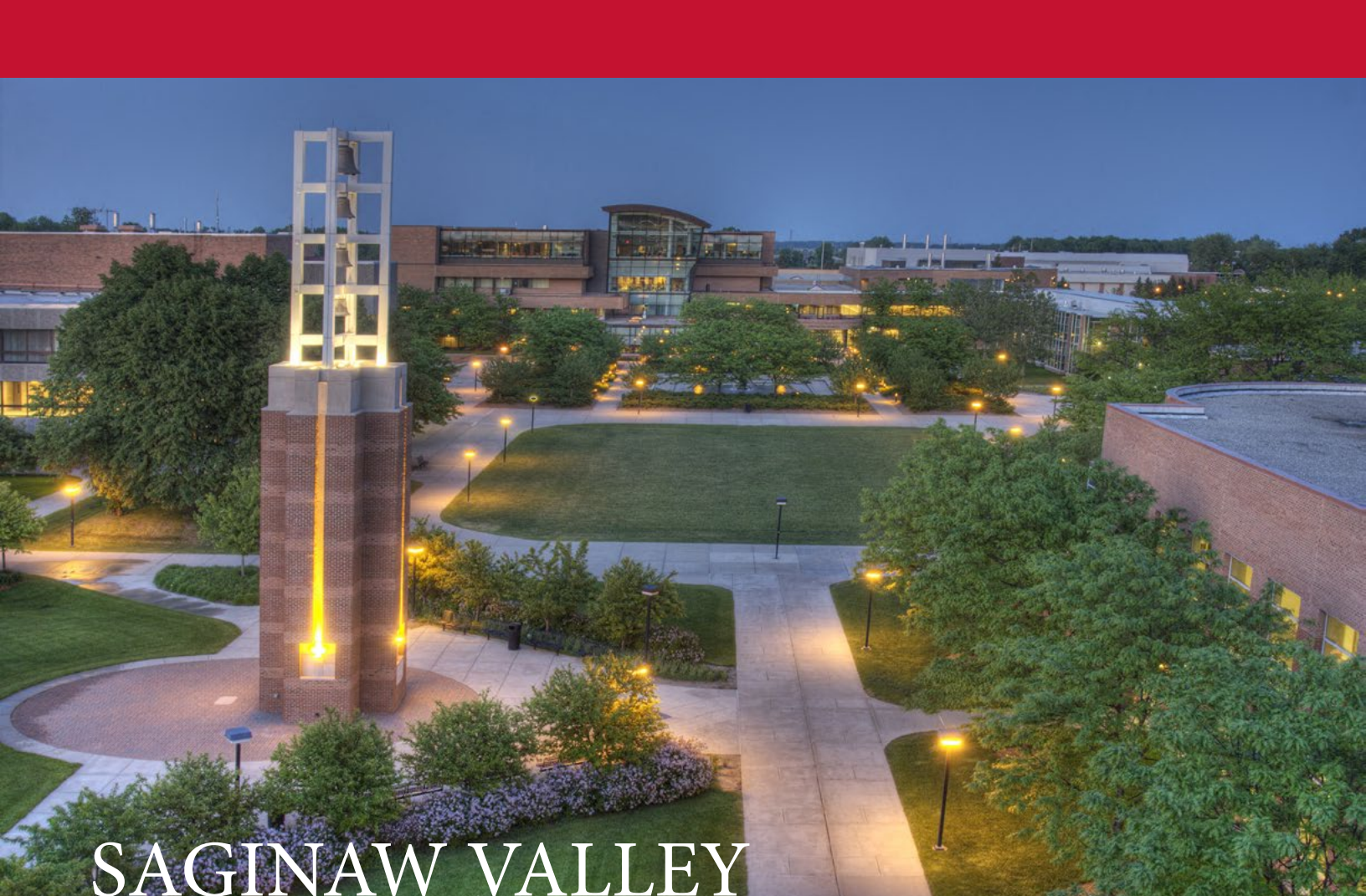




SAGINAW VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY

A Self-Study Report

In preparation for the April 2014
Reaffirmation Accreditation Visit of
The Higher Learning Commission
of The North Central Association of
Colleges and Schools



Preface

Background

Academic Profile

Student Profile

Campus Growth and Change

Change and Continuity

Follow-up on 2006 HLC Monitoring Report

Moving Forward

The Self Study Process

extent of the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development and religious or cultural purpose.

1.B.3 The mission document or documents identify the nature, scope, and intended constituents of the higher education programs and services the institution provides.

1.C The institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of U.S. society.

1.C.1 The institution addresses its role in a multicultural society.

1.C.2 The institution's processes and activities reflect attention to human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

1.D The Institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.

1.D.1 Actions and decisions reflect an understanding that in its educational role the institution serves the public, not solely the institution and thus entails a public obligation.

1.D.2 The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contribution to a related or parent organizations or supporting external interests.

1.D.3 The institution engages with its identified external constituencies and communities of interest and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

Evaluative Statement for Criterion 1: Mission

Criterion One:

The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

1.A The mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations.

1.A.1 The mission statement is developed through a process suited to the nature and culture of the institution and adopted by the governing board .

1.A.2 The institution's academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.

1.A.3 The institution's planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission.

1.B The mission is articulated publicly.

1.B.1 The institution clearly defines its mission through one or more public documents such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans or institutional priorities.

1.B.2 The mission document or documents are current and explain the

Criterion Two:

The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

2.A The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions; it establishes and follows fair and ethical policies and processes for its governing board, administration, faculty and staff.

Financial Functions: Fiduciary Responsibility of the Board of Control

Financial Functions: Sponsored Programs

Financial Functions: Fund-Raising

Financial Functions: Purchasing Policies

Academic Functions: Academic Integrity

Academic Functions: Grade Grievance and Complaint Procedures

Academic Functions: Academic Freedom

Academic Functions: Curriculum Review

Personnel Functions: Human Resources

Auxiliary Functions

2.B The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public with regard to its programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control and accreditation relationships.

Programs and Requirements

Faculty and Staff Information

Educational Costs

Accreditations

2.C The institution's governing board is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure its integrity.

2.C.1 The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.

2.C.2 The governing board reviews and considers the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.

2.C.3 The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties when such influence would not be in the best interest of the institution.

2.C.4 The governing board delegates day to day management of the institution to the administration and expects the faculty to oversee academic matters.

2.D The institution is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.

2.E The institution ensures that the faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly.

2E1. Institution provides effective oversight and support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff and students.

2.E.2 Students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information resources.

2.E.3 Institution has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

Evaluative Statement for Criterion 2: Integrity

Criterion Three:

The institution provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

3.A. The institution's degree programs are appropriate to higher education.

3.A.1 Courses and programs are current and require levels of performance by students that are appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded.

3.A.2 The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for its undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate, and certificate programs.

3.A.3 The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements, or any other modality).

3.B The institution demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs.

3.B.1 The General Education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the institution.

3.B.2 The institution articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.

3.B.3 Every degree program offered by the institution engages students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

3.B.4 The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live and work.

3.B.5 The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their programs and the institution's mission.

3.C. The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student service.

3.C.1. The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance; establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff; involvement in assessment of student learning.

3.C.2. All instructors are appropriately credentialed, including those in dual credit, contractual and consortial programs.

3.C.3 Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.

3.C.4 The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.

3.C.5. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.

3.C.6 Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and co-curricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development.

3.D. The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.

3.D.1 The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.

3.D.2 The institution provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. It has a process for directing entering students in courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared.

Support Programs for Academically At-Risk Students

Programs for Outstanding Students

3.D.3. The institution provides academic advising suited to its programs and the needs of its students.

3.D.4 The institution provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning (technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites, museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).

3.D.5 The institution provides to students guidance in the effective use of research and information resources.

3.E. The institution fulfills its claims for an enriched educational environment.

3.E.1 Co-curricular programs are suited to the institution's mission and contribute to the educational experience of students.

3.E.2 The institution demonstrates any claims it makes about contributions to its students' educational experience by virtue of aspects of its mission, such as

research, community engagement, service learning, religious or spiritual purpose, and economic development.

Non-Credit-Bearing Community Engagement

Credit-Bearing Community Engagement

Evaluative Statement for Criterion 3:
Quality Programs

Criterion Four:

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

4.A. SVSU demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs

4.A.1 The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.

4.A.2 The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning.

4.A.3. The institution has policies that assure the quality of the courses it accepts in transfer.

4.A.4 The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It assures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.

4.A.5 The institution maintains specialized accreditation as appropriate to its educational purposes.

4.A.6 The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution assures that the degree or certificate programs it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its missions, such as employment rates, admission rates to advanced degree programs, and participation rates in fellowships, internships, and special programs (e.g. Peace Corps and Americorps).

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

4.B.1 The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.

4.B.2 The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.

4.B.3 The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.

4.B.4 The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.

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

4.C.1 The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence, and completion that are ambitious but attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations, and educational offerings.

4.C.2 The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs. Academic Factors.

4.C.3 The institution uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to improve its persistence and completion rates as warranted by the data.

Administrative Initiatives

4.C.4 The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs reflect good practice. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDs definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)

Evaluative Statement for Criterion 4: A Culture of Continuous Improvement

Criterion Five:

The institution's resources, structures, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. The institution plans for the future.

5.A. The institution's resource base supports its current educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

5.A.1. The institution has the fiscal and human resources and physical and technological infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.

Fiscal Resources

Endowments

Grants and Research Funding

Human Resources

Technology

Positioning SVSU for the Future

5.A.2. The institution's resource allocation process ensures that its educational purposes are not adversely affected by elective resource allocations to other areas or disbursement of revenue to a superordinate entity.

5.A.3. The goals incorporated into mission statements or elaborations of mission statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources, and opportunities.

5.A.4. The institution's staff in all areas are appropriately qualified and trained.

5.A.5. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring expenses.

5.B. The institution's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission.

5.B.1. The institution has and employs policies and procedures to engage its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students—in the institution's governance.

5.B.2. The governing board is knowledgeable about the institution; it provides oversight for the institution's financial and academic policies and practices and meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.

5.B.3. The institution enables the involvement of its administration, faculty, staff, and students in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes through effective structures for contribution and collaborative effort.

5.C. The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.

5.C.1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities.

5.C.2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting.

5.C.3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.

5.C.4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity. Institutional plans anticipate the possible impact of fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue, such as enrollment, the economy, and state support.

5.C.5. Institutional planning anticipates emerging factors, such as technology, demographic shifts, and globalization.

Technology

Globalization

Demographic Shifts

5.D. The institution works systematically to improve its performance.

5.D.1. The institution develops and documents evidence of performance in its operations.

Academic Assessment

Fiscal Evaluation

Annual Performance Evaluation

Institutional Research

5.D.2. The institution learns from its operational experience and applies that learning to improve its institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability, overall and in its component parts.

Evaluative Statement for Criterion 5:
Resources and Planning

Preface

Background

Saginaw Valley State University (SVSU) is the newest of Michigan's state universities and is situated on a 782-acre campus in the Great Lakes Bay Region within a triangle formed by Saginaw, Bay City, and Midland. SVSU was originally chartered as a private institution to meet the higher education needs of east-central Michigan; there were no four-year institutions of higher learning in the region, and committed community leaders saw a need for a liberal arts college in an area with a population base of 500,000 people. This grassroots investment has remained consistent throughout SVSU's history, as the University and the region remain intertwined in both goals and leadership. As Saginaw Valley College, the institution admitted its first class of 119 students in 1964, became state-assisted in 1965 during a period of national expansion of institutions of higher learning, and held its first commencement in 1966. The name was changed from Saginaw Valley College to Saginaw Valley State College in 1975 and to Saginaw Valley State University in 1987. The earliest students were primarily non-traditional commuter students. However, the student profile has shifted steadily, especially over the past decade, to a more traditional student base, with significant numbers of students living on campus or nearby. From its beginnings the University has experienced steady growth, not only in its student body, faculty, and staff, but also in the programs it offers, as well as its physical facilities and infrastructure. SVSU has evolved into a distinctive comprehensive regional university that fulfills the goals of its founders by providing higher educational opportunities for the citizens of the region, the state, and, to a more limited extent, beyond. While many things about Saginaw Valley State University have changed in its 50 year history, its primary mission — to provide access to high quality academic programs, to provide opportunities for success in personal and intellectual development, and to serve the region as an intellectual and cultural center — has remained constant.

As can be seen in Figure P.1, the University has experienced continuous growth over time, leveling out over the past few years at approximately 10,500 students, which has been defined as the “right size” for the institution.

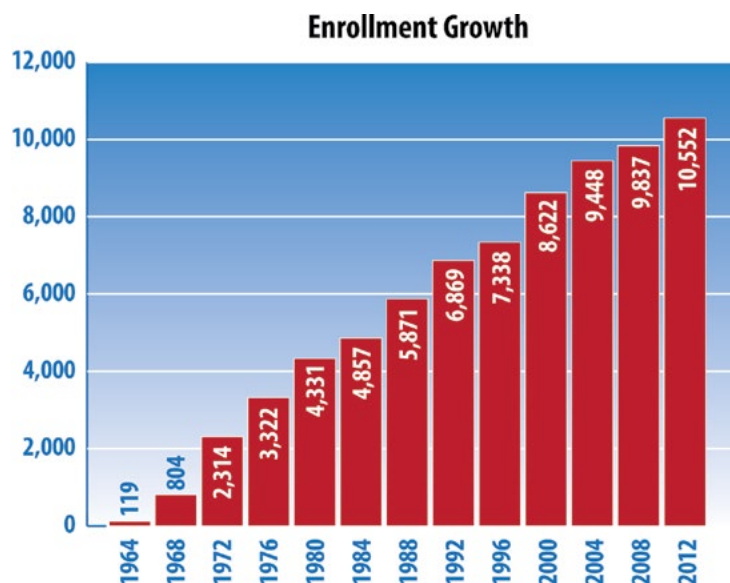


Fig. P.1
(RD#21)

Academic Profile

SVSU is a regional comprehensive university holding the Carnegie Classification ([RD#368](#)) of Masters-L, VHU (very high undergraduate focus). The institution is organized into five colleges: Arts and Behavioral Sciences; Science, Engineering and Technology; Business and Management; Education; and Health and Human Services. Over its history, SVSU has provided traditional undergraduate programs, with majors and minors in the arts, sciences, and social sciences, along with professional programs, including education, engineering, business, and the health professions. When the University added graduate programs, it carefully considered the needs of the region and the strengths of the institution.

The University has a well-defined General Education program and offers 65 undergraduate programs that lead to one of the following 10 degrees: Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Fine Arts, Bachelor of Social Work, Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering, Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering, Bachelor of Business Administration, Bachelor of Professional Accountancy, Bachelor of Applied Studies, and Bachelor of Science in Nursing. SVSU also offers 13 graduate degree programs and three post-baccalaureate programs; these are primarily part-time professional programs intended to provide students with opportunities to enhance their knowledge and abilities and to help them expand career options. SVSU's graduate degrees are: Master of Arts in Communication and Digital Media, Master of Arts in Administrative Science, Master of Education, Master of Business Administration, Master of Science in Nursing, Master of Science in Health Administration and Leadership, Master of Science in Occupational Therapy, Master of Science in Energy and Materials, Education Specialist, and Doctor of Nursing Practice. The post-baccalaureate programs in education lead to either initial teacher certification or additional teacher endorsements.

SVSU received its initial accreditation from the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools in 1970; approval for master's programs was granted in 1974. SVSU has maintained its comprehensive accreditation continuously since those initial approvals. In 2012, SVSU requested approval to offer its first doctoral program, the Doctor of Nursing Practice, which HLC approved. Additionally, the University has received specialized accreditations from 10 external bodies, listed in 4.A.5.

Primarily, SVSU offers classes in traditional face-to-face formats; however, in the last six years, SVSU has gradually and strategically added online and hybrid classes to meet student demands, particularly in graduate programs. Currently, about 7% of the total credit hours are offered through online or hybrid delivery, representing an 18% increase since 2009. Of those courses, most (69%) are at the graduate level, primarily in the College of Education. The College of Health and Human Services and the College of Business and Management also offer significant numbers of their courses online.



To prepare faculty for the demands of online teaching, SVSU has required training, first through Sloan-C courses, and, since 2009, through in-house programs. Recently, the University appointed a full-time Director of Online/Hybrid Learning and is in the process of enhancing its training for faculty, developing online tutorials for students, and making consistent use of the Quality Matters rubric for course design. The institution will continue to pursue a gradual and rational approach to adjusting its class formats, balancing the needs of students enrolled in professional programs and spring/summer classes with the strength of the physical learning environment and faculty-student interaction.

Student Profile

SVSU identifies itself as an institution of both opportunity and choice.

As will be discussed in Criterion 1, SVSU identifies itself as an institution of both opportunity and choice. It continues to meet the goals of its founders by providing opportunities for students in the region to acquire a higher education. Although not an open enrollment institution, SVSU provides services to a diverse range of student populations, from those who are underprepared for college work and require a particular set of academic support services, to those who are well-prepared for college and have chosen SVSU for its value, size, exemplary programs, and student-centered undergraduate experiences.

In recent years, the University has made a concerted effort to attract and retain high achieving students by offering scholarships and distinctive programs and has been successful at attracting a significant percentage of successful high school students. The average ACT composite score for entering freshmen in 2012 was 21.6, and the average high school GPA was 3.21, making the 2012 class the best academically prepared class in the University's history ([RD#369](#) presents fall 2013 data). While the average ACT score and high school GPA suggest students are generally well-prepared for college-level work, the distributions associated with these measures do not follow a normal bell-curve.

It is also important to note that while SVSU enrolls a relatively large proportion of students who have been very successful in high school (HS GPA > 3.5), such high school GPAs do not always translate into especially high ACT scores (e.g., 30 or above). More critically, SVSU enrolls substantial numbers of students with HS GPAs below 2.5 and ACT Composites below 18. These groups of students are marked as academic risk, as may be some of those with high school GPAs between 2.5 and 2.99 and/or ACT Composites between 18 and 20. Addressing the issues associated with this bi-modal split, as well as serving students in the perennial "middle," represents a challenge for SVSU student services and shapes the implementation of teaching and learning strategies and support efforts. The University has responded with numerous programs for students requiring additional academic support, while also encouraging research, international travel, and other enrichment programs for the high-achieving students.

Averaged over 2011-2013 and based on data reported in the Common Data Set, the graphs below describe the academic preparation of incoming students at SVSU. A significant fraction of SVSU students thus need developmental work. Among the fall 2013 FTICs, roughly 43% initially placed into developmental math courses

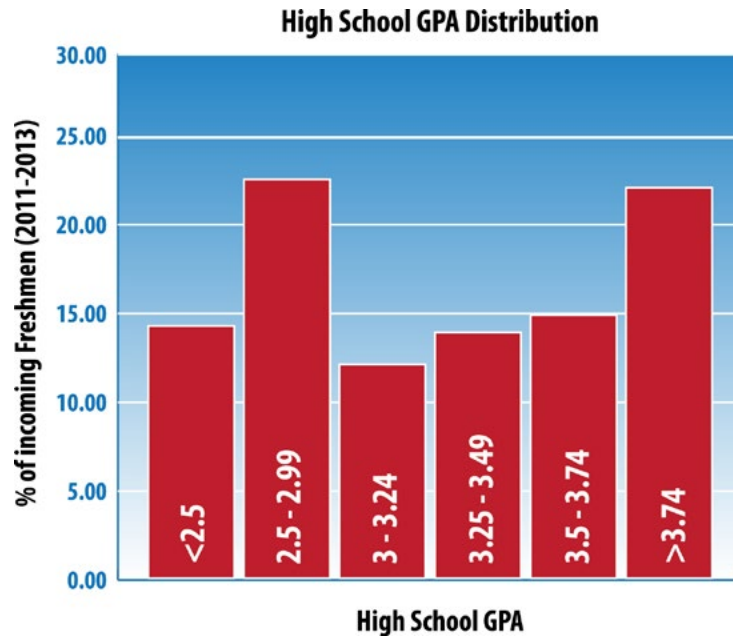


Fig. P.2
([RD#588a](#))

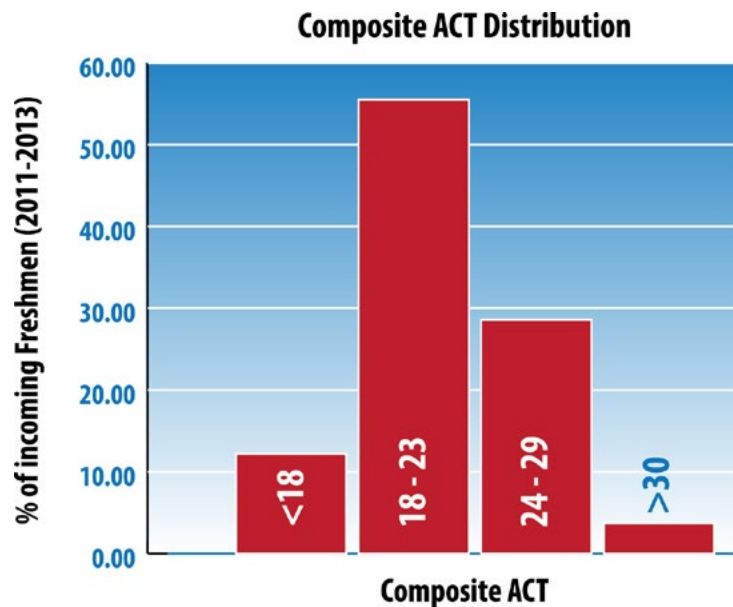
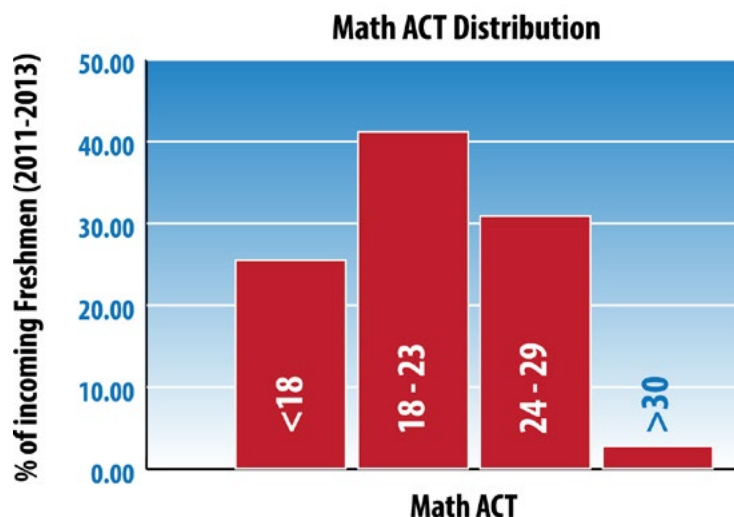


Fig. P.3
([RD#588b](#))

Fig. P.4
(RD#588c)



(0-level, specifically Math 081 and Math 082); roughly 9% initially placed into SVSU's developmental writing course (English 080); and roughly 32% initially placed into reading courses (9.7% into English 082 and 22.4% into English 103 or English 104). Some 36% need developmental work in multiple areas. Approximately 45% of SVSU students are Pell Eligible and approximately 33% are first generation in college. Because of its enrollment profile, the University is especially attuned to the fact that first generation in college students often lack knowledge and experience with the expectations, conventions, and practices of higher education, and so may struggle to navigate the complexities of the organization. Success statistics for these students are comparable to those observed nationally, and the large proportion of students needing developmental work has a significant impact on SVSU's graduation rates.

Of the full-time undergraduates at SVSU in fall 2012, 74% had demonstrated financial need. Of those students, 92% were awarded some need-based financial aid, with 40% receiving federal grants, 49% receiving university grants, and 73% taking student loans. The average student debt (including federal loans, subsidized and unsubsidized) is \$21,228, suggesting a significant gap between the financial resources of the students and the cost of a university education, despite SVSU's low tuition. Nonetheless, SVSU students' two-year cohort loan default rate is only 7.1%, (RD#362) well below the national average of 10% (RD#361).

SVSU's student body is diverse in terms of background; students come from rural, urban, and suburban areas, bringing with them widely different life experiences and expectations about what a university education entails. Virtually all of the entering freshmen are full-time students, and over 70% of the freshmen now live on campus. SVSU's primary service area comprises the surrounding 14 county region, with about 50% of its students coming from Saginaw, Bay, Midland, and Tuscola counties, but increasing numbers coming from Genesee, Macomb, Wayne, and Oakland counties. About 93% of SVSU's students come from within Michigan, while almost 6% come from 34 other countries, with the largest numbers coming from Saudi Arabia and China.

SVSU Fall 2012 Enrollment Where Students Come From

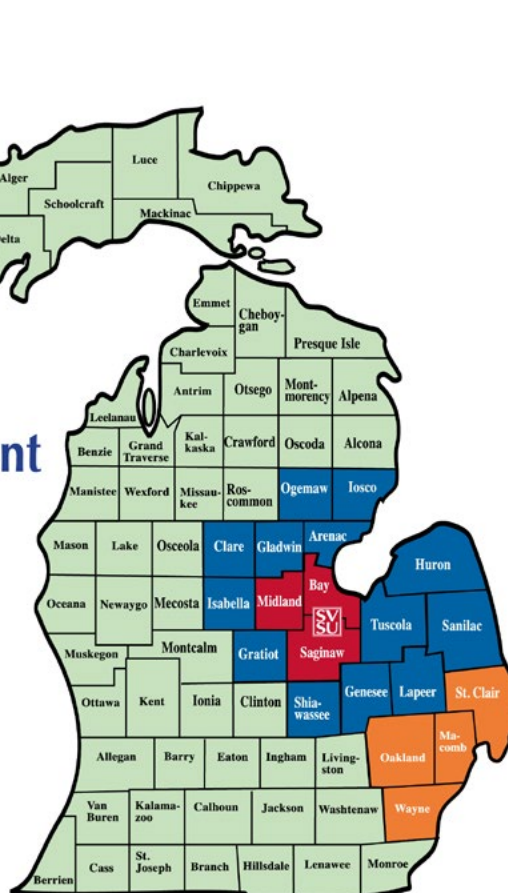
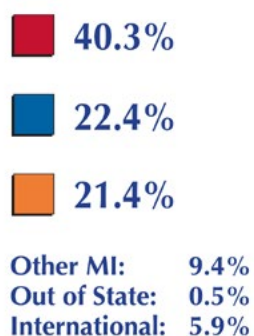


Fig. P.5
(RD#583)

SVSU serves a multi-ethnic region, and the student body's racial and gender makeup approximate that of the region, as shown in the table below. While progress has been made in diversifying the faculty and staff, there is still a gap in representation by certain groups. While the University has made progress in diversifying the campus community, it is committed to furthering these efforts.

	Total Minority	Black	Hispanic	Asian American	Native American	Female
USA (2010 census)	31%	10.5%	14.3%	5.0%	0.5%	47%
Saginaw, Bay, Midland Counties	14.7%	7.5%	4.8%	1.1%	0.3%	49%
SVSU workforce (2012)	13.6%	5.5%	3.5%	4.4%	0.1%	49%
SVSU Students (2012)	18.5%**	13.7%*	3.5%	0.9%	0.3%	59%

Table P.1
(RD#357)
and
(RD#21)

*Includes students who self-define as African American and "mixed race."

** Based on domestic students self-disclosure of ethnicity; does not include international students, or non-reporting students.

Campus Growth and Change

(SVSU) has a current enrollment of about 10,500, a size that the University has deemed as sustainable for the region and optimal to fulfill its mission.

Since its founding, SVSU has changed from a commuter-oriented institution with a large non-traditional population to a more traditional and increasingly residential student body that reaches beyond the four-county area that had been its primary recruiting base. This change was deliberate. As a response to the decreasing high school populations in the traditional region, the University intensified its recruiting efforts outside the region. Since 2000, the number of students living on campus has increased from less than 1,400 to about 2,700, including about 70% of the freshman class. Today, SVSU is a comprehensive, co-educational, baccalaureate, and masters granting state university with over 34,000 alumni. It has a current enrollment of about 10,500, a size that the University has deemed as sustainable for the region and optimal to fulfill its mission. In a report ([RD#14](#)) issued in the spring of 2012, a University task force “recommended that the University’s primary goal should be to stabilize total enrollment at approximately current levels.”

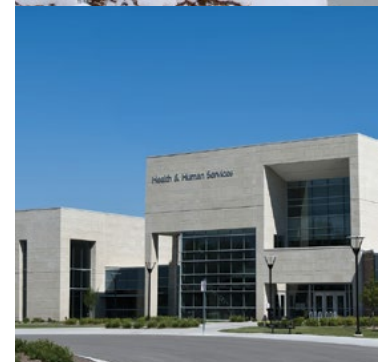
As the institution made the transition to its current size and character, the University developed a number of strategic initiatives to better serve its internal and external constituencies. It has enlarged the campus by 70% since 1990, which includes the more than 980,000 square feet of new construction (costing about \$190 million) added since 2003. Recent large scale expansions include major renovations to Pioneer Hall, which houses the engineering program (2007), and the Arbury Fine Arts Center (2009), as well as the construction of the Health and Human Sciences building in 2010. The University also added a fourth floor to the Melvin A. Zahnnow Library, significantly enhancing campus research capacity and library services. The University took further steps to meet the needs of its larger student body by expanding campus wide technology infrastructure and technical support as well as adding or updating classrooms and lab spaces and fitting them with state-of-the-art technology.

To support the increased number of campus residents, the University built modern student housing, including the Living Center Complexes, University Village, Pine Grove West, and Living Center Southwest. At the same time, the University expanded recreation and fitness areas, food courts, and health care facilities to better serve its growing residential population and enhance its campus experience. All of the above projects are summarized in Table 1 on the following page.

Additionally, the University developed three satellite locations. The first, housed in Cass City, provided evening classes for residents of Tuscola County. (Due to enrollment declines, these classes were discontinued in 2008). A classroom and administrative building constructed in Macomb County meets the needs of graduate programs in the College of Education, and a site in Port Huron offers undergraduate education courses.

Building Name	Year	Cost	Sq. Footage
Fitness Center (<i>sq. footage included in Campus Recreation Center</i>)	2003	\$3,519,396	15,390
Library Expansion (4th Floor)	2003	\$12,056,023	21,815
Living Center South	2003	\$9,921,823	84,170
Regional Education Center	2003	\$28,000,000	122,296
Student Center	2003	\$7,100,000	33,155
Macomb Regional Education Center	2003	\$3,217,246	14,812
Marshall Fredericks Museum Expansion	2003	\$2,510,000	7,994
University Village III (<i>includes community room</i>)	2005	\$8,800,000	57,747
Living Center South Addition	2005	\$2,716,000	23,001
Baseball/Softball Concession Stand	2006	\$917,537	2,634
Library Food Court Addition	2006	\$2,913,407	5,871
Davis Road (7366) Barn & Shed	2006	---	3,840
Michigan Road Greenhouses (2 bldgs.)	2006	---	3,600
Baseball/Softball Stadium	2007	\$906,612	240
Pioneer Hall Expansion (<i>renovation cost included</i>)	2007	\$16,000,124	30,550
University Village IV (<i>approx. cost</i>)	2007	\$7,300,000	54,607
Pine Grove West & Community Bldg.	2008	\$10,907,000	70,700
Arbury Fine Arts Addition	2009	\$2,949,294	13,107
Living Center Southwest	2009	\$11,709,494	77,368
University HealthCare	2009	\$2,621,000	9,984
Health Science Building	2010	\$28,000,000	95,975
Campus Recreation Center (<i>includes Fitness Center</i>)	2011	\$7,405,000	63,148
1662 Pierce Road Storage Buildings	2012	---	12,528
Boutell Greenhouse	2013	\$500,000	1,920
Field House and Ryder Center Upgrade (<i>underway</i>)	2014	\$20,000,000	153,800
Total		\$189,969,957	980,252

Table P.2
([RD#198](#))



As resources allow, the University will continue to authorize significant building projects, such as the current \$20 million dollar project to construct a field house addition to the Ryder Center for Health and Physical Education to provide space for varsity and sports clubs. However, the current focus is on maintaining and renovating existing campus facilities and expanding services to meet the needs of the increasingly residential population. To that end, the University maintains a full-time professional police force ([RD#370](#)) on campus. It also contracts for an array of food service ([RD#305](#)) options, including traditional campus dining facilities along with on campus locations for popular franchises such as Starbucks, Papa John's Pizza, and Einstein Bros. Bagels. Barnes and Noble manages the on-campus bookstore ([RD#310](#)).

At the same time, Residential Life ([RD#371](#)) has developed more comprehensive policies and standards to assist students living on campus and has organized affinity housing based on student interest. An on-campus Counseling Center ([RD#372](#)) and University Health Center ([RD#312](#)) provide support for both the psychological and physical well-being and care of students.

Student Life fosters a wide variety of opportunities for student engagement on campus for both residential and commuter students. There are over 150 student organizations ([RD#264](#)) on campus including special interest, multicultural, academic/professional, faith-based, and performance opportunities. In addition, the SVSU Program Board sponsors a large number of campus events. Students have the opportunity to participate in a Leadership Development Program as well as multiple opportunities to participate in service and civic engagement projects. Campus Recreation promotes health and wellness on campus through its support for such activities as intermural sports, fitness classes, club sports, and personal training, as well as off campus field trips. The University provides support for students of color ([RD#314](#)); active, reserve, and veteran service members and their dependents ([RD#315](#)); students with a wide array of disabilities ([RD#316](#)); and the LGBTQA+ community ([RD#373](#)).

*mission:
to serve the
region as a
cultural and
intellectual
resource*

Consistent with its mission to serve the region as a cultural and intellectual resource, the University expanded the role of the Conference Center at SVSU and established entities such as the Center for Business and Economic Development, the Stevens Center for Family Business, the Marshall Fredericks Sculpture Museum, and the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (discussed further in [1.D.3](#)). The University hosts a number of cultural events that are open to the public including music and theatre performances; art exhibitions; and symposia and presentations by nationally known academics and prominent speakers. The growth of SVSU's endowment has fostered a host of other important developments and is a point of pride for the University. It provides \$1.2 million in scholarship support each year and supports 10 endowed faculty chair positions. The endowment also supports numerous high-value opportunities for students including international travel; leadership programs including the Gerstacker Fellows and the Roberts Fellows; and student research.

While comprising a small portion of the overall budget, the SVSU endowment nearly tripled in the last decade and increased dramatically after the 2008 recession from \$39 million in 2009 to \$63 million in 2013. The institution currently is engaged in an endowment campaign, "Talent, Opportunity, Promise: The Campaign for SVSU," in conjunction with its 50th Anniversary celebration. The fundraising goal is \$25 million, and, at the time of this writing, the Foundation had raised nearly \$17 million.

Change and Continuity

Although the infrastructure and physical facilities at SVSU have grown and transformed continuously over the institution's history, the University's core values have remained constant. SVSU maintains its strong commitment to student learning through excellent teaching that values individuals. It provides for small classes ([RD#374](#)), averaging about 21 students, the significant majority of which are taught by full-time faculty.

Sound fiscal management and careful planning have allowed these emphases to continue despite significant changes in institutional funding. SVSU is a public institution supported by the State of Michigan, although in the last decade, the University's general fund revenue has shifted from about 50% state-funded to less than 22%. As a result, the institution has become more tuition-driven. However, SVSU's increasing enrollments have offset decreases in state funding; this growth has allowed the University to minimize tuition increases and maintain the lowest tuition among the 15 public universities in the state.

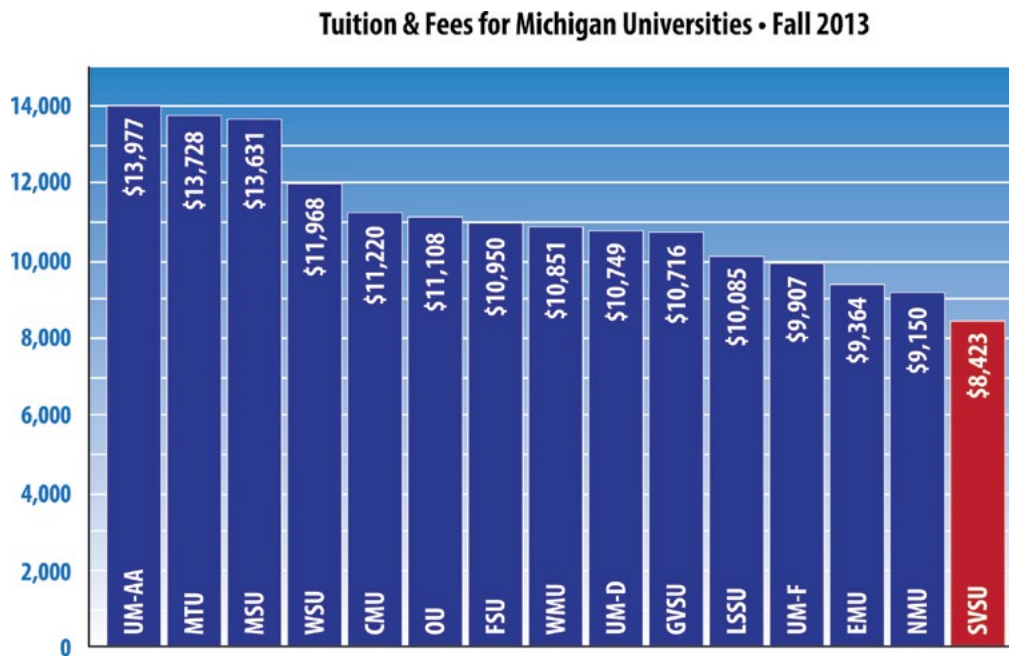


Fig. P.6
([RD#197](#))

Michigan has no formal higher education structure to oversee its public universities, but SVSU's leadership structures and personnel have exhibited marked continuity. Each of the 15 state universities is constitutionally autonomous and operates independently — from setting its own tuition to approving its own curriculum and negotiating for capital project funding. That said, SVSU participates in statewide meetings coordinated by the Presidents' Council of the State Universities of Michigan, an organization that sets up regular meetings of the 15 public universities' presidents, chief academic officers, chief financial officers, student affairs officers, registrars, and institutional research officers. These high-level administrators regularly meet to discuss

issues of mutual interest, such as sharing and reviewing changes in academic offerings including the creation, revision, or elimination of programs.

The governing body of SVSU is the Board of Control, whose members are appointed by the state governor. The daily operation of the institution is delegated to the president and his staff. The University has established well-defined policies and procedures since its earliest years. It has revised or added clearly defined practices when needed to address new issues such as academic program assessment or the approval of online and hybrid courses.



Eric Gilbertson

In June 2013, President Eric Gilbertson announced his intent to retire after 24 years of successful leadership. His decision, while a personal one, was predicated on his belief that the institution was in a strong position with “fine faculty and staff, a solid financial position, strong political and philanthropic support, an organizational culture that works and is at peace with itself” ([RD#112](#)). The Board of Control, responsible for hiring the next president, has retained a consulting firm, AGB Search, to facilitate this process. A search team, led by a former Board of Control chairman and composed of Board of Control members, former Board of Control members, representatives of the three major communities in the region, faculty, staff, and a student, has been charged with the task of identifying three to five finalists for the Board of Control to consider. The final hiring decision, as delineated in the Board of Control Bylaws, lies with a simple majority (five of the eight voting members) of the Board. It is expected that this process will be complete by March 2014.

Due to its growth and increased complexity, in 2010 the University reorganized its administrative structure. It split Student Services and Enrollment Management into two divisions, Student Affairs and Enrollment Management ([RD#46](#)), each headed by a vice president, in order to improve the operations of each by allowing them to focus on core areas of responsibility. For similar reasons, the Information Technology unit was reassigned to the Administration and Business Affairs division, as was the Athletic Department. The principal functions of the University— Academic Affairs, Administration and Business Affairs, Enrollment Management, Student Affairs, and Public Affairs— are now carried out within the four units headed by vice presidents and one by an executive director, respectively.

The SVSU organizational chart on the following page identifies the structural units of the University and their relationship to each other. The accompanying graph illustrates the distribution of personnel, emphasizing how these structures speak to SVSU’s areas of emphasis.

SAGINAW VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

(Revised January 13, 2014)

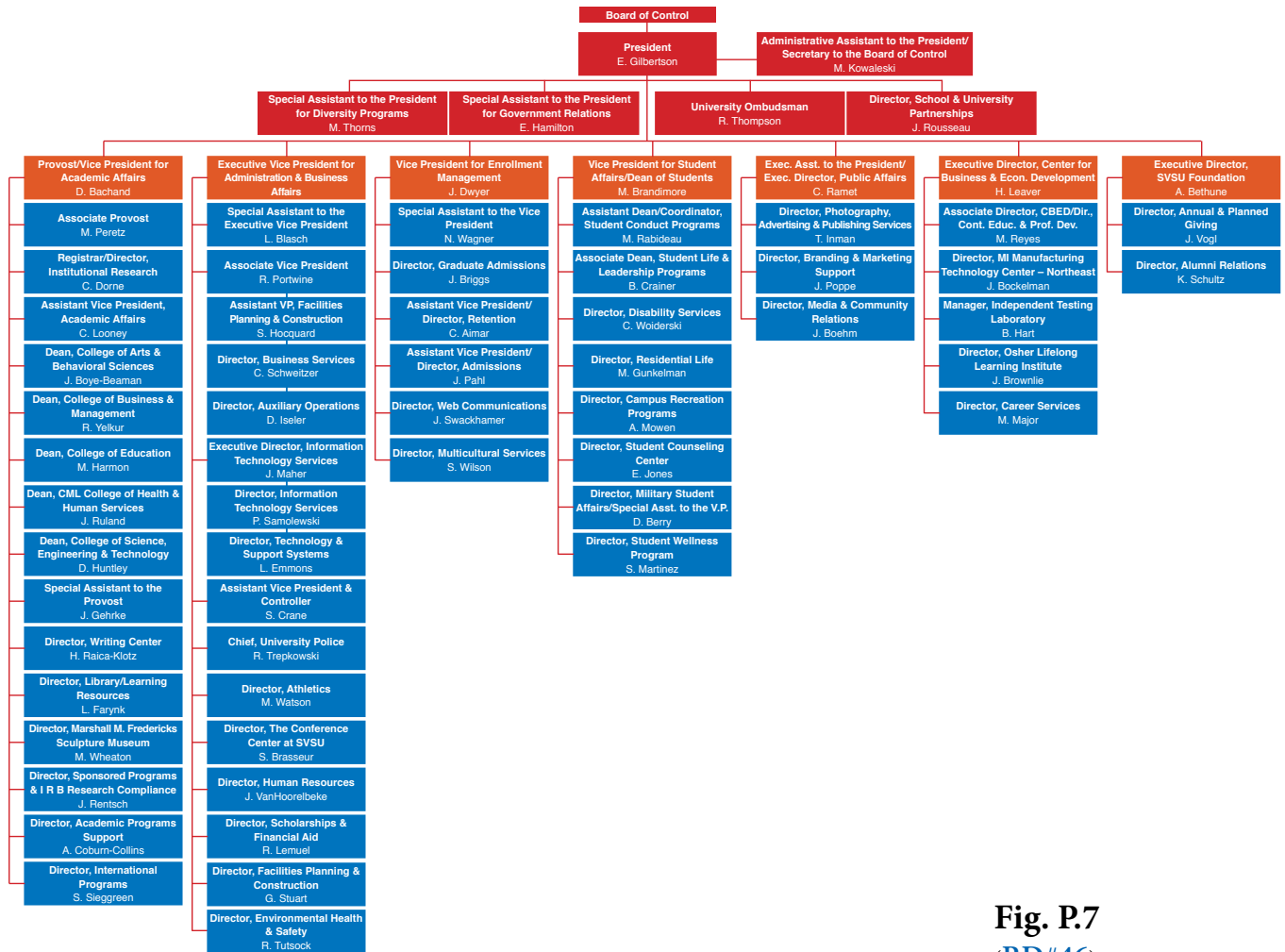


Fig. P.7
(RD#46)

Distribution of Personnel Resources

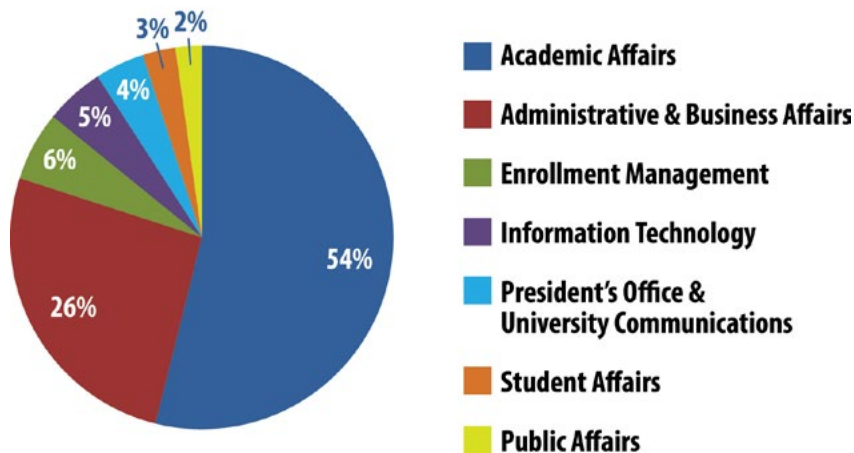


Fig. P.8
(RD#357)

SVSU has collective bargaining agreements with its faculty and with the support staff (secretarial and physical plant/business services staff). The Faculty Association (FA), affiliated with the Michigan Education Association/National Education Association, has been in existence since 1972. The two separate unions for secretaries and physical plant personnel merged in 1989 as the Support Staff Association (SSA). The FA and SSA contracts define the working relationship between the covered employees. Contracts are negotiated on three-year cycles. The current contract with the Faculty Association is set to expire on June 30, 2014. Negotiations took place during fall 2013, and a tentative agreement on the next three-year contract was reached in November 2013. The new contract, to serve from July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2017, was ratified by the faculty and approved by the Board of Control in December 2013. The Support Staff Association Contract is slated for re-negotiation in the summer of 2015. In recent years, campus personnel have negotiated the contracts between the University and these two unions in house rather than relying on outside entities. Bargaining has generally been cooperative. Both contracts are mature, and the most significant aspects of negotiation have been related to financial issues including salary and benefits.

The University values commitment, both the commitment from the community that it has enjoyed since its inception, and the commitment from faculty and staff.

The University values commitment, both the commitment from the community that it has enjoyed since its inception, and the commitment from faculty and staff. This culture of commitment is characterized by stable and enduring campus leadership with key offices being held by the same individuals for long periods of time, engendering a strong sense of identity for faculty, staff, and students. The University and the surrounding community enjoy a positive relationship. Numerous community-sponsored events are held on campus, and the University actively engages in the community through such activities as service learning projects, internships, and consulting enterprises.

In addition to its primary educational function, the University serves as a regional cultural, intellectual, and economic center. It is a significant employer in the region ([RD#98](#)), with 85% of its employees living within the four counties of Bay, Isabella, Midland, and Saginaw and whose total compensation is \$51.2 million dollars. In addition, about two-thirds of the University's expenses, approximately \$108 million dollars, are spent within the region. As part of its cultural mission to the region, for example, in 2012, SVSU presented nine theatre productions and over 40 musical performances, all of which were open to the public. Members of the public also come to campus to participate in a variety of continuing education programs, such as the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute ([RD#379](#)), and to use campus facilities made available through the Conference Center at SVSU. The University also supports a variety of economic programs through the Center for Business and Economic Development (CBED) ([RD#380](#)) and through other offices, such as the Stevens Center for Family Business ([RD#381](#)).

Students are engaged with the community through classroom-based leadership and service initiatives, as well as internships, fieldwork experiences, and civic engagement projects. SVSU's students share a commitment to give back to the

community through service and charity projects. This commitment reflects the strong ties to the community responsible for establishing the school. Registered Student Organizations annually hold fund-raising efforts on behalf of the community, such as the Battle of the Valleys and Relay for Life. For example, in the first 11 years of the Battle of the Valleys ([RD#382](#)), SVSU students raised over \$250,000 for charitable causes.

Follow-up on 2006 HLC Monitoring Report

Following the last HLC self-study and site visit in 2004, the University submitted a monitoring report in December 2006 in response to concerns raised by the site visitors. These concerns were centered on assessment within the newly implemented General Education program, academic program assessment, and diversity.

General Education: The current program (approved by the faculty in 2002) has now been through two complete five-year assessment cycles. At SVSU, General Education is a 35-credit program spread over 10 broad categories. In addition to the overarching tri-partite goals of critical thinking, logical reasoning, and effective communication, each of the 10 categories has specific student learning objectives. The General Education Committee (GEC), which has the responsibility for oversight of the program, reviews course applications for inclusion in the program to ensure that they address the tripartite and category-specific goals and include effective assessment plans. The committee also considers the need to offer a sufficient number of courses within each category to provide students with a reasonable set of choices while keeping the program focused and manageable. The GEC approves courses for a five-year period, after which the sponsoring department must provide assessment data to the GEC demonstrating that the course meets the goals of the program. If the assessment data is incomplete or if the results are unsatisfactory, the GEC may withhold the five-year approval and require a revision to the assessment measures used in the course and a resubmission of data in one or two years.

In addition to course-level assessment, the overall General Education program is assessed for its effectiveness. At the time of the monitoring report, the General Education Committee evaluated samples of student writing for logical reasoning, critical thinking, and effective communication. The Committee solicited writing samples from faculty in all five colleges. When several years of reviewing these evaluations failed to provide a meaningful evaluation of the program as a whole, the GEC looked to external assessment methodologies. Following a review of several national instruments, the GEC selected the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) to supplement the course level assessments and provide benchmark data. It chose the CLA because it best matched the tripartite goals of the SVSU program. SVSU began its participation in the CLA program in 2009; since then it has administered the assessment to incoming freshman

each fall and to graduating seniors each spring. As described in detail under Criterion 3, the scores earned by the graduating seniors are significantly above those expected based on their pre-college preparation and normal intellectual maturation. Results are included, along with departmental and course-specific assessment information, in on-going evaluations of General Education and indicate that the General Education program achieves its primary goals.

Program Assessment: Beginning in 2004, Academic Affairs instituted a new academic program assessment initiative requiring that each department offering academic majors prepare an annual Academic Program Assessment and Department Planning Report. These reports require departments to identify student learning outcomes for their degree programs and to discuss how those goals reflect the mission of the University, how the goals are assessed, and how departments use such information to improve their programs. These departmental planning documents also serve as the means by which departments request additional resources. Departments must tie such requests directly to articulated student learning outcomes and align them with enrollment issues. They submit these reports to their respective deans, who review and prioritize the resource requests within the context of their individual colleges.

All reports are then sent to the Office of the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs where the associate provost reviews them and makes preliminary recommendations to the provost. Funding for resource requests is determined by the provost in consultation with the deans. The members of the Assessment Advisory Board also read the reports to ensure that departments are providing the appropriate information from which to draw conclusions regarding program effectiveness. All reports are posted on VSpace, SVSU's internal learning management system. Academic Program Assessment has become an integral part of SVSU's academic culture. Faculty recognize the role of assessment in student learning, curriculum planning, program development, and resource allocation. SVSU's academic units have developed a culture of continuous improvement, and the University is developing an outcomes-based culture in non-academic areas as well.

Campus Diversity: The University created the position of Special Assistant to the President for Diversity Programs in 2002 with the intent that the individual in that office would provide leadership for the institution's efforts to improve the diversity climate on campus. The Office of Diversity Programs has organized numerous projects, workshops, speakers, etc. that have dealt with the broad topic of diversity, but perhaps the most important and impressive accomplishment has been a significant change in the campus's valuing of diversity, paired with a recognition that "diversity" is about more than race and gender ([RD#166](#)).

The University considers continuing such improvements and expansion of opportunities to engage in diversity programs to be a priority; it thus lists

several actions in its current Strategic Plan that speak directly to diversity issues. (RD#75, p. 3-5), (RD#75, p. 31) and (RD#75, p. 36). Diversity issues are included in numerous courses across multiple disciplines; departments are asked to address diversity questions as part of their annual program assessment and planning reports; and a number of successful diversity initiatives, described later in this report, continue to receive support. More than 110 faculty and staff, for example, have participated in SVSU's Inclusion Advocate program (RD#383), which helps ensure that the institution's hiring practices are equitable and that personnel are aware of how issues of diversity impact hiring. SVSU's Diversity Score Card/Workforce Trend data from 2003-2012 shows that there has been a 20% increase in minority faculty and staff to current levels of 17% for faculty and 12% for staff (RD#270). SVSU continues to make progress in diversifying the student body as well. In 2004, minority (non-white) students comprised 16% of the student body, with international student enrollment at 2.5%. In the fall of 2012 those numbers had increased to 25.7% and 5.8% respectively. SVSU was recently notified that it is a 2013 recipient of *INSIGHT Into Diversity's* Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award (RD#384), which recognizes exceptional institutional commitment to diversity and inclusion.

Moving Forward

While the University continues to improve its General Education program, its academic program assessment processes, and campus diversity, it also is undertaking new initiatives to raise its retention and persistence-to-graduation rates to aid the academic success of all SVSU students. To increase the internationalization of the campus, the University is recruiting students from a greater diversity of nations, developing sister-institution relationships with schools from other countries, and expanding study abroad opportunities for SVSU students. At the same time, the University is preparing its application for the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification (RD#386) as it furthers its commitment to service and engagement with the larger community.

The Self Study Process

The Office of Academic Affairs initiated the self-study process in April 2011 with the formation of the Coordinating Committee. This group developed a comprehensive timeline for the self-study project, created the organizational structure that would be used for preparing the self-study (as indicated in the following chart), and began service as an executive body overseeing all aspects of the self-study process. It brought together people from across campus to address the accreditation criteria while the Steering Committee, composed of the President's Planning Council, provided guidance and approval on matters of policy.

... the University is recruiting students from a greater diversity of nations, developing sister-institution relationships with schools from other countries, and expanding study abroad opportunities for SVSU students.

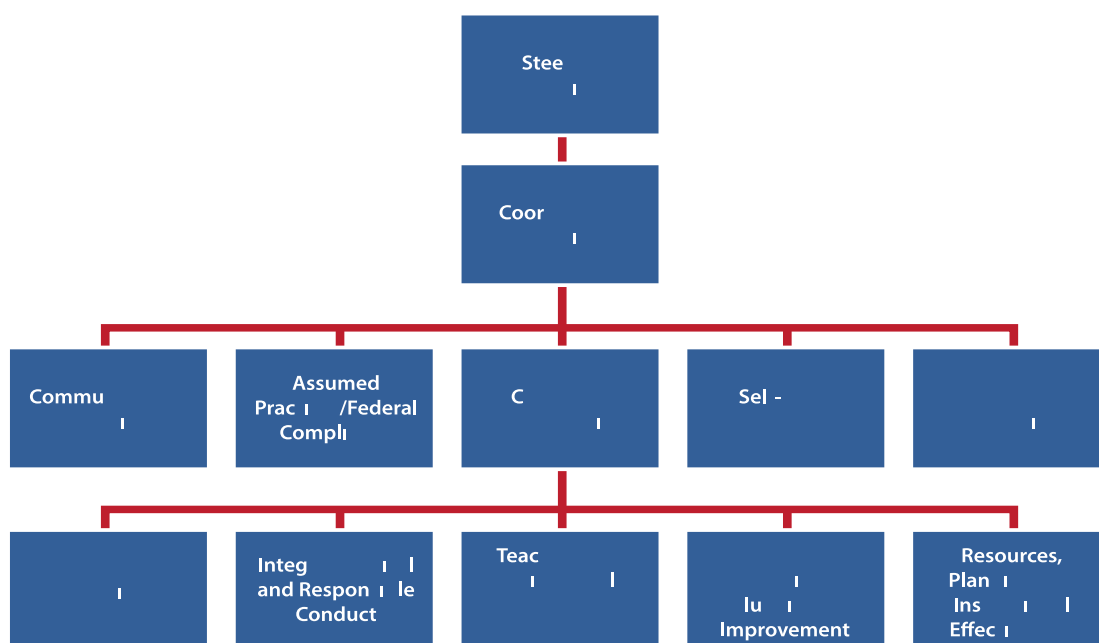


Fig. P.9
(RD#165)

The Associate Provost serves as the chair of the Coordinating Committee. Most members of the Coordinating Committee have experience with accreditation procedures, through HLC, specialized accreditation processes, or both. During the summer and early fall of 2011, the membership of the various sub-committees reporting to the Coordinating Committee was identified and approved by the Steering Committee. In January 2012, invitations were issued to 65 faculty members, administrators, and staff from all units on campus asking them to serve on the various sub-committees (RD#165). The Coordinating Committee brought together all the committees and sub-committees for their first workshop in February 2012 to discuss the process, review the accreditation criteria, consider their respective roles, and set up their initial sub-committee meetings.

Each sub-committee had a well-defined charge. The Communications Committee was responsible for providing information about accreditation, the self-study, and site visit to both internal and external constituents. The Assumed Practices/Federal Compliance group was formed to review SVSU's compliance. The Self-Study Support sub-committee was charged with developing and maintaining the data archive for the use by the self-study teams and the site evaluators. The Site Visit Logistics Team was tasked with planning and scheduling all aspects of the team visit.

Five additional sub-committees were formed to address each of the five accreditation criteria. Each group included a balanced mix of faculty, administrators, and staff. Each sub-committee was asked to gather evidence and provide evaluative statements regarding the extent to which SVSU meets the

criteria, including criteria components and subcomponents. The sub-committee chairs met periodically with the Coordinating Committee to share results and discuss findings. Each group had its own VSpace site for sharing materials internally, and all members of all committees had access to the overall HLC site where drafts were stored for review.

The general timeline for the self-study and site visit is shown below.





Criterion One

Criterion One:

The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly;
it guides the institution's operations.

SVSU's current Mission/Vision statement was developed by a campus committee with broad-based participation representing the institution's diverse stakeholders. This statement emphasizes the opportunities SVSU creates for both individuals and the larger community and so is consistent with the mandate for a regional comprehensive university.

Mission: The University creates opportunities for individuals to achieve intellectual and personal development through academic, professional, and cultural programs. By fostering an environment of inquiry and openness that respects the diversity of all whom it serves, the University prepares graduates whose leadership and expertise contribute to the advancement of a pluralistic society. The University serves as a cultural and intellectual center dedicated to the pursuit and propagation of knowledge.

Vision: The University will provide academic, professional, and cultural programs at the highest level of quality and service; it will achieve national recognition for its programs of distinction. The University's graduates shall distinguish themselves and their University through meritorious service, accomplishments, and leadership in the economic, cultural, and civic affairs of a diverse and global society. Through exemplary teaching, research, and engagement with the greater community, the University will also be the premier cultural and intellectual resource for the region's schools, governments, businesses, and people ([RD#12](#)).

*To
operationalize
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and assessed
periodic
strategic
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documents . . .
tied to all
aspects of SVSU.*

To operationalize the Mission/Vision, the institution has created, implemented, and assessed periodic strategic planning documents that specify goals and actions tied to all aspects of SVSU. The current Strategic Plan ([RD#75](#)) defines the University's goals for and expected outcomes for issues grouped under the following headings:

- Academic Improvement;
- Programs of Qualitative Distinctiveness;
- Enrollment Management;
- Physical and Technical Resources;
- Campus Culture; and
- University and Community Advancement.

The creation, implementation, and evaluation of these core documents involve collaboration among a large number of diverse University stakeholders. The

Mission/Vision and Strategic Plans are thus widely shared with the University's various constituencies and the general public. All formal University actions are tied to the Mission/Vision and the Strategic Plans. Administrative units and academic departments align their planning and assessment activities with the University Strategic Plan and the Mission/Vision statement.

Because the Mission/Vision and Strategic Plans continue to identify SVSU as an institution of opportunity and choice, serving a diverse population has always been a core institutional value. SVSU thus remains committed to diversifying its faculty, staff, student body, and programs and has made significant progress in infusing multicultural perspectives into its curricula and campus culture. Similarly, again based on the Mission/Vision and Strategic Plan, the University embraces the goal of working for the public good in the region and beyond.

Serving a diverse population has always been a core institutional value.

1.A The mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations.

1.A.1 The mission statement is developed through a process suited to the nature and culture of the institution and adopted by the governing board.

SVSU's current mission statement was developed in 2004 by a committee charged by the President to produce a statement that accurately represented the purpose, goals, and role of the University. Composed of administrators, faculty members, and representatives from the SVSU Student Association, the committee sought input from a wide range of stakeholders including off-campus community members. The committee also reviewed previous mission statements and compared the existing mission statement to mission statements of peer institutions. The deliberations of the committee are well documented, and the statement that emerged from those deliberations was brought before the Board of Control for consideration and approval ([RD#267](#)). This process embodied SVSU's campus culture of collaboration, stakeholder inclusion, and transparency. In this spirit, the University periodically reviews and re-evaluates the Mission/Vision as part of its on-going strategic planning and assessment processes. ([RD#391](#)) and ([RD#63](#)) and ([RD#401](#)) and ([RD#200](#)).

To amplify the Mission/Vision, cross-functional committees of diverse stakeholders developed the various strategic planning documents through similar processes of dialogue and assessment and submitted these materials to the Board of Control, which plays an active role in approving the plans and reviewing the progress tied to them. SVSU currently operates under the Strategic Plan approved by the Board of Control on February 11, 2013 ([RD#75](#)). The previous Strategic Plan initially ran from 2008-2011 ([RD#72](#)) but was extended via an update ([RD#70](#)) until the current plan was in place; both of these documents and their associated progress summaries, are available online.

1.A.2 The institution's academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.

SVSU aligns its programs and services consistent with its identity as an institution of both opportunity and choice.

As a regional comprehensive public university and within the framework of its Mission/Vision and Strategic Plan, SVSU makes a concerted effort to align its academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile with its identity as an institution of both opportunity and choice. As noted in the Preface, SVSU offers traditional undergraduate degrees in arts, humanities, social sciences, physical sciences, natural sciences, mathematics, engineering, business, health sciences, and education. It also offers a modest number of graduate degrees emphasizing professional fields of particular need to the region or to SVSU's increasing international population or both. As discussed in Criteria 3 and 4, the Mission/Vision and Strategic Plan drive the development and on-going assessment of all these programs.

This same mission-centered imperative guides the development of SVSU's support programs to ensure their alignment with SVSU's enrollment profile. SVSU's ongoing review and assessment of student support services have informed such efforts as the recent expansion and centralization of tutorial services in the campus library as well as a similar consolidation of financial aid, scholarships, and cashier services in the new Financial Services Center. In addition, the University recently created a full-time Director of Military/Veterans Student Affairs and reconfigured the role of the Associate Dean of Student Life and Leadership to better coordinate student activities.

SVSU has always defined itself as an institution of both opportunity and choice, but, over the past decade, the institution has paid particular attention to framing these terms responsibly through its enrollment strategies in keeping with its Mission/Vision. Specifically, SVSU wants to provide as much access to learning as it can, while recognizing that some potential students are so underprepared for college work that even with high levels of intervention, there is little likelihood that they will succeed within university-level expectations and would be better served by other entities.

To address these issues, in fall 2010 the University changed its policy of accepting students with ACT Composite scores of less than 15 as it became clear that such students were uniformly unsuccessful. As discussed in the Preface, SVSU still accepts some students with ACT scores between 16 and 20 and high school GPAs between 2.0 and 2.5. Also, a significant number of students experience financial need (42% of the fall 2012 FTIC class were defined as Pell eligible). One-third of students in the 2012 FTIC cohort were classified as first generation in college as defined by the U.S. Department of Education. Thus, even though the University raised its admissions standards, it continues to enroll students with a wide range of abilities and academic preparation to a degree consistent with its commitment to providing access.

The University also reexamined its policies and practices for when to dismiss students with low GPAs and aligned these practices with new federal guidelines. These efforts are consistent with the federal government's concerns that students are accumulating unsustainable amounts of debt for an education they may not be able to complete. The new policy was developed in 2012 and ratified by the faculty in 2013. The University publishes its academic probation and dismissal policy in its catalog ([RD#403](#)) and makes the relatively new ([RD#404](#)) federal SAP (Satisfactory Academic Progress) policy available online ([RD#405](#)).

At the same time, SVSU is committed to providing opportunities for highly talented, well-prepared students who find the teaching-focused environment provided by a smaller regional comprehensive university well suited to their goals and financial means. The University provides scholarship monies and has initiated various distinctive programs and enrichment activities, such as the Roberts Fellows Program, student/faculty research opportunities, and an expanded Honors Program to attract such students to SVSU.

Meeting the needs of students with such varying abilities and academic backgrounds — essentially a bi-modal population distribution in terms of abilities — can prove challenging to faculty and staff. That said, the university environment is arguably richer for the range of experiences students encounter in and out of the classroom because of this mission-based approach.

SVSU's graduate programs face a bi-modal population of a different sort; they work to balance the needs of students from the region (who are often working adults) and international students. Again, the sense is that this mix, while administratively and pedagogically challenging, will enlarge SVSU community members' experiences with a diverse world and thus speaks directly to the Mission/Vision.

1.A.3 The institution's planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission.

Institutional planning and budgeting is firmly aligned with the Mission/Vision, especially in the various iterations of the Strategic Plan. As noted above, the task force that drafted the current Strategic Plan was composed of diverse University stakeholders who worked together to review and reaffirm SVSU's Mission/Vision.

From this work, the task force developed the following broad goals, each followed by a statement of the goal's alignment with the Mission/Vision:

Academic Improvement: The University will continuously assess and improve academic programs to ensure student learning and expand participation in a wide range of experiential learning opportunities. The University will develop and support targeted academic and co-curricular

SVSU is committed to providing opportunities for highly talented, well-prepared students who find the teaching-focused environment provided by a smaller regional comprehensive university well suited to their goals and financial means.

*The University
will develop
and be known
for distinctive
programs
that provide
opportunities for
excellence to
students.*

programs to expand student opportunities and improve student success rates.

This goal aligns with the mission and vision of providing “opportunities for individuals to achieve intellectual and personal development” offering “academic programs...at the highest level of quality” while “preparing graduates whose leadership and expertise contribute to the advancement of a pluralistic society.”

Programs of Qualitative Distinctiveness: The University will develop and be known for distinctive programs that provide opportunities for excellence to students.

This goal aligns with the mission and vision of “preparing graduates whose leadership and expertise contribute to the advancement of a pluralistic society” through the development of distinctive programs that “achieve national recognition.”

Enrollment Management: The University will meet or exceed specific enrollment goals in established categories and will increase retention, academic program completion and six-year persistence-to-graduation rates.

This goal aligns with the institution’s commitment to offer “academic, professional ... programs at the highest level of quality and service” to its broadly defined service region.

Physical and Technological Resources: The University will continue to develop, maintain, and enhance its physical facilities and technological resources to support excellence in teaching, learning, and campus life.

This goal supports the mission to provide the infrastructure necessary to serve the mission and vision of offering “academic, professional, and cultural programs at the highest level of quality” and of being “the premier cultural and intellectual resource for the region’s schools, governments, businesses, and people.”

Campus Culture: The University will promote a culture of student success, valuing high achievement, personal and intellectual integrity, a dynamic campus environment, inclusion, and social responsibility.

This goal aligns with the mission and vision to foster “an environment of inquiry and openness that respects the diversity of all whom it serves” and to prepare graduates who “distinguish themselves and their University through meritorious service, accomplishments and leadership in the economic cultural and civic affairs of a diverse and global society.”

University and Community Advancement: The University will increase support from and advance its service to the region, Michigan and beyond as a cultural, intellectual and economic leader.

This goal reflects the mission and vision that “through exemplary teaching, research, and engagement with the greater community, the University will also be the premier cultural and intellectual resource for the region’s schools, governments, businesses, and people.”

The current Strategic Plan ([RD#75](#)) shows how the institution operationalizes these Mission/Vision-based goals through specific initiatives and includes both measures of progress and indicators of success. A related document, the Campus Master Plan, most recently updated in 2012 ([RD#172](#)), addresses issues tied to physical facilities, including long-range planning and priorities based on the Mission/Vision and the Strategic Plan. As with previous strategic plans and planning cycles, the results of the most recent planning process were presented to the Board of Control for review and approval. Progress reports have been and continue to be made to the Board of Control at key junctures ([RD#407](#)).

The Strategic Plan is, in turn, further operationalized under the authority and supervision of the President’s Planning Council (composed of the four vice-presidents and the Special Assistant to the President for Diversity, the Executive Assistant to the President, and the Director of the SVSU Foundation) and the President’s larger staff, which adds representation from the five colleges, the government liaison, the ombudsman, and entities such as the Center for Economic Development (CBED). These vice presidents and directors also meet with the Board of Control regularly, both in large session and committee.

As fully described in Criterion 5, both long- and short-term budgeting priorities align with and support the Mission/Vision and the Strategic Plan. The graph below specifies general fund allocations within this framework.

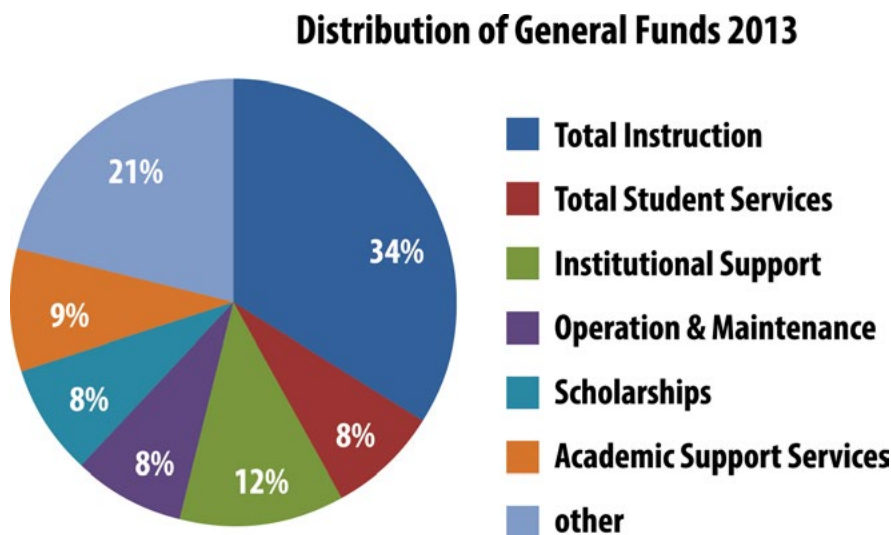


Fig. 1.1
([RD#188](#))

In line with the Mission/Vision, the largest expenses are those directly related to instruction, with those services that directly support students (the combination of student services, academic support services, and scholarships) as the second largest expense. As discussed in Criterion 5, the careful management of resources in service of the mission has been a hallmark of this institution, and all budgetary decisions are made in consonance with the Mission/Vision and especially the Strategic Plan. Capital outlay requests to the State of Michigan, for example, cite the Mission/Vision directly ([RD#208](#)).

1.B The mission is articulated publicly

The University displays framed copies of the Mission/Vision statements throughout the campus in offices, meeting rooms, and other public spaces. The text appears in several prominent places on the university website, including some of the pages used primarily for admissions such as, ([RD#408](#)) and ([RD#409](#)), as well as at the President's page ([RD#74](#)) where it is available in English and seven other languages. The language, values, and practices associated with the Mission/Vision are also reflected in the mission statements of specific units, ranging from Campus Facilities ([RD#410](#)) to IT services.

SVSU is enhancing and restructuring its web services by implementing a portal system. The portal will serve constituencies internal to the campus, and the university website will focus on constituencies external to the campus. Both structures will continue to emphasize wide dissemination of the Mission/Vision and related documents such as the Strategic Plan, thus providing increased public awareness of the mission and related institutional priorities.

1.B.1 The institution clearly defines its mission through one or more public documents such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans or institutional priorities.

Beyond the wide dissemination of the Mission/Vision discussed above, SVSU clearly articulates and elaborates on its Mission/Vision through other public documents such as the various iterations of the Strategic Plan, which is regularly updated ([RD#75](#)), the Master Plan ([RD#172](#)), the Operations Manual ([RD#73](#)), and diverse SVSU Board of Control ([RD#105](#)) documents. In addition, SVSU's Mission/Vision is both included in and serves as the primary driver of such texts as the website's welcome page ([RD#408](#)), the Student Handbook ([RD#411](#)), and the Course Catalog ([RD#42](#)).

As discussed above, the Strategic Plan, along with its regular updates, progress reports, and other associated documents, serves as the central road-map for the direction of the University. In addition to the website postings, the University shares this Plan with its various internal and external constituencies through diverse venues ranging from the President's biannual speeches to all faculty and staff ([RD#412](#)) to SVSU's Annual Report, *Insight* ([RD#171](#)), and to presentations to the Board of Control.

1.B.2 The mission document or documents are current and explain the extent of the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development and religious or cultural purpose.

SVSU's Mission/Vision and Strategic Plan are current. The revised Mission/Vision created by the 2004 committee, discussed above, was approved by the Board of Control in 2005 and has been regularly reviewed since. The current Strategic Plan was approved earlier this year.

The Mission speaks directly to institutional priorities. The Mission's promise of "fostering an environment of inquiry and openness" recognizes the institution's central commitment to teaching, even as it expands that commitment to include "intellectual and personal development through academic, professional, and cultural programs." The Mission's centerpiece language ("prepares graduates") and its mandate as "a cultural and intellectual center dedicated to the pursuit and propagation of knowledge" reiterate that commitment. The Vision, too, emphasizes this priority in the ordering of the opening of its final sentence: "Through exemplary teaching, research, and engagement with the greater community, the University will also be the premier cultural and intellectual resource for the region's schools, governments, businesses, and people." In a May 6, 2013 interview, Provost Donald Bachand reaffirmed that teaching is the "unequivocal priority at SVSU" ([RD#36](#)).

The Mission/Vision recognizes that scholarship, research, creative work, and various forms of public service are essential to effective collegiate teaching and to the University's broader purposes. Thus, both the Mission and the Vision address what the Mission calls, "the pursuit and propagation of knowledge." Such work is particularly important in terms of the University's service functions and its engagement with the broader community, embodied in SVSU's plans to obtain the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification.

The Strategic Plan offers the best evidence for this reading of the Mission/Vision and the clearest examples of how that reading is realized in both short-term and long-term efforts. Samples of the ways in which the various institutional priorities are balanced — always focused around teaching and learning—can be seen both in the current Strategic Plan's goals ([RD#75](#)) and the last Strategic Plan's goals and progress reports ([RD#72](#)). While the Strategic Plan's ordering does not always signify prioritization, it is notable that the very first area considered in the current plan is "Academic Improvement" and that the first initiatives in this section address "effective teaching" while the second group of initiatives "support student learning." Actions related to scholarship, research, and creative activities inform both the section on Academic Improvement and the next section on "Programs of Qualitative Distinctiveness," with the intent to foster faculty development, student learning, and community engagement. Strategic initiatives to create an environmental science institute and to seek

Both the Mission and the Vision address what the Mission calls, "the pursuit and propagation of knowledge."

Carnegie Community Engagement Classification exemplify how the University intends to meet these objectives ([RD#75](#), p. 12-13).

1.B.3 The mission document or documents identify the nature, scope, and intended constituents of the higher education programs and services the institution provides.

The Mission/Vision clearly identifies the nature and scope of SVSU's programs and services, emphasizing teaching and learning in all endeavors. Both components of the Mission/Vision focus attention on "graduates," thus marking enrolled students as key intended constituents. The Mission/Vision encourages a wide range of people to consider themselves as potential students and broadly defines the individuals who might become its students and graduates. Some of this latitude, as stated in the Mission, is tied to the University's goal of creating a community that "respects the diversity of all whom it serves" and its sense of its place within "a pluralistic society." Thus, while the University is primarily a "resource for the region's schools, governments, businesses, and people" (as the Vision's language makes clear), the Vision further states that the University aims to serve and to have its graduates serve "a diverse and global society."

In the section on Enrollment Management, the 2008-2011 Strategic Plan establishes the overall goal to "Recruit and retain a wide range of qualified students from the region and beyond" ([RD#72](#)). In the same section of the current Strategic Plan, the University further elaborates how it intends to meet these ideals. This extension beyond its traditionally-defined region reflects both SVSU's growing sense of its place in the wider world and the fact that SVSU students increasingly come from across the State of Michigan (especially from the southeastern counties near Detroit) and from the international community.

While SVSU's constituents are first and foremost enrolled students, the campus community also includes faculty, administrators, and staff. In alignment with the University's vision to serve as the "premier cultural and intellectual resource for the region's schools, governments, businesses, and people," the campus reaches out to alumni and a range of outside constituencies, including prospective students, regional community members, and a broader general public. Again, the Strategic Plan discusses how the University engages these different constituencies, and Criteria 2, 3, and 4 address such questions in more depth.

1.C The institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of U.S. society.

The University has defined itself an institution of opportunity with respect for diversity since its inception. As such, diversity is a core value in the Mission/Vision and the Strategic Plan. Thus, the University community was especially pleased when *Insight into Diversity* awarded SVSU one of its first Higher

Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Awards ([RD#384](#)) in 2013. The award recognizes that “SVSU has an unprecedented number of programs and initiatives in place that provide substantial opportunities for students, faculty, and staff from all underrepresented groups” and that “diversity and inclusion goals have shaped the character of this university.” The award particularly notes the services the University provides to groups based on gender, race, ethnicity, veteran status, sexual orientation, and people with disabilities.

“Diversity and inclusion goals have shaped the character of this university.”

In line with its mission, the University is committed to fostering diversity in a number of ways, including:

- increasing the diversity of the student body, the faculty, and the staff;
- promoting curricular and co-curricular efforts that are diverse in intellectual content and approach;
- implementing academic support initiatives to increase retention among a diverse student population; and
- organizing student clubs and campus life opportunities that reflect a diverse population.

This commitment can be seen in the range and scope of activities that various units within the University have undertaken and the outreach activities to local communities that faculty, students, and staff have organized. Examples are discussed below; the Preface as well as sections of Criteria 2, 3, and 4 address the issue further.

1.C.1 The institution addresses its role in a multicultural society.

and

1.C.2 The institution’s processes and activities reflect attention to human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

Diversity is a core value on the SVSU campus and is embedded throughout its Strategic Plan, with particular emphasis in the sections on Academic Programs, Campus Culture, and Enrollment Management. Work by various offices and organizations across campus as well as curricular efforts and moves to internationalize SVSU’s campus are crucial components of the University’s endeavors to promote human diversity and attend to the University’s role in a multicultural society.

The Office of Diversity Programs, a cabinet-level unit that reports directly to the President, is critical to realizing the University’s commitment to fostering diversity and creating a campus of inclusion and respect. Guided by feedback and recommendations from the 21-member, community-based SVSU Diversity Council (established in 2003 to address issues of diversity and community relations), the Special Assistant to the President for Diversity Programs ([RD#413](#)) initiates and coordinates a key set of diversity activities including the following:

- planning campus-wide diversity-related events;
- increasing awareness of diversity issues;

- compiling and disseminating workforce statistics;
- Receiving, investigating, and resolving allegations of discrimination from all types of campus constituents;
- coordinating the Inclusion Advocates program ([RD#383](#)), which trains faculty and staff selected to serve on search committees. 67 faculty and 51 staff members had been trained by November 2013. These Advocates work with search committee members, department chairs, deans, and hiring managers to develop job announcements, recruitment itineraries, candidate screening activities, on-campus interviews, and recommendations of final candidates. They also participate in workshops on best practices for diversity recruitment conducted by external consultants with expertise in this area. This approach has been met with considerable enthusiasm by members of the faculty and staff;
- offering a range of diversity educational programs to faculty and staff, including topics such as Embracing Diversity in Excellence; Diversity and Inclusion; Biases/Stereotyping/Micro-Inequities; Diversity Dialogue Circles; and Understanding Cultural Difference; and
- providing educational programs for students including Preventing, Investigating and Reporting Sexual Harassment; Embracing Diversity in Excellence; Diversity and Inclusion; and “OUCH! That Stereotype Hurts.”

In addition, the Office of Diversity Programs collaborates closely with the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs/Dean of Students to ensure the delivery of programs and supportive resources for the University’s lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender population. The VP/Dean chairs an LGBT advisory committee comprised of student representatives of the RSO, faculty, and staff; the advisory committee supports a wide range of campus programs and resources, as well as the delivery of “Safe Space” Ally Training which is held twice during the academic year. Upon completion of the workshop, participants may display decals on their offices or campus residences and may further elect to be listed as an ally in a directory ([RD#416](#)) published on the University website ([RD#373](#)).

The Office of Multicultural Services ([RD#314](#)) is separate and distinct from the Office of Diversity Programs, but the two units also work closely together. Multicultural Services specifically focuses on the persistence-to-graduation rates of under-represented students. This office serves as the main support service on both academic and social levels. Much of the academic support involves making appropriate referrals to the Academic Advisement Center and to the Center for Academic Achievement. The office collaborates with the Office for Diversity Programs to coordinate campus events related to diversity, including Martin Luther King Day and Hispanic Heritage Month.

The campus’s efforts to infuse a variety of diverse ideas and experiences into campus life and to internationalize the University are discussed in more depth in Criterion 3 but in this context, it should be noted that SVSU hosts several groups for faculty, staff, and the broader community tied to diversity issues, ranging from its African American Research Consortium, which supports African American faculty, to the Great Lakes Bay Hispanic Leadership

Institute, which addresses Hispanic representation on community boards and organizations ([RD#272](#)). In addition, the significant expansion of study abroad opportunities (including faculty-led curricular efforts), the sustained effort to bring international students to campus, the reconfiguration of the English Language Program, the assessment-based creation and revision of courses including or focused on international issues, and the broadening of international programming all speak to the global nature of SVSU's commitment to questions of diversity. SVSU also makes a conscious effort to diversify those who teach in these programs. The University regularly sponsors Fulbright visiting scholars, especially from countries in the Middle East, who are able to teach Arabic. The University also hosts visiting scholars from several partnership universities in Japan, China, and India.

The University is also concerned with increasing the diversity of its students as well as faculty, administrators, and staff. Data from such sources as the Common Data Set, Workforce Statistics, and the Diversity Scorecard indicate that, from fall 2004 to fall 2012, the percentage of nonwhite faculty, including multiracial and international, increased from 14.1% to 17%, the nonwhite student population increased from 16.8% to 25.7% and the percentage of nonwhite staff increased from 10.4% to 11.8%. With respect to gender, in fall 2004, 39.1% of the faculty members were women compared to 44.7% in 2012. While SVSU welcomes these improvements, it remains committed to making further strides in terms of these indicators. Also, as noted by the Director of the Office of Diversity Programs, achieving greater diversity does not always equate to a culture of inclusion. To address that issue, in addition to the programs described above, the Office is preparing a campus climate survey to be administered in AY 2013-2014.

1.D The Institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.

In addition to the value SVSU provides to individuals in the region as an accredited, degree-granting institution of higher learning, the University serves the public good as a key venue for diverse programs and services available to the a broad range of constituencies. Both the Mission and the Vision Statements of the University are grounded in an awareness of and commitment to the communities served by the University.

1.D.1 Actions and decisions reflect an understanding that in its educational role the institution serves the public, not solely the institution and thus entails a public obligation.

All aspects of the Mission/Vision and the Strategic Plan center on SVSU's public obligations in the context of SVSU's identity as a public state university. Because all actions and decisions, from policy-making to budgeting, rely on the Mission/

Vision and the Strategic Plan, those actions all also embody an understanding of SVSU's broad educational role.

According to a recent analysis by the Service Learning Coordinator, for example, more than 15% of faculty have involved students in service learning projects that enhance their education while also making a difference in the lives of citizens of the region. Faculty and student projects come from disciplines as disparate as chemistry and art and are discussed in detail in 3.E. Student organizations also view outreach activities to the local community as critical to their individual missions. Competitively awarded funds, often made available through endowments, support student organizations' involvement in such activities. University employees and students are active in a wide range of philanthropic and civic activities, from serving on boards of various business, professional and social service organizations to engaging in numerous volunteer and charitable fund raising activities. Faculty and staff have been involved in leadership initiatives for Saginaw, Midland, Bay City, and the Great Lakes Bay Area, as well as the Community Foundations in Midland, Bay, Arenac, and Saginaw counties.

SVSU's president charged a task force to examine the feasibility and value of seeking the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification. This task force concluded that SVSU's history of serving the public good through outreach, partnerships, and service learning merits applying for this classification.

In 2011, in recognition of the vision of "exemplary ... service to the greater community" and the commitment to volunteerism at the University, SVSU's president charged a task force to examine the feasibility and value of seeking the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification. This task force concluded that SVSU's history of serving the public good through outreach, partnerships, and service learning merits applying for this classification ([RD#278](#)).

1.D.2 The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contribution to a related or parent organizations or supporting external interests.

SVSU has no purposes beyond those expressed in its Mission/Vision and its Strategic Plan. As a public state institution, it has no investors and so no need to generate financial returns for such. Because of Michigan's higher education structure, discussed in the Preface, it has no related or parent organizations and so no need to contribute to such. It supports no external interests that fall outside of the broad educational responsibilities described in its Mission/Vision and operationalized in its Strategic Plan.

1.D.3 The institution engages with its identified external constituencies and communities of interest and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

SVSU engages with external constituencies, including local businesses, schools, health care providers, industries, community agencies, and arts organizations, as well as the general public to fulfill its mission to serve as an educational and cultural center for the region. The institution gathers and uses input on

community trends and needs from advisory boards, both at program and institutional levels, and the institution provides cultural and educational opportunities for the greater community.

The University's Board of Fellows ([RD#417](#)) pays special attention to tracking community developments and maintaining positive relations with members of the community. This advisory group of local business and community leaders meets on campus for breakfast once each month with members of the university staff and faculty. It also hosts an annual breakfast for legislators from the region, giving each elected official an opportunity to speak to the campus community about priorities and concerns related to education.

The SVSU Center for Business and Economic Development (CBED) ([RD#380](#)) is a key example of how the University engages with area economic interests. Its mission and goals can be viewed at: [CBED](#). CBED addresses the needs of the region's businesses in a variety of ways. The Center serves in consultative capacities to many regional businesses, partners with Chambers of Commerce and other business organizations. It also involves faculty and students from business, science, and engineering in addressing challenges faced by a wide array of local businesses. The Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center—Northeast (with a main office in Plymouth, Michigan, and a regional office under CBED on the SVSU campus) ([RD#418](#)) provides management training and product performance benchmarking. The CBED Independent Testing Laboratory ([RD#419](#)) offers physical, chemical, biological, and microscopy product testing for regional manufacturing businesses. CBED has assisted nearly 100 companies in Michigan, from large corporations to family-run start-ups.

In part because of these connections to regional employers, the University recently moved SVSU's Office of Career Services to CBED. CBED also operates the Continuing Education & Professional Development program ([RD#420](#)), offering courses in a wide variety of topics outside the regular academic curriculum of the University. The courses include topics such as finance and conflict resolution, as well as paralegal studies, leadership, marketing, and non-profit agency management. CBED also houses the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) ([RD#379](#)), a member-based organization that meets monthly and offers non-credit educational programs and travel opportunities (in-state, out-of-state, and international) for individuals who are fifty years and older. Currently in its twelfth year of operation, OLLI has more than 1500 members.

Other entities that connect SVSU to the broader community include:

- SVSU's Stevens Center for Family Business ([RD#381](#)), which operates under the auspices of the SVSU College of Business and Management, offers a major event series, a membership program, and academic coursework in family business. Major events include monthly breakfasts in which speakers and/or panelists make presentations and discuss issues pertaining to family businesses. Owners and employees of area family businesses are the main participants, but business students and some faculty members also attend;

- the Community Arts Research Program ([RD#421](#)) places SVSU art students in neighborhood and community organizations to help organize youth in the production of public art projects such as community murals and brings community artists and other relevant speakers to campus to inspire and stimulate students and community members in the production processes; and
- the new SVSU Greenhouse Program ([RD#422](#)), which is housed within the College of Science, Engineering, and Technology, provides collaborative research opportunities for students and faculty while offering information on gardening and innovative agricultural practices to the public.

SVSU currently authorizes twenty-one public school academies (PSAs) ([RD#423](#)) pursuant to state law. Reporting directly to the SVSU President's Office, the Office of University-School Partnership implements the authorization process as well as relevant university services to individual PSAs. The SVSU Board of Control reviews and approves each school authorization contract. In addition to the legal enabling authority provided by SVSU, the University also shares extensive expertise with the teachers and administrators of the PSAs through its College of Education. The many services offered and/or coordinated by the SVSU Office of University-School Partnership to the PSAs authorized by SVSU include professional development, certification and graduate education for teachers, and assistance with curriculum assessment.

The University also sustains its role as a regional intellectual and cultural center through public lectures, concerts, plays, and art exhibits.

The University also sustains its role as a regional intellectual and cultural center through public lectures, concerts, plays, and art exhibits. It also supports the Marshall Fredericks Sculpture Museum, which provides additional exhibits and programs for the public. Facilities and resources tied to these undertakings are discussed in more depth in Criterion 3, as many are critical to SVSU's educational programs. Many of the events are free to the public, or charge minimal admission fees. Information regarding upcoming events ([RD#424](#)) is publicly available on the University website, which provides a calendar of arts and other community events along with a web-based ticket service.

While SVSU hosts far too many events to describe in this report, the following examples demonstrate that SVSU fulfills its mission to be a cultural resource for the region and is committed to the public good.

Every year since 1993, SVSU has presented the Rhea Miller Concert Series ([RD#425](#)). Nationally and internationally-acclaimed musicians and ensembles perform. Past artists include such notables as the Carpe Diem String Quartet, the Manhattan Piano Trio, and the Axiom Brass Quintet. These concerts, made possible by an endowment from Rhea Miller, are free and open to the public.

The Dow Visiting Artists & Lecture Series / Fall Focus Lecture Series, was established in 1996 as part of the Dow Visiting Artists & Scholars endowment funded by the Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation. This series, free and

open to the public, presents approximately six speakers each fall focused around a theme. In 2013 the theme was “Insights-Experience-Achievement” and included presentations by Eugenia Zuckerman, Mira Nair, Lawrence Smith, and Alina Fernandez. In the past, at these and other public lectures, the university has hosted such notable figures as Isabel Allende, Maya Angelou, Henry Louis Gates, Roald Hoffmann, Robert Pinsky, and David Trimble.

Three other regular lectures supplement the Fall Focus series. The Rush Lecture, endowed by Tom and Hilda Rush, is presented by an SVSU faculty or staff member distinguished in creative or scholarly pursuits. The Hoffmann-Willertz Lecture, endowed by the founding members of the SVSU history department, William Hoffman and John Willertz, is presented each year by a member of the SVSU history department. Lastly, SVSU and the Field Neuroscience Institute co-sponsor the James E. O’Neill Jr. Lecture, in recognition of Mr. O’Neill’s many contributions as an educator and state representative. This lecture brings prominent authors to campus to discuss their work. Recent speakers have included Walter Isaacson, James Bradley and, in 2013, Allen Guelzo. All of these lectures are well attended by both the campus and greater communities.

The Mission Statement for the Theatre Program ([RD#426](#)) recognizes that “live theatrical productions provide individuals, the university community, and the community at large with opportunities for artistic and cultural growth.” As such, the Theatre Department regularly offers a season of four or five productions as well as a summer season during which shows are staged in the more intimate surroundings of the Black Box Theatre. These productions are critical for theater students to practice their crafts as actors, writers, directors, and theater technicians. In addition, the University has hosted the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival ([RD#427](#)) Region III competition in 2009, 2010, 2013, and most recently, in January 2014. This enterprise brings approximately 1200 visitors to campus and generates an estimated \$2.8 million in economic activity for hotels, restaurants, and other businesses in the Great Lakes Bay Region each time.

The Voices in the Valley Endowment allows the University to bring award-winning authors to campus for workshops, class visits, writers’ workshops, and public readings of their work. Visitors have included authors ranging from NEA and Rona Jaffe Fellow Janice Harrington, a poet and children’s book author, to Kresge Award-winning poet, Vieve Francis. Series planners have long agreed that interacting with diverse writers expands both student and community awareness of literature. Also of note, in terms of literary offerings, the Theodore Roethke Poetry & Arts Festival ([RD#428](#)) is a triennial celebration of the Pulitzer-winning poet Theodore Roethke featuring various events throughout the Great Lakes Bay Region and highlighted by the awarding of the SVSU Board of Fellows Theodore Roethke Memorial Poetry Prize.

The Marshall Fredericks Sculpture Museum ([RD#429](#)), housed on the SVSU campus, has an extensive collection of plaster casts and bronze sculptures by

Michigan artist, Marshall Fredericks. This museum, free to the public, also features visiting exhibits from artists of national caliber and organizes many educational and arts events. Recently accredited ([RD#430](#)) by the American Alliance of Museums, a status achieved by only 6% of museums in the United States, the Marshall Fredericks Sculpture Museum is a resource for the entire state.

Evaluative Statement for Criterion 1: Mission

Saginaw Valley State University has a current and appropriate mission, articulated through its formal Mission and Vision Statements and amplified through its Strategic Plan. The goals of the Strategic Plan are well aligned with and guide operations to ensure fidelity to the mission and vision of the institution. Cross-functional committees composed of faculty, administrators, students, and external stakeholders developed and updated these three guiding documents, which the Board of Control approved.

SVSU describes itself as a teaching institution, and the Mission, Vision and Strategic Plan clearly state that primary purpose.

The Mission, Vision, and Strategic Plan are articulated publicly and are well understood by the campus community. SVSU describes itself as a teaching institution, and the Mission, Vision and Strategic Plan clearly state that primary purpose. These documents also reflect other appropriate aspects of higher education albeit tied closely to the primary teaching focus, including research, scholarship, and public service.

Saginaw Valley State University offers an appropriate range of programs at the baccalaureate level, with select professional graduate programs. These programs and associated support services are well suited to SVSU's enrollment profile and provide access and opportunities to students from a diverse set of academic and socioeconomic backgrounds. While the University strives to facilitate success for all students, it recognizes the need to balance its goal of access with its limited resources and the need to improve its graduation rate.

SVSU is committed to diversity in its campus climate, workforce composition, and curriculum. It has made significant progress in these areas since 2003, and, in 2013, *Insight into Diversity* recognized SVSU with a Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award. Although the campus community has worked hard to diversify the student body, faculty, and staff, as well as provide meaningful multicultural programs, there is still opportunity for improvement in these areas.

The University supports the public good in the region through artistic, cultural, and intellectual programming as well as continuing education and economic development activities. Many of these activities are made possible by endowments from local business and civic leaders. Through various advisory boards, including the Board of Fellows, SVSU receives regular input from the community to guide its operations and programs.





Criterion Two ■

Criterion Two:

The institution acts with integrity;
its conduct is ethical and responsible.

2.A The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions; it establishes and follows fair and ethical policies and processes for its governing board, administration, faculty and staff.

The University has worked diligently to develop clear and fair policies in all its offices and programs and to improve the transparency of these policies and associated practices.

SVSU is committed to maintaining high standards for integrity and promotes ethical principles in its financial, academic, and auxiliary functions. The University has worked diligently to develop clear and fair policies in all its offices and programs and to improve the transparency of these policies and associated practices. The Board of Control, various levels of administration, faculty, and staff all have generated policies and instituted fair practices consistent with the University's mission, commitment to diversity, and public service, as well as with sound governance practices. Ongoing modifications to the institution's website, including a recent, much improved search function, make documents more accessible.

Financial Functions: Fiduciary Responsibility of the Board of Control

As discussed in Criterion 1, the Strategic Plan guides the use of the University's resources in line with institutional goals and prioritizes the funding of both continuing and new initiatives consistent with the University's mission. The Board of Control is responsible for the approval and periodic review of these high-level decisions, and it regularly evaluates the progress on meeting these goals ([RD#104](#)). Routine control of financial functions of the University is delegated to the President and his Planning Council. However, the Board of Control's fiduciary responsibilities include the following:

- approval of operating budgets, capital outlay, and auxiliary services for the University;
- approval of both capital project "program statements" and all capital projects costing more than \$250,000;
- selection and appointment of the university auditing firm
- acceptance of the annual audit;
- approval of acquisition or sale of real property in excess of \$250,000;
- approval of acceptance of private, state, and federal grants and gifts which

- affect university priorities or which require substantial matching funds;
- approval of tuition, fees, and room and board rates;
- establishment of the compensation for the President and Vice Presidents;
- and
- approval of all contracts.

Board minutes show transparency and deliberation in financial decision making and the formation of policies related to university resources. All Board of Control meetings are open to the public, and Board agendas and minutes are distributed and posted publicly ([RD#105](#)) and are archived and made available to the public on the library website ([RD#103](#)). The Board reviews and approves general fund operating budgets and financial audits annually ([RD#438](#)) and ([RD#439](#)). Each time the Board considers expenditures or funding for projects, it formally notes such decisions in the BOC minutes. An example is the capital outlay plan entered in the minutes for December 14, 2012 ([RD#442](#)). Independently-audited university financial statements are available to the public through the Annual Report ([RD#171](#)). The University maintains an impeccable record of sound fiscal management and consistently receives top ratings from the external auditors ([RD#320](#)).

The SVSU Operations Manual addresses several areas of financial functions, including policies and regulations for use of university resources ([RD#73](#)); policies related to fund-raising and contributions to University funds ([RD#73](#)); and policies regarding tuition ([RD#73](#)). The Operations Manual also specifies the University's policy on conflict of interest in financial affairs ([RD# 73](#)). The Board of Control Bylaws delineates financial policies and processes as they relate to Board members ([RD#104](#)). Each year, Board members must disclose relationships and business affiliations that could give the appearance of conflict of interest and must refrain from participating in decision making where such conflict could exist.

Financial Functions: Sponsored Programs

As will be discussed in further detail later in the chapter, the Office of Sponsored Programs, under the direction of the President, oversees both internal and external grants and ensures that grants are managed appropriately. Sponsored Programs also serves as a third party to facilitate the application for and administration of grants received through the SVSU Foundation and other entities. The Office of Sponsored Programs generates an annual report ([RD#450](#)).

Financial Functions: Fund-Raising

In the spirit of ethical practice, the SVSU Foundation was established in 1977 as an independent entity on campus to function as the fund-raising arm of SVSU. "Its purpose is to provide support for SVSU in order to assist in the

The SVSU Foundation is committed to “generat[ing] and cultivat[ing] a community of enthusiastic and loyal donors who contribute to the development of a premier university of outstanding students.”

accomplishment of the educational purposes of the University” ([RD#451](#)). The Foundation meets and maintains the requirements of the Internal Revenue Service Code Section 501(c)(3) nonprofit status. The Foundation’s Board of Directors operates independently of other university structures under its own set of bylaws ([RD#287](#)) and is committed to “generat[ing] and cultivat[ing] a community of enthusiastic and loyal donors who contribute to the development of a premier university of outstanding students” ([RD#451](#)). The Foundation fulfills this mission through capital projects; endowments; a wide range of merit- and need-based scholarships for students; and diverse grants available to faculty and staff for projects that enrich the educational experience of SVSU students. The Foundation reports its financial status in an annual public report ([RD#453](#)).

Financial Functions: Purchasing Policies

To obtain maximum value from the expenditures its funds, the University follows a well-defined set of purchasing policies, which are delineated in section 5.2-1 of the SVSU Operations Manual ([RD#73](#)). The final selection of a vendor is the responsibility of the Purchasing Department. It must obtain multiple price quotes for purchases over \$1000 and competitive sealed bids for purchases over \$25,000, unless already covered by pricing agreements. Administrative personnel must justify and approve any sole source requests.

The University prohibits discrimination against any vendors on the basis of race, creed, age, sex, or national origin and does not patronize vendors known to practice discrimination. Policies also prohibit purchases where there is a conflict of interest or in response to donations or other gifts to the University. The policies and actions tied to these and other financial concerns are addressed in more depth in Criterion 5, but underlying all financial activity is the commitment to ethical and transparent practice embodied in the above.

Academic Functions: Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is fundamental to the University, and the academic integrity website provides the campus community with an overview of the importance of this issue within SVSU culture ([RD#94](#)). Significantly, the students themselves generated an Honor Code, adopted by the Student Association in 2006, demonstrating their understanding of the issue ([RD#454](#)).

I am committed to upholding a high standard of academic integrity in all of my work, inside and outside of the classroom. Out of respect for my peers, professors, institution, and self, I will complete all tasks honestly and to the best of my ability.

I am guided by my conscience as I work toward my educational and professional goals, and I expect my fellow students to practice that same moral judgment.

I take pride in my academic accomplishments and therefore will not give or receive unauthorized assistance on any assignment, project, exam, or other university requirement.

I seek to maintain the honor of a Saginaw Valley State University degree, and I will preserve its value throughout my professional career.

The SVSU Faculty Association Contract articulates clear academic integrity standards for faculty and the processes for addressing violations of those standards (H 2.3) ([RD#273](#)). By contractual agreement, for example, tenured faculty may only be terminated for just cause, based upon “[a] failure to maintain competence as a teacher and scholar or of repeated failure to comply with job requirements,” charges that have included breaches of academic integrity. The University’s Professional Practices Committee carries out a contractually defined review of any faculty member so charged and recommends disciplinary action if it finds merit to the charges.

Similarly, the University holds students to a clearly articulated standard of academic integrity including questions of plagiarism. This policy, which is spelled out in the SVSU Student Handbook and Student Code of Conduct, also defines procedures for dealing with alleged violations ([RD#65](#)). After appropriate hearings, students may be sanctioned through actions ranging from a written warning (which becomes part of their university record) to dismissal from the University. The Office of Student Conduct maintains information regarding student academic integrity cases. Statistics on violations indicate that the process has been used in all five colleges. To further support its goal of promoting academic integrity, SVSU maintains a site license with Turnitin.com, which faculty use regularly in their classrooms as both a teaching and monitoring tool.

Academic Functions: Grade Grievance and Complaint Procedures

The University has a well-defined and accessible procedure that can be used by any student who has a complaint relating to the grade received in a class. The grade grievance policy is located on a number of SVSU webpages including Academic Affairs, Resource Pages for both faculty and students, in all academic catalogs, and Student Affairs ([RD#558](#)). The grade grievance procedure balances the freedom of faculty members to conduct their classes according to their best professional judgments with the rights of the students against arbitrary or unfair treatment by faculty members. The policy is unambiguous that such grievances are not to be used to second-guess faculty members’ judgment of content but rather are meant to ensure that the means by which content knowledge is evaluated are clear and that grading standards are applied equitably. Grade Grievance proceedings begin with informal negotiation between the student

and faculty member. The Student Association, the University Ombudsman, department chairs, and the appropriate dean's office can advise students or faculty regarding the procedures associated with filing or responding to a grievance. Once the grievance has moved to the formal stage, written records are kept by the parties involved (student, faculty member, chair and appropriate dean's office). Should the process move to a grievance hearing, proceedings are organized through the appropriate dean's office and chaired by the dean or associate dean of the college in which the particular class in question is housed. Deans work closely with the Faculty Association and the Student Association to set up such proceedings. The Faculty Association appoints three faculty members to serve on a Grade Grievance Committee, and the Student Association appoints three students to serve. These proceedings are taken very seriously by all involved, and the committee findings are sent to the student and faculty member in question shortly after the hearing. While rarely employed, as a final step in the process, either party may appeal the decision to the Office of the Provost for review and final resolution.

SVSU has also recently instituted a procedure for logging student complaints (other than grade grievances) and their resolutions through a centralized system housed in Academic Affairs. This procedure will improve consistency in reporting, which until now has been more informal.

Academic Functions: Academic Freedom

The University articulates and supports academic freedom for faculty. As stated in the 2011-2014 SVSU/Faculty Association Contract ([RD#273](#)), "The faculty member shall have the freedom to report the truth in his discipline as he sees it in the classroom, publication, in reports of research activities, and all other professional and academic forums. The faculty member's rights as a citizen shall not be abridged because of his relationship with the institution." Discussions with the recent presidents of the Faculty Association revealed no recollection of complaints or incidents regarding academic freedom. These questions are further discussed in 2.D.

Academic Functions: Curriculum Review

Procedures for the three standing curriculum committees—the Curriculum and Academic Policy Committee (CAPC), the General Education Committee (GEC) and the Graduate Committee (GC)—are laid out in the SVSU/Faculty Association Contract. These are discussed in detail below in 2.C.4 and in Criterion 3, but it is important to note here that elected faculty members, administrative appointees, and student representatives comprise the membership of these committees. Input on curricular issues is solicited from the whole faculty and voted on through a contractually defined ratification process whereby all faculty vote on curriculum and academic policies. These processes are widely and well understood and foster a university-wide commitment to academic quality and the University's mission and philosophy.

Personnel Functions: Human Resources

SVSU is committed to maintaining the highest quality workforce through well-defined and consistent hiring practices including adherence to labor contracts. The Human Resources Department ([RD#455](#)) establishes policies and procedures regarding the recruitment and hiring process for all potential employees, including student workers, support staff, full and part-time faculty, and administrative professionals. It is also responsible for posting and maintaining resources necessary for conducting searches. A “Hiring Manager’s Guide” and “Hiring Procedures Guide” are available to assist hiring managers in selection processes ([RD#456](#)). All positions are announced on the HR job posting site as well as in community and professional publications. Hiring processes are carried out through an online system designed to make the process as consistent and transparent as possible ([RD#457](#)).

The HR Department also functions as a clearinghouse for information about employment contracts, benefits, resources, such as the Healthy U wellness program, and the confidential employee assistance program.

Contracts for faculty and support staff ([RD#273](#)) and ([RD#62](#)) are negotiated on a periodic basis, and a representative from Human Resources sits on the collective bargaining committee for both the faculty and support staff contract negotiations. The Support Staff represents all full-time Secretarial/Clerical employees and all Plant/Business Services Division employees except those specifically excluded by the contract ([RD#62](#)). The contracts articulate expectations for working conditions for bargaining unit members, including salary and benefit packages, as well as the review processes for both groups. Review processes are formalized and transparent. Processes for review of faculty and Endowed Chairs are addressed in 3.C.

The Support Staff Contract describes the processes associated with the evaluation of SVSU support staff. Staff supervisors conduct performance reviews annually. Performance goals are tied explicitly to the employee’s job description, and performance is reported on a five point scale (1 = exceptional performance/5 = unsatisfactory performance) ([RD#458](#)). Key competencies for support staff include impact and effectiveness, professionalism, teamwork, and customer service.

Administrative professionals are also subject to an annual review process ([RD#458](#)). Key competencies for administrative professionals include impact and effectiveness, professionalism, teamwork, and customer service, as well as the abilities to coach staff, support professional development, encourage group achievement, lead, motivate, and both understand and work to accomplish university strategic goals. After reviewing differences between the goals and actual performance for individual staff and AP employees, the employee and supervisor establish a plan that is oriented towards improving the employee’s skills for current or future positions and providing opportunities for professional

growth. The development of an individual's Professional Growth Plan is expected to be linked to the University's strategic goals to the extent possible.

Grievance procedures are also addressed in the SVSU FA and SSA contracts ([RD#273](#)) and ([RD#62](#)). All grievances are individually processed and categorized based on bargaining unit, contract year, and type of dispute. Records are also kept on the disposition of grievances, including resolutions and arbitration decisions.

The SVSU Operations Manual details policies not covered by contract, including vacation and sick policies for administrative professionals, medical/personal leave (FMLA), travel policies, and annual performance reviews. Personnel policies are consistent with the University's non-discrimination policies ([RD#73](#)). Faculty and staff participation in Inclusion Advocate training through the Office of Diversity Programs also demonstrates the University's commitment to non-discrimination as does the resource manual for the program and face-to-face sessions on Title IX ([RD#383](#)) and ([RD#302](#)).

Auxiliary Functions

The University establishes and follows fair policies for auxiliary functions. Examples of auxiliary units at SVSU include campus housing, dining services, parking, and the bookstore ([RD#480](#)). Auxiliary functions are self-supporting, producing their own revenue for services that are not instructional or general services of the institution. All expenditures associated with these functions are funded by auxiliary revenue.

The University "outsources" some functions, such as the bookstore and campus dining, in order to improve services for students. In other cases, such as The Conference Center at SVSU, the University has designated an administrative unit to coordinate services and resources for internal and external constituents ([RD#73](#)). In each case, the University is attentive to both efficiency and cost-containment in making decisions.

The SVSU Athletic Department ensures its compliance with the rules and regulations contained within the NCAA Division II Manual ([RD#303](#)) and clearly defines practices and expectations for student-athletes within the SVSU Student-Athlete Handbook. Student-athletes review this document annually prior to signing a form acknowledging their willingness to abide by its contents ([RD#77](#)).

2.B The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public with regard to its programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control and accreditation relationships

The University utilizes a variety of media, including its website, printed publications, and face to face formalized interactions, to present itself clearly, widely, and completely to its students, their parents, and the public with regard to its programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation relationships.

The University uses electronic technologies extensively to inform its various stakeholders about institutional policies and practices. Improvements to the university website, updates to the learning management system, and the addition of a new web portal all aid (or will aid) the University in providing the most current and accurate information to various constituents. In addition to web resources, the University produces a number of printed publications as a means of communicating with various internal and external stakeholders. Publications such as the *Reflections* magazine ([RD#452](#)), the *Interior* (internal newsletter) ([RD#462](#)), the *Annual Report* ([RD#171](#)), the *SVSU Research Bulletin* ([RD#461](#)), the *Valley Vanguard* (student newspaper) ([RD#460](#)), *Cardinal Sins* (student literary magazine) ([RD#464](#)), the Braun Awards for Writing Excellence (student awards publication) ([RD#463](#)), and additional recruitment materials from the Office of Graduate Programs and the Office of International Programs are available both on line and in print. Most publications and print marketing materials are available on the website. These materials direct users to appropriate webpages on academic programs, catalog/degree requirements, cost, and accreditation information. Viewbooks and guidebooks are now accessible online using an online reader service (ISSUU) ([RD#459](#)). Admissions requirements are available on-line directly through the University's catalog ([RD#585](#)).

The University utilizes a variety of media, including its website, printed publications, and face to face formalized interactions, to present itself clearly, widely, and completely to all constituents.

Programs and Requirements

Admissions requirements are clearly delineated on the Admissions website ([RD#465](#)) and are differentiated for freshman, transfer students, second degree students, and graduate students. The Student Handbook and the Course Catalog are the primary and official sources of information about university policies and academic programs for admitted students; both are also available on the university website. The Course Catalog publishes requirements for all academic programs at the University, including General Education, majors, minors, course pre-requisites, and specialized program admission criteria. Because students are held to the catalog in effect at the time of their matriculation, catalogs are archived online so students can view the appropriate requirements. In January 2013, the University approved the purchase of a student portal system to complement the website and to enhance communication with students through targeted messaging and individualized access to a variety of university information.

Students are able to review an informal degree audit on line at any time before or after they register for classes and are able to build their schedules by stipulating parameters in the Schedule Planner ([RD#466](#)). Course schedule look-up is available continuously and provides the necessary scheduling information for students to plan their programs. This feature also allows students to track course availability in real time during registration periods; to easily access course descriptions and lists of required materials; and to request specific filled courses via the on-line course request process ([RD#467](#)).

The University makes special efforts are made to communicate with prospective students and their parents as well as with incoming students to assist in their acclimation to SVSU culture. It employs various print and online resources, including those maintained by the offices of Undergraduate Admissions and Graduate Admissions, with guidance and oversight by University Communications.

The University also requires incoming students to participate in a three-phase orientation program ([RD#468](#)) that provides face-to-face communication opportunities. Phase 1 (the Student Orientation and Academic Registration program or “SOAR”) is a typical spring/summer orientation for new students and their parents, during which students are introduced to university policies, procedures, and resources. During Phase 1, students and their parents are also oriented to campus, and students register for fall semester classes. Phase 2 (Fresh Start) takes place on the Friday before classes start. A convocation ceremony welcomes students to campus followed by opportunities to meet faculty from their respective majors. Students then participate in various activities to begin building relationships with the University. In the fall of 2013, the University introduced a third mandatory program, Soar +, for all first year students. SOAR + takes place during the fall semester (before registration for winter classes) and is a “refresher” session that reintroduces students to the topics covered during orientation. It includes helping students access and read their degree audit, use the course scheduling software, and register for classes on-line. It also reminds students of available campus resources.

The Academic Advisement Center also provides critical information to all students about university requirements, including General Education and Basic Skills as well as particular degree requirements. This office assists students with program planning and registration. Students also are encouraged to meet with faculty in their respective majors to discuss career trajectory questions and long-term planning. Some departments, especially those where strict course sequencing is an inherent part of the curriculum, have determined that faculty advising is critical to the success and timely progression of students in their majors.

Faculty and Staff Information

SVSU maintains an on-line directory of all faculty and staff, which provides up-to-date contact information, including name, e-mail address, title, department, phone, office location, and highest degree earned. The Directory also allows faculty the option of uploading further information (e.g. a current Vita, information regarding area(s) of expertise, awards, affiliations, research projects and office hours) should they desire to do so ([RD#469](#)). The University purchased a new content management system in 2012 to aid in maintaining the website, and select information is now automatically loaded onto appropriate webpages. For example, staff listings for the schedule look-up are now pulled directly from Datatel/Colleague (Ellucian), the University's enterprise education platform system.

Educational Costs

The Scholarship and Financial Aid website provides students with easy access to financial aid information and directs them to appropriate resources for decision making about financial aid, including the Net Price Calculator, which gives student a realistic picture of the costs associated with their education. Students can also find the Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy on the website as well as the critical dates for applying for financial aid ([RD#470](#)). In addition, the bookstore maintains a site to which students can connect when registering. This site allows students to calculate the costs of books and materials for individual course sections ([RD#471](#)).

Accreditations

The University maintains a webpage identifying all external accreditations ([RD#472](#)). Programs that have earned specialized accreditations also publish that information on their departmental websites. For a fuller discussion of such accreditations, see 4.A.5.

2.C The institution's governing board is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure its integrity.

SVSU is governed by an eight-member Board of Control that works with the SVSU President (who sits *ex officio*). As mandated by the 1963 State Constitution of Michigan, Board members are appointed by the Governor, subject to State Senate confirmation, and are predominantly from the Great Lakes Bay region. The criteria for selecting individuals for the Board may vary from state administration to administration, especially if there is a change in the controlling political party, but Board terms are relatively long — Board members serve eight year terms, with two members rotating off every two years in odd-numbered years — which results in a diverse Board that represents the varied

constituencies of the region. The diversity of the Board works to protect the body against undue influence by any political party and/or elected official and ensures that multiple perspectives are considered in decision-making. Incoming Board members undergo a thorough orientation process, including an assessment of conflict of interest issues, to familiarize them with Board procedures and by-laws.

Informational agenda items are presented to the full Board at the open meetings. Matters of personnel, budget, capital projects, and other substantial issues are discussed first in one of the two subcommittees (one focusing on academics, students, and personnel with the other focusing on business, finance, audit and facilities). Once information has been presented and discussed in subcommittee, agenda items are brought to the full Board for approval, usually at the next regular meeting. This two-phase process helps to ensure that matters are discussed in detail, questions are resolved, and the relevant interests of all constituencies are considered.

The Board's deliberations are transparent, structured, and presented for public scrutiny.

The Board's deliberations are transparent, structured, and presented for public scrutiny. Meetings are open to the public, except for confidential matters such as those pertaining to personnel. The President, vice presidents, deans, and representatives of both the Faculty Association and the Support Staff Association regularly update the Board. Often various administrative staff, faculty, students, and community members are present at meetings and are invited to speak to the Board formally, when appropriate. In addition, the Board regularly consults with independent auditors and legal counsel to ensure prudent oversight of university business and planning. Such consultations serve to keep Board members apprised of both day-to-day operations and future planning. The Board delegates most control of the day-to-day operations of the University to the President. However, as discussed above in 2.A, it maintains the right of authority over functions as elaborated in the "Separation and Delegation/Reservation of Functions" section ([RD#104](#)).

2.C.1 The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.

Minutes of the Board of Control indicate the body's sustained and careful attention to maintaining the fiscal health of the institution and the development of programs and projects to improve the campus. Board discussions have dealt with physical improvements to campus, such as major capital projects, new buildings, exterior lighting, additional parking, etc., as well as with academic initiatives such as Programs of Distinction ([RD#473](#)). Throughout its deliberations, the Board demonstrates its awareness of, and commitment to, the University Mission/Vision, the Strategic Plan, and the Campus Master Plan. The Board reviews the Strategic Plan at least twice a year.

2.C.2 The governing board reviews and considers the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.

Board of Control ([RD#105](#)) meeting schedules, agendas, and minutes are posted on the University's website. These show that the Board carries out its mandate with attention to its multiple constituencies and that it documents input from students, faculty, staff, and community members. The Board's agendas follow a calendar cycle but can address issues introduced by such entities as the faculty union, administration, or ad hoc committees as needed. The Board has a clear policy outlining the process for students, staff, and the public to request to speak to the Board during formal and special formal sessions. Recent examples include Board discussions of and attention to enrollment management, physical plant improvements, collective bargaining for support staff, and review of program-level assessment.

2.C.3 The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties when such influence would not be in the best interest of the institution.

As discussed above, Board policies and practices promote autonomy from both outside interests and Board members' personal interests. The Board Bylaws clearly articulate the Board's conflict of interest policy. Each Board member's required annual written disclosure "concerning all relationships and business affiliations . . . that reasonably could give rise to conflict of interest involving the University" is submitted to the University's external auditor and managed in collaboration with the University's attorney. Board members are required to refrain from voting on any matter in which they have a conflict of interest. The recent Board action to approve purchase of properties where Board members recused themselves from voting exemplifies the Board's attention to these policies ([RD#297](#)). In addition, Board policy specifically prohibits nepotism both in Board matters and in employment practices ([RD#104](#)).

2.C.4 The governing board delegates day to day management of the institution to the administration and expects the faculty to oversee academic matters.

The SVSU Board of Control maintains a positive relationship with University administration and faculty, and this longstanding relationship has resulted in a culture of cooperation. The Board Bylaws also specify how the University President and the Student Association President interact with the Board, as well as the inclusion of campus and community members on special committees to advise the body. While maintaining appropriate oversight, the Board delegates

the general management of the University to the President, who is elected by the Board and is designated the chief executive officer of the institution. The Board Bylaws state: “The President shall be responsible for all functions of the University, be the official medium of communication between the Board and University faculty, staff, and students, implement policies of the Board, and have authority to issue directives and executive orders not in contravention with law of the Board’s by-laws and policies” ([RD#104](#)).

Board minutes present clear evidence of the delegation of day-to-day management, and the University’s organizational chart attests to the task allocation, coordination, and supervision delegated to the administration and staff of the institution ([RD#298](#)), ([RD#474](#)) and ([RD#46](#)). Even in cases where the Board is informed of an unusual or particularly sensitive issue, such as student conduct cases or ethical concerns, the President retains the authority to manage the situation.

The Faculty Contract, which is approved by the Board, makes plain that faculty have a central role in overseeing academic matters. Faculty have a major part in faculty evaluation, hiring, retention, promotion, and tenure recommendations, as discussed elsewhere in this self-study. The Contract describes processes for faculty-led development of programs and curriculum, academic policies, and departmental governance, but, given the focus of 2.C.4, further discussion of SVSU’s curriculum process is warranted.

SVSU’s contractually defined curriculum development and approval process, described below, has been effective at ensuring that the institution’s courses and programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded. It has resulted in a set of strong basic programs with significant value to students and the region, while avoiding the proliferation of under-enrolled, highly specialized programs that drain resources from the fundamental mission.

Two separate standing committees oversee curricula for undergraduate and graduate programs. In addition, a third committee oversees the undergraduate General Education program. Each of these committees includes six elected faculty, one from each of the academic units (Business and Management; Health and Human Services; Science, Engineering and Technology; Education; Arts and Humanities; and Social Sciences), two administrators appointed by the Provost, and one student selected by the Student Association.

The process for establishing new courses, programs, changing or deleting programs or courses is parallel for the undergraduate curriculum committee (Curriculum and Academic Policy Committee, abbreviated as CAPC) and the graduate curriculum committee (Graduate Committee) and is delineated in the Faculty Association Contract ([RD#273](#)), ([RD#273](#)) and ([RD#273](#)). The processes employed by the General Education committee are similar, but with some key differences, discussed in more detail elsewhere in the self-study.

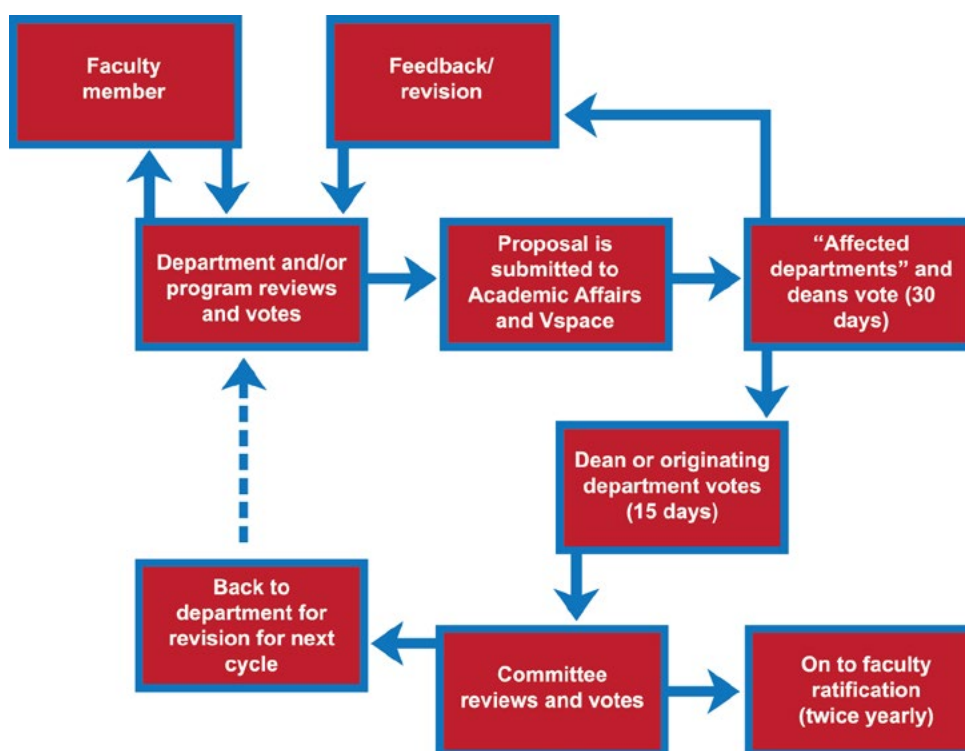


Fig. 2.1

In principle, any member of the campus community may submit a curriculum proposal, but, in practice, proposals ordinarily come from a faculty member or a department. The process is summarized in the graphic above.

To summarize, faculty members develop proposals in collaboration with their department or program. When a proposal is fully developed, it is forwarded to the relevant committee secretary, with a departmental/program vote. The proposal is posted on “VSpace,” SVSU’s electronic learning management system, and all affected programs and departments are asked to comment and submit their votes on the appropriateness of the proposal. Once the affected departments have completed this process, contractually within 30 days, the deans of affected colleges and then the dean of the college where the proposal originated also vote. During this phase, revisions can be made to address any concerns or suggestions. If a revision is made, affected departments that have already posted their votes are asked to re-vote. Once all the votes have been recorded (or the contractual deadlines have been met), the proposal proceeds to the curriculum committee where it is discussed in the broader University context, which includes consideration of such issues as redundancy, staffing, other resources, and viability. If a plurality of committee members supports the proposal, it proceeds to ratification by the entire university faculty. If the committee does not approve the proposal, the department is notified, and, if it chooses, it may resubmit a revised proposal in the next cycle.

This process occurs in both fall and winter semesters, and any curriculum revision that is ratified in a given academic year is implemented in the

subsequent year. Proposals that come to ratification with negative votes or even abstentions by committee members generally are discussed at the faculty ratification meeting prior to the final vote. The overall process involves faculty and administrators across the five colleges, as well as other interested parties, and provides numerous opportunities to identify and resolve concerns such as redundancy, unintended consequences for other programs, resource implications, and potential shifts in enrollments.

2.D The institution is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.

Both the Bylaws of the Board of Control and the SVSU/FA Contract specifically articulate the University's commitment to academic freedom. One of the principle responsibilities of the Board of Control is to "preserve academic freedom" ([RD#104](#)). The SVSU/FA Contract, which is approved by the Board of Control, assures that faculty members have the "freedom to report the truth in" their respective disciplines, as they see it ([RD#273](#)).

The University clearly has supported both students and faculty engaged in academic inquiry.

In practice, the University clearly has supported both students and faculty engaged in academic inquiry. It has imposed no limitations on the questions that faculty and students may investigate. A review of proposals for research funding by the Office of Sponsored Programs and the topics represented in the SVSU *Research Bulletin* ([RD#461](#)) reveals that faculty and students across the multiple disciplines of the University pursue an appropriately wide range of issues.

In addition, the University's administration has been steadfast in its protection of academic freedom and artistic expression when art works or theater productions that some felt were controversial or inappropriate were presented. For example, in April 2007, the Theatre Department staged *Angels in America*, a Pulitzer Prize-winning play that addresses homosexuality, AIDS, religion, and drug/alcohol use. It also includes a scene with male full frontal nudity. The play elicited some concerns by the community and area legislators. In response, President Gilbertson generated an "Open Letter" to the community ([RD#204](#)) in which he affirmed that SVSU "students have had a wonderful range of opportunities to experience the varieties of theatre. But part of any comprehensive range of performance art must also include pieces that may be more controversial, unnerving, and occasionally even raw. Their experiences would be sheltered and incomplete without exposure to contemporary plays that raise troublesome questions — even in controversial ways." The debate about the play continued, and President Gilbertson again considered it in "The Idea of a University," his Honors Convocation speech that year. He asserted "Academic freedom ... is often misunderstood, often resented, often jeopardized ... [if] academic freedom and freedom of expression are to mean anything, they mean that critics cannot silence that with which they disagree." He stated that a "core value of [this] university — and indeed of a free society — is tolerance" ([RD#207](#)).

2.E The institution ensures that the faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly.

As reviewed earlier in this criterion and in the material below, the University employs a number of ways to ensure faculty, students, and staff acquire and apply knowledge responsibly. These include establishing and maintaining IRB and IACUC protocols; defining expectations for and overseeing grant compliance; conducting PPC reviews for faculty integrity breaches; promulgating academic integrity policies for students, including the development of the Student Code of Conduct; and enforcing those policies through Student Conduct Board hearings. The expectation of peer review of research and creative activities also assures that the faculty applies knowledge responsibly. Faculty and staff assist students in the responsible application of knowledge through oversight on fieldwork and community projects. Strict adherence to lab protocols through lab supervision also contributes to a culture in which students learn to apply knowledge responsibly. Finally, as with faculty research, student research, funded by such entities as the Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Student Research and Creativity Institute Grants, is subject to internal review and to external review when students present at peer-reviewed conferences/performances or publish in peer-reviewed venues ([RD#475](#)).

2E1. Institution provides effective oversight and support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff and students.

Research projects at the University are subject to review by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) ([RD#476](#)) or Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) ([RD#477](#)) as appropriate. As stated in the IRB policies, “All research involving human subjects conducted in whole or in part by any individual acting on behalf of SVSU (e.g., full- or part-time employees, students, and volunteers) regardless of the physical location of the data collection, shall be submitted to the SVSU IRB for purposes of oversight and compliance with this policy. This requirement is binding whether the research is externally funded or not and regardless of the source of any such funding.”

The IRB is composed of faculty from across the campus and works to guarantee the safety and integrity of research that involves human subjects. To further its work, over the past several years the IRB has engaged in significant outreach efforts within the SVSU community to encourage the ethical conduct of human subject research while eliminating any perception that the oversight mechanisms were unduly onerous. These efforts included workshops for faculty and colleges; presentations to all new faculty during their orientation; classroom visits for student researchers; and development and upgrade of the IRB website. Similarly, the IACUC policy requires “all investigators planning to utilize vertebrate animals for research or education, regardless of source of funding or format of the project submission, must submit a protocol for approval. This

Committee, which is also under the supervision of the Office of Sponsored Programs, currently is revising its policies and procedures. Minutes of the IRB and IACUC demonstrate that scholars across the University utilize the oversight, consultation, and support of these bodies. Summary statistics show that SVSU faculty and students are actively engaged in human subjects' research and that there is effective oversight of this research.

The Office of Sponsored Programs oversees both internal and external grants and is responsible for research development training and review on campus.

The Office of Sponsored Programs oversees both internal and external grants and is responsible for research development training and review on campus. Sponsored Programs serves as a third party to facilitate the application for and administration of internal grants received through the Foundation and other sources ([RD#478](#)). Sponsored Programs works closely with the Provost's Office as well as the five college deans to establish clear guidelines and transparent procedures for internal grants such as the Faculty Research and Professional Growth grants. Information about applying for internal grants is readily available on the Sponsored Program website. Grant applications are processed electronically through the vendor site, InfoReady Competition Space. Appropriate committees review all internal applications. The FA Contract addresses policies associated with Faculty Research and Professional Growth grants ([RD#273](#)).

Over the past several years, Sponsored Programs has significantly expanded its role in relationship to seeking and ensuring appropriate use of external funding. The Office helps faculty and staff members identify possible funding sources for various initiatives, both for individual research as well as more general program initiatives. It guides each Principal Investigator (PI) through the application process including internal transmittal procedures. These serve to corroborate that there is no conflict between university policies and granting agency expectations as well as document that the University is supportive of the project and any institutional obligation that may be incurred, such as release time and in-kind costs. Should a grant be secured, the Office works with the PI to ensure that funds are expended appropriately and that reports are submitted on schedule. Through the Controller's Office, the University has designated a special accountant to monitor grant budgets. This accountant regularly meets with each grant PI and Sponsored Program staff to monitor ongoing compliance with grant requirements and restrictions. The Office also assists PIs with the sometimes-complex process of report submission that includes the appropriate documentation that goals have been met, expenditures tracked, and appropriate progress reports and final accountings submitted.

2.E.2 Students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information resources.

Students who perform research subject to IRB or IACUC regulations receive appropriate training on the ethical use of human or animal subjects as noted above.

The First Year Writing Program (English 080/111) introduces students to definitions of plagiarism and academic dishonesty. All faculty are encouraged to address these issues in course syllabi and classroom practice. Many instructors provide classroom sessions devoted to explicit instruction regarding this topic and establish sanctions for violations. The University provides licenses to Turn It In.com to interested instructors who use it as a teaching tool. It allows students to submit their work for an Originality Report, and these reports help instructors identify and correct any improper use of information. For the 2012-2013 Academic Year, 132 instructors were registered, and a total of 5,963 students used the program, generating 21,067 Originality Reports ([RD#479](#)).

The Writing Center offers all students both in-person and on-line instruction regarding the ethical use of resources when writing. The Writing Program and Student Conduct office join forces to present the faculty workshop, “Teaching Your Course to Promote Academic Integrity.” The Writing Program also maintains an academic integrity website ([RD#94](#)), with information on using sources responsibly, especially in the era of electronic media. The site also includes best practices for faculty on instructing students on these issues ([RD#94](#)). Copyright information can be found in the SVSU Operations Manual accessed through the University’s website ([RD#73](#)).

2.E.3 Institution has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

The Student Handbook and Student Code of Conduct and SVSU’s Policy Regarding Copyright provides students with information about the ethical use of information in the academic setting. The section in the Student Handbook on Student Rights and Responsibilities articulates the University’s expectation for students’ conduct as members of the academic community. The Academic Integrity Policy clearly defines academic dishonesty and plagiarism ([RD#94](#)).

The Handbook also outlines the process for addressing violations of the policy, potential sanctions, and the appeals process. Faculty members report students suspected of academic dishonesty to the Office of Student Conduct Programs for a hearing. Students may appeal any academic sanction through the Grade Grievance procedure outlined in the Student Handbook and discussed above. As noted earlier in the chapter, students who violate the Student Conduct Code are subject to a hearing and possible sanctions; similarly, faculty members are governed by the Faculty Contract.

The Professional Practices Committee (PPC) conducts a review of any faculty member charged with academic dishonesty. As defined in the FA Contract, this is a two-step process ([RD#273](#)). Initially, the charges are brought to the committee to determine if adequate evidence exists to pursue the charge. If so, PPC holds a full hearing where the charging party and the faculty member so charged present their cases, and answer questions from committee members.

Faculty members have the right to Faculty Association and legal representation at the hearing, and the University also has legal counsel available. Following deliberations, which include both determination of guilt and the appropriate disciplinary action (if any), PPC sends its recommendation forward to the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Evaluative Statement for Criterion 2: Integrity

SVSU operates with integrity in its financial functions as evidenced by its history of clean financial audits and sound financial management. The Board of Control and the President's Planning Council have clearly defined roles in authorizing budgets, plans, and expenditures. SVSU's Strategic Plan and subsidiary documents align financial commitments with institutional goals consistent with the mission. The Office of Sponsored Programs oversees compliance with IRB and IACUC regulations as well as federal, state, regional, and internal grant requirements.

Because members of the SVSU Board of Control are appointed for 8-year terms by the Governor of the State of Michigan, the Board is sufficiently autonomous and knowledgeable to make decision in the best interest of the institution. The Board of Control Bylaws requires annual disclosure of potential conflicts of interest. Thorough orientation of new Board members ensures that the members are familiar with both the institution and Board policies and procedures. The diversity of the Board provides multiple perspectives in decision-making.

As defined in its bylaws, the Board of Controls yields responsibility for all functions of the University to the University President, who only requires Board Approval on a well-defined set of issues. As expected, the faculty has significant roles in curriculum development, approval, and oversight, as well as in faculty evaluation, promotion, tenure, and sabbatical processes. These responsibilities are carried out through standing committees as defined in the faculty contract.

The institution's commitment to academic freedom is demonstrated by both the bylaws of the Board of Control and the Faculty Association contract, which articulate the University's commitment to academic freedom. One of the principle responsibilities of the Board of Control is to "preserve academic freedom." The FA contract, which is approved by the Board of Control, assures that faculty members have the "freedom to report the truth in" their respective disciplines, as they see it. The recent example regarding a controversial play demonstrates that the University administration will stand behind this commitment.

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SVSU takes academic integrity very seriously and holds students and faculty to high standards of academic honesty with regard to copyright laws and plagiarism. The University makes information about these issues available to different audiences through venues such as the website, the Operations Manual,

the Student Handbook, syllabi, classes, and Turnitin.com. Student understanding of these expectations is clear from their self-initiated and defined Student Honor Code, adopted by the Student Association in 2006. The institution has fair and effective systems to rule on violations of academic integrity standards through the Student Conduct Board or, for faculty, the Professional Practices Committee.

The University operates with integrity regarding its personnel functions. Union contracts, renewed on a triennial cycle, formalize personnel practices for faculty and support staff. The Operations Manual Policies defines policies for personnel not covered by union contracts. All personnel policies are non-discriminatory. Widely disseminated hiring guidelines ensure that job postings include clear job descriptions and qualifications and are publicized in appropriate venues to generate a diverse and qualified pool of candidates

Grievance procedures for students (grades or other grievances), faculty, and staff are laid out in appropriate documents. All grievances are handled individually and generally are logged in the appropriate offices. SVSU has recently instituted a procedure for recording student grievances and resolutions through a centralized system, housed in Academic Affairs, to improve consistency in reporting.

SVSU represents its academic programs and requirements clearly and completely to its students and the public. Information about SVSU's programs including all curricular requirements is available in the online Course Catalog. Department websites include program goals. Accreditations and faculty credentials are publicly available. Scheduling information, extending out about one year, is also available online through Cardinal Direct. Students have access to their unofficial transcripts and degree audits using online tools. Students also receive information and guidance through the centralized academic advising office and, when appropriate, from faculty advisors. Most instructors use an electronic learning managements system to communicate course requirements, and faculty are required to distribute a syllabus outlining expectations for every course offered. Pass rates for licensure examinations are posted publicly on departmental websites, when applicable. The University provides incoming students with ample information regarding its policies and requirements through recently enhanced orientation activities. The Scholarship and Financial Aid webpage includes a comprehensive list of tuition, fees, and room and board costs.



Criterion Three ■

Criterion Three:

The institution provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

3.A. The institution's degree programs are appropriate to higher education.

SVSU provides strong and appropriate programs at all approved locations and in all approved modalities. Consistent with its mission as a regional comprehensive university, SVSU's undergraduate programs encompass the traditional liberal arts and sciences as well as a number of professional programs. SVSU offers a limited number of interdisciplinary graduate programs, designed primarily for working adults. These are professional and applied in their orientation, and, with the exception of a recently-approved doctorate in nursing practice, are at the master's level.

In addition to gaining several specialized external accreditations (see 4.A.5), the University has also developed robust internal departmental and General Education assessment plans that cover all its academic programs. Joined with these efforts, the University's curriculum processes (see 2.C.4), select use of standardized tests (see 4.B.2), a renewed system of external periodic review for departments not tied to disciplinary accrediting bodies and the use of external advisory boards all ensure program quality.

Programs articulate their learning goals in a variety of settings and clearly differentiate their levels of demand. SVSU holds its courses and programs to the same standards, catalog language, and policies regardless of their physical location. SVSU has followed these principles in its thoughtful and limited entry into online and hybrid instruction, which has included substantial expectations for instructor training and assessment.

3.A.1 Courses and programs are current and require levels of performance by students that are appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded.

All of SVSU's degree and certificate programs require appropriate preparation and performance. All undergraduate students must accomplish the following: ([RD#42](#))

- satisfy Basic Skills requirements in reading, writing, and mathematics;
- complete General Education coursework spread over ten content categories;
- meet program-specific requirements for majors, minors, and certificates as outlined in the Academic Catalog;
- complete upper-division course work (at least 42 credit hours, including at least six credit hours at the 300- or 400-level in the major taken at SVSU and at least three credits at the 200-level or higher in the minor taken at SVSU);
- complete a minimum number of total credits (at least 124 total credit hours, with at least 31 taken at SVSU); and
- earn a cumulative GPA of at least a 2.00 overall with grades of “C” or better in all Basic Skills, major, and minor courses.

All graduate students must meet program-specific standards that are appropriate to their field. Graduate program curriculum must be approved by SVSU’s Graduate Committee, University Administration, and Board of Control. SVSU’s graduate catalog lists graduate program requirements ([RD#44](#)).

SVSU affirms the currency and appropriateness of performance levels in its courses and programs through external specialized program accreditations 4.A.5, student performance on standardized tests 4.B.2, and the detailed curriculum processes described earlier 2.C.4. Specialized program accreditation provides clear evidence that those programs are current and have appropriate expectations. SVSU students generally perform at or above national means on nationally standardized tests 4.B.2 indicating that programs develop knowledge and skills that meet external disciplinary standards. The curriculum process is the means by which programs maintain currency of their offerings, and the process allows curricular adjustments to meet both student learning outcomes and evolving disciplinary expectations. Beyond these measures, which are discussed elsewhere in the self-study, SVSU evaluates the currency and appropriateness of performance levels in its courses and programs through: the University’s processes for annual program assessment by all academic departments; periodic external review of departments that are not subscribed to disciplinary accrediting bodies; and input from other sources, such as, when appropriate, advisory boards.

All academic departments at SVSU engage in annual program assessment, regardless of whether they have external accreditations. The current format for this work developed in response to concerns raised in the last HLC site visit. At that time, the University stopped conducting periodic external reviews of such programs in order to shift its focus and energies to the development of a robust annual departmental assessment program as well as further assessment measures of the new General Education program, as discussed in 3.B.2, 4.A, and 4.B. The University’s assessment program requires departments to articulate programmatic student learning goals and define other critical functions. Departments must collect and analyze data related to how well they and their students are meeting their defined goals. The analysis in these reports is shaped

by both internal factors and external factors, including material gathered from discipline-specific, professional organizations. Departments submit results and conclusions in annual assessment reports to their respective college deans. The deans write responses to these reports and then forward the reports to the provost. The departments, colleges, and the provost's office use these shared reports in planning at all levels. Department reports are archived on the Academic Assessment VSpace site ([RD#481](#)).

With these assessment measures firmly in place and fine-tuned through several annual cycles of planning and assessment, in 2012 the University instituted a new round of external program review for programs not tied to external accreditors. During that year the Art, Mathematics, Kinesiology, and Psychology Departments underwent external review, as did the program providing basic skills coursework in reading (housed in the English Department). In 2013, the Criminal Justice, Geography, Modern Foreign Languages, and Exercise Science Programs will participate in external review along with further study of the math and reading programs. The review process begins with the department under review preparing an extensive self-study. The department submits that self-study and supporting documentation to an expert external consultant in the discipline prior to an extensive visit to campus. Resulting consultant reports are used in department, college, and university planning. The University expects that all departments or programs without specialized external accreditation will have undergone such review within a five-year period, at which time the cycle will begin again. The five-year program review schedule, the self-studies with supporting documents, and the consultant reports are available online ([RD#481](#)) and ([RD#556](#)). As with specialized accredited programs, external review of non-accredited programs provides assurance that SVSU sets appropriate standards for program outcomes. These, in turn, inform the ongoing assessment processes.

In addition to direct methods of program review and assessment, the University employs additional methods to evaluate the currency and appropriateness of its programs, including select alumni and employer survey data.

In addition to direct methods of program review and assessment, the University employs additional methods to evaluate the currency and appropriateness of its programs, including select alumni and employer survey data. When appropriate, SVSU utilizes advisory boards of regional stakeholders to provide input on curriculum, especially in relation to professional and industry standards. Representatives from fields such as engineering, criminal justice, business, and health sciences meet regularly to provide input on programs and feedback on curriculum, to assess the relevance of SVSU's curriculum to their respective fields, and to discuss the viability of new programs and their potential value to the region. For example, feedback from SET's Engineering Advisory Board suggested the need for additional study in lean manufacturing. Consequently, the program integrated this topic into an appropriate course ([RD#304](#)).

During the planning of the new Master of Science - Energy and Materials, local employers provided significant input regarding the types of skills and knowledge needed for their employees. The University similarly drew on the expertise and perspectives of representatives of agriscience businesses, other universities, community colleges, career centers, and public schools to develop its new Agricultural Studies minor ([RD#482](#)). The resulting program will add value to science or business degrees for those students interested in working for the agricultural sector.

3.A.2 The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for its undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate, and certificate programs.

SVSU articulates its broadest learning goals in its Mission/Vision, as discussed in Criterion 1. Additionally, broad learning goals as well as several program-specific goals are articulated through the venues discussed in 2.B. Of particular note, the SVSU Catalog, the Academic Affairs website, and several other texts reiterate learning goals for the General Education program (see also 3.B.2). Departments post program-specific learning goals to their departmental websites, and individual faculty may include program-specific goals along with course-specific goals on their syllabi. This is especially common for courses in SVSU's Basic Skills and General Education programs. That said, these are not universal practices. Similarly, the level and character of articulation of learning goals in the course catalog varies: some departments publish very specific student learning goals in this venue, and some offer only more general statements tied to describing programs and program rationale. Learning goals are, however, consistently addressed in department or college assessment reports and on departmental web pages.

It is clear from reviewing the course catalog, various promotional materials, the annual program assessment reports, proposals submitted to the distinct undergraduate and graduate curriculum committees, and diverse other documents that SVSU differentiates learning goals for different program levels. Such differentiation is most obvious in SVSU's course numbering practices ([RD#42](#)), which are defined in the course catalog, and are consistent with those of many universities: lower-division courses are set at the 000-level (remedial), 100-level (freshman), or 200-level (sophomore); upper-division courses are set at the 300-level (junior) or 400-level (senior); graduate courses are set at the 500-level or 600-level. To date, all Basic Skills courses are designated as 000-level or 100-level and all General Education courses as 100-level or 200-level, in keeping with the understanding that such work is foundational. Conversely, undergraduate senior seminars carry 400-level numbers. Course numbering often reflects pre-requisite requirements in consonance with the degree of complexity and specialization.

Beyond these widely distributed methods for differentiating learning experiences, it is notable that SVSU faculty must apply and be approved by both their departments and the Graduate Committee before being allowed to teach graduate courses ([RD#273](#)). Such approval considers degree and disciplinary qualifications in some depth.

A side-by-side comparison of program goals for sets of parallel graduate and undergraduate majors exemplifies how programs differentiate specific learning goals ([RD#323](#)). Comparisons of the learning goal language of the Bachelor of Science in Nursing to the Master of Science in Nursing, the Bachelor of Arts in Political Science to the Master of Administrative Science, and the Bachelor

of Business Administration to the Master of Business Administration reveal a number of consistent differences. In particular, graduate programs place strong emphasis on leadership and professional skill development that builds on a richer and more complex understanding of disciplinary content; because of this, SVSU's graduate program learning goals often focus on creative problem solving, reflected in the requirements for research or field projects.

3.A.3 The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements, or any other modality).

The University offers the vast majority of its courses on its main campus in a face-to-face format.

The University offers the vast majority of its courses on its main campus in a face-to-face format. A small number of courses and one program (Instructional Technology and E-Learning) are offered in either hybrid or online format. A small number of courses are offered at off-campus locations (including the Macomb campus) or at local community colleges. All programs and courses, no matter the location or modality, undergo the same curricular approval processes described in 2.C.4. Courses presented in traditional formats in off-campus locations have the same learning goals and expected outcomes as those on the main campus, and online courses must also demonstrate equivalent learning outcomes. Full- and part-time faculty must meet the same contractually-specified levels of qualification (see 3.C.2) regardless of instructional location or modality. Full-time faculty teach the majority of online and hybrid courses and have a regular presence in off-campus offerings. Both full- and part-time instructors who wish to teach online must complete additional training in effective online course design and delivery ([RD#483](#)). Adjunct faculty who choose to complete this training receive a stipend, while full-time faculty view it as professional development.

Similarly, the program assessment processes discussed above and in Criterion 4 apply to courses and programs regardless of mode of delivery or location. Departments apply learning goals program-wide, and these goals guide each program's courses and activities. Departments routinely include information on assessment of their online and hybrid courses in their annual assessment documents. If a significant portion of courses in a program employs hybrid or online delivery, departments are required to assess the online pedagogy explicitly.

SVSU has adopted online/hybrid learning slowly and carefully. Most of the courses the institution offers in these formats are in graduate level professional programs, primarily in education, business, and health professions. Since the beginning of online/hybrid education at SVSU, the University has required faculty training. Initially, it used the Sloan Consortium's online materials, requiring each instructor who wanted to teach online to complete two courses. It later moved to in-house training, which was initially sponsored by

a \$1.8 million grant from the Department of Education, and which provided both staffing and infrastructure for online education. Using grant funds, the University hired a course-designer/trainer and required faculty who wanted to teach online or hybrid courses to complete a comprehensive course in online pedagogy. More recently, the University invested in the consulting services of Eduventures, which made several recommendations, including making the course designer/trainer position permanent ([RD#324](#)). The University followed this advice, creating the position of Director of Online and Hybrid Learning; the first director redesigned professional development courses to better suit the needs of SVSU faculty.

A 2012 analysis of pass rates, grade distributions, and persistence data indicates that SVSU's online and hybrid courses have pass rates and grade distributions similar to those in traditional courses with some variation by program and modality ([RD#325](#)). For example, in the College of Business and Management, grades in hybrid courses tended to be comparable to those in traditional courses, while grades in online courses in the same program were somewhat lower than their traditional counterparts. However, these variations were not systematic and may even out over time, and SVSU continues to assess such. Generally, student success in learning outcomes is not significantly different based on the mode of delivery.

Among the small number of alternate location/enrollment modes used by SVSU, three are of note: various concurrent enrollment agreements in Nursing, SVSU's participation in the Great Lakes Bay Early College Program, and SVSU's interactions with Ming Chuan University. The Department of Nursing is developing concurrent enrollment agreements with several community colleges in the region (Delta, Kirtland, and St. Clair Community College) for the RN-BSN program. While students take courses at the community colleges, those courses have either been approved for transfer credit or are SVSU courses taught by SVSU faculty at those locations. SVSU offers an "early college" experience through the Great Lakes Bay Early College Program, which is recognized as a 4+1 program by the US Department of Education. Students are only granted college credit for SVSU courses, all of which are taught by SVSU faculty and most of which are in the Basic Skills and General Education programs.

SVSU is engaged in discussions with Ming Chuan University in Taipei to develop joint programs to be offered through both institutions. Ming Chuan University is accredited by the US Middle States Higher Education Commission and by Taiwan's Higher Education Evaluation and Accreditation Council. The two institutions signed a Memorandum of Understanding on International Education Collaboration Joint Ventures in June 2012 that focused on educational programs to be offered by MCU on SVSU's campus ([RD#326](#)). The institutions are exploring broader cooperative programs in Education and Communication.

The University has a full-time Director of Online and Hybrid Learning who is responsible for faculty development in online pedagogy and course development.

3.B The institution demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs.

SVSU offers strong programs — including a General Education program appropriate to the University’s mission — that are guided by philosophies centered on continuous improvement, lifelong learning, intellectual inquiry, diversity, adaptability, and preparation for leadership. Students and faculty share in numerous opportunities for research and creativity in ways that serve the region’s intellectual and economic needs.

Students and faculty share in numerous opportunities for research and creativity in ways that serve the region’s intellectual and economic needs.

3.B.1 The General Education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the institution.

SVSU’s General Education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the institution. There is clear alignment between the University’s Mission/Vision statement and the mission of the undergraduate General Education program ([RD#42](#)), which the University defines as “that part of a student’s education that contributes to the breadth of knowledge needed to be a more effective citizen of a complex and culturally diverse world.” The program’s ten content categories help students become more broadly knowledgeable, adaptable, and capable in their many life roles. The three overarching goals of SVSU’s General Education Program are to equip students to think critically, reason logically, and communicate effectively. These widely published goals align with the Mission/Vision, provide coherence within the program, and link to the undergraduate majors — thus ensuring that, by graduation, all students will have had opportunities to develop their insight, creativity and intellectual curiosity, and analytical and critical skills in diverse disciplinary contexts. Further discussion of this sub-criterion appears below and elsewhere in the self-study including the Preface.

3.B.2 The institution articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.

SVSU clearly articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its General Education requirements in the course catalog, advising documents, and diverse other venues. The cornerstones of SVSU’s General Education program are the three goals of critical thinking, logical reasoning, and effective communication. The General Education program organizes approved courses in ten content categories ([RD#42](#)), each of which has clear objectives and learning goals, as displayed in the table below. The content categories are

broadly similar to traditional liberal arts and sciences-centered models and are designed to ensure exposure to a broad range of disciplines, knowledge, forms of intellectual inquiry, and skills. Two of the courses from the ten categories must be designated communication-intensive (CI) courses; these subject-based courses teach effective communication within various disciplines building from the Basic Skills courses. Similarly, rather than being segregated in a separate category, questions tied to diversity are considered across categories within discipline-specific modalities; because of this, several of the categories have elements tied to human diversity in their governing criteria. The program is set up to be reasonably flexible: while some majors dictate which courses their students must take to satisfy General Education requirements, others leave course choice up to the students. In both cases, the GEC and the CAPC processes described in 2.C.4 ensure that students have the same breadth and richness of learning experiences.

General Education Content Categories and Category Objectives	
Category Title (credits required)	Objective
1: Literature (3 credits)	To read major literary works critically with appreciation and understanding.
2: Arts (3 credits)	To appreciate the arts; to understand the arts as vehicles for human expression.
3: Numerical Understanding (4 credits)	To understand and manipulate numerical data; to respond to arguments and positions based on numbers and/or statistics.
4: Natural Sciences (7 credits in two departments and one lab course)	To understand basic scientific concepts; to appreciate how these concepts are verified through experimentation and observation; and to become knowledgeable and responsible citizens in dealing with the challenges of a sophisticated technological society.
5: Historical and Philosophical Ideas (3 credits)	To identify and subject to analysis the significant ideas and events of human history by understanding cause and effect relationships through historical and logical investigation, narration and synthesis.
6: Social Sciences (3 credits)	To analyze and interpret social phenomena and human thought processes using the techniques and procedures of the social sciences.
7: Social Institutions (3 credits)	To identify, describe and understand the workings of important social, economic and political institutions and the relationship of the individual to these institutions.
8: International Systems (3 credits)	To understand the nature of significant international systems and to step outside of the constraints of one's own society.
9: Oral Communication (3 credits)	To develop greater proficiency in English or a foreign language in general and discipline-specific settings.
10: Written Communication (3 credits)	To write effective, researched academic texts in English.

Table 3.1
(RD#528)

A set of processes described here and in the Preface ensure that the General Education program imparts what it promises. As delineated in the SVSU FA Contract, the General Education Committee evaluates course proposals and oversees approval, assessment, and renewal of courses for the program in line with the procedures and content established for the program. Courses enter the program with a five-year term following the campus-wide approval process and are required to undergo periodic review by the GEC. That periodic review includes detailed assessment plans and reports ([RD#273](#)).

The GEC also supervises programmatic assessment in the General Education program. Because SVSU's program goals are consistent with many national standards, they also align well with nationally normed exams, including the Collegiate Learning Assessment, which measures students' abilities in critical thinking, writing, and reasoning and has thus become an important component of programmatic General Education assessment. The following chart shows the improvement achieved by SVSU students over their undergraduate programs in critical thinking, effective communication, and logical reasoning. For each of the last four years, students improved more than would be expected for students of similar background, suggesting that SVSU's programs are consistent with national norms for undergraduate education.

Table 3.2
([RD#540](#))

Task	Percentile Score for Skill Improvement*			
	AY08-09	AY09-10	AY10-11	AY11-12
Overall	79	97	75	91
Performance Task	65	96	77	84
Analytical Writing	90	94	62	95
Make-an-argument	87	91	51	91
Break-an-argument	92	94	63	93
Compared to expected gains	Above	Above	Above	Above

*A score of 50%-ile is an average or an "as expected" result.

3.B.3 Every degree program offered by the institution engages students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

The program descriptions in SVSU's catalog demonstrate that every SVSU degree program addresses the expectations cited in 3.B.3 in discipline-specific ways and builds from the shared student learning experiences of SVSU's General Education program. A variety of assessment measures also show that all programs engage students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and developing skills adaptable to changing environments. A detailed tabulation of these assessment findings from 2011-2012 is available online ([RD#328](#)). This section presents three examples from disparate fields included in that tabulation.

SVSU's Nursing Program addresses issues in 3.B.3 first in their mission, which states that "The Department fosters an environment of inquiry and use of best evidence in the preparation of graduates for leadership in nursing practice in a pluralistic society. The Department serves as an intellectual center dedicated to nursing knowledge development and nursing science." Related to this broad mission statement are several specific program goals, asking that students, for example:

- demonstrate competence as beginning practitioners of professional nursing who can care for well and ill clients of all ages in a variety of health care environments;
- demonstrate competencies in scholarly educational bases that foster personal and intellectual growth;
- demonstrate competencies in theory and clinical practice in nursing to be eligible for graduate study.

The Program meets these goals through a carefully-planned and well-articulated program that includes library instruction on retrieving scholarly literature; writing scholarly papers in every semester of the program; completing a required research course as well as evidence-based practice projects with presentations to local healthcare agencies; compiling portfolios; and giving scholarly presentations at the department's senior symposium. The Program assesses students each semester on these skills and seeks input from agency partners as well as faculty. Nursing uses the assessment results for ongoing program planning and revision ([RD#329](#)).

The Art Department attends to issues in 3.B.3 through its demands that students be able to:

- produce high quality artwork, which reflects a professional level of technical proficiency, unique and individual visions, original ideas, and professional presentation;
- describe the features of imagery presented using art vocabulary;
- appreciate the aesthetics and diverse range of the arts from many different cultures, media, styles, periods, and ideas, therefore, to understand and promote diversity in the arts;
- identify, analyze, and interpret the important visual elements in works of art;
- articulate, verbally and in writing, the basic and advanced levels of formal visual elements such as composition, line, color, style and space;
- identify and articulate historically significant art works;
- place contemporary art works in historical context, articulate, and analyze those images, and further apply this knowledge to the creation of artworks; and
- make personal, yet rational and reasonable, assessments, evaluations, and judgments about art works.

The Art Department routinely evaluates these outcomes in course work throughout the curriculum and cumulatively assesses them through the senior

student exhibitions that the entire full-time faculty adjudicates. Student work (paired with oral presentations and written artist statements) is judged on technical proficiency, concern for visual elements, ideas/aesthetics, and presentation. In all of these venues, the department also evaluates students on all of the criteria above. As in the above example, this assessment information is used in curricular planning and revision. For example, when the department found deficiencies in students' ability to place historical works in context and to write well-developed artist statements, it addressed those issues through curricular revisions ([RD#330](#)).

Among the learning goals of programs in both Mechanical and Electrical Engineering ([RD#331](#)) and ([RD#332](#)) — which are accredited by ABET and share a set of student outcomes — several are specifically related to 3.B.3, including those that expect graduates to have:

- an ability to design and conduct experiments, as well as to analyze and interpret data;
- an ability to design a system, component, or process to meet desired needs within realistic constraints;
- an ability to identify, formulate, and solve engineering problems
- an ability to communicate effectively;
- the broad education necessary to understand the impact of engineering solutions in a global, economic, environmental and societal context;
- recognition of the need for, and an ability to engage in life-long learning; and
- knowledge of contemporary issues.

These outcomes are assessed on a regular cycle across all levels of coursework, with the culminating assessment happening through the senior design experience, a yearlong capstone project. Faculty, administrators, industrial clients, members of the Engineering Advisory Board, and other engineering professionals assess these projects. Students present their projects as exhibits in a poster session as well as through formal presentations open to the campus community. Projects are always mentored by at least one faculty member, often assisted by an industrial partner who has developed the specifications for the project. Assessment information again feeds into on-going planning and improvement to ensure that program objectives (and larger SVSU objectives like those embodied in 3.B.3) are met.

Many majors require capstone or senior-level projects culminating in symposia or colloquium presentations that allow students to gain experience in inquiry and creative endeavors.

Many majors, beyond those discussed above, require capstone or senior-level projects culminating in symposia or colloquium presentations that allow students to gain experience in inquiry and creative endeavors. Student symposia are generally open to the campus community, faculty, other students, and administrators attend these presentations to support and engage students. Departments often hold these events at the end of the academic semesters to celebrate student achievement. The linked table indicates the various ways in which different departments participate in the modes of learning addressed in 3.B.3. ([RD#328](#)).

3.B.4 The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live and work.

Diversity is an essential part of the University's mission. As discussed in Criterion 1, the University has set a number of goals to foster diversity at SVSU and has made significant progress in meeting those goals. The University continues to work to increase the diversity of its student body, faculty, and staff through a range of recruitment and hiring strategies and by fostering a campus climate that welcomes people from diverse backgrounds and experiences. At the same time, the University furthers the recognition of human and cultural diversity through its curriculum and educational programs. While SVSU has attended deeply to the nation's diversity, it has also made notable progress in expanding international opportunities.

SVSU has long made a concerted effort to address diversity in the curriculum in a number of ways. Various departments have added diversity requirements to their programs. For example, the learning goals of all three programs discussed in the previous section include objectives related to working in a diverse world. The General Education program, in particular, requires each course admitted to the program to address aspects of diversity relevant to the course's category and content. Also, specific categories within the program, such as international systems, are oriented to diversity issues. The General Education program ([RD#484](#)) emphasizes different kinds of diversity and is designed to develop in each student:

- appreciation of a wide range of perspectives and experiences;
- acquaintance with the many ways of experiencing and acquiring knowledge;
- broad knowledge about the human and natural world;
- appreciation of the arts for aesthetic value and for their usefulness in exploring complex human truths;
- knowledge of the history of civilizations; and
- exploration and development of individual values and ethics.

Approximately 60% of general education courses include a significant component related to diverse and global systems, and by design, all students encounter such courses in completion of their general education program.

SVSU also has created individual courses that are focused around diversity including:

- COMM 455 Intercultural Communication;
- ENGL 307 Ethnic Literature in the United States;
- courses in French, German, Japanese, Latin, Polish, and Spanish;
- GEOG 201 World Cultural Regional Geography;
- GEOG 311 Geography of Africa;
- GEOG 312 Historical Geography of Latin America;
- GS 100 Introduction to Gender Studies;

The General Education program, in particular, requires each course admitted to the program to address aspects of diversity relevant to the course's category and content.

- HS 336 Cultural Competence in Healthcare;
- HIST 215 Survey of East Asian History;
- HIST 319 African American History;
- MGT 613 Management of Workforce Diversity;
- PHIL 240 Philosophy and Feminism;
- PS 270 Race and the United States Political System;
- SW 410 Diverse Youth and Families;
- SOC 305 Sociology of Aging; and
- TE 546 Educating the Diverse Learner.

The University has developed specific programs centered on diversity, such as the interdisciplinary Black Studies and Gender Studies minors, the interdisciplinary International Studies major, an Asian Studies program, and the International Business major. While such programs study diversity directly, most academic departments also have addressed issues of diversity in their general learning goals, curriculum, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities. The majority of departments and programs include diversity goals in their planning/assessment documents, and assess such goals regularly ([RD#333](#)). Still, this has been an uneven endeavor. A handful of departments' annual reports state that diversity is not relevant to them or is outside of their realm, while a few use overly broad and general statements to describe their diversity initiatives. Reporting and evaluation processes are sometimes weak. Reasons for this are unclear, but departments and programs may be at different points in their attention to the University's mission of diversity or perceive different roles relating to the issue.

In addition to fostering majors with more international emphases, SVSU has increased the number of annual Study Abroad trips it sponsors substantially.

At the same time, the University has focused on providing more students with international experiences ([RD#334](#)). In addition to fostering majors with more international emphases, SVSU has increased the number of annual Study Abroad trips it sponsors from three to eighteen. The number of students who participate in such experiences has increased from fewer than 100 to more than 200. Students are also visiting a more diverse range of sites in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, including China, Senegal, and El Salvador. In part, this growth is due to student interest in particular programs, such as Geography, Spanish, and International Studies, but it has also been generated by faculty experiences in these countries and by University efforts to create opportunities for faculty to visit sites well ahead of offering programs.

While trips abroad ([RD#485](#)) were previously mainly co-curricular or extracurricular activities, many are now tied to specific courses with defined learning outcomes and academic expectations ([RD#335](#)). These include nursing students studying health practices in India; education students working with female students in India; art students studying art history in Rome; English and history majors studying in London; and geography students studying ecology in Costa Rica.

3.B.5 The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their programs and the institution's mission.

SVSU primarily offers undergraduate degree programs with a small number of professional graduate programs. Its faculty contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery and dissemination of knowledge within the context of heavy teaching loads and a significant commitment to undergraduate student learning. In part because of this, SVSU has also begun to actively support research opportunities for its undergraduate and graduate students and for students and faculty working collaboratively.

The *Research Bulletin of Faculty, Staff, and Students* ([RD#461](#)) and the Office of Sponsored and Academic Program Support's *Annual Report* ([RD#450](#)) are key, albeit not exclusive, indicators of the scholarly and creative work of SVSU's faculty, staff, and students. The first of these lists a range of types of publications and presentations, and the second focuses on grants. The number of contributions to the *Bulletin* has grown significantly, nearly doubling in both faculty and student entries in the last three years. The 2010 and 2011 volumes show that SVSU faculty, for example, authored or edited six books and over 150 articles and book chapters published in peer-reviewed venues and presented an even larger number of conference papers, exhibitions, and performances. A SVSU faculty member serves as the editor of *Material Culture* (the journal of the Pioneer America Society) ([RD#486](#)), and a number of faculty serve as officers of various disciplinary organizations and scholarly societies. Faculty in a wide range of disciplines from all five of SVSU's colleges contribute to the *Research Bulletin*. Grant funding for faculty research projects reached a record amount of nearly \$7 million in external funding, contracts, and sponsored research in 2008. This amount dropped to \$2 million in 2009, as several large federal grants closed simultaneously, but since then, funding levels have increased, reaching nearly \$4 million in 2011. These efforts result from many faculty members' sense of themselves as teacher-scholars even as the University increases its expectations for scholarly and creative achievement in its criteria for tenure, promotion, and sabbaticals.

SVSU, with funding from outside donors, supports several award programs designed to promote excellence in research and creative endeavors. The Warrick Award ([RD#487](#)) recognizes one faculty member each year for a cumulative body of research or creative activity. More recently, through an endowment by the Wickes Foundation, the Ruth and Ted Braun Fellowship Program ([RD#463](#)) was established. Each year, two faculty or staff members are selected as Braun Fellows. Each fellow receives grants totaling \$37,500 (\$12,500 per year) during the three-year term to further their scholarly or professional activities. Braun Fellows are expected to produce a body of professional or academic work for publication or presentation during or at the conclusion of the fellowship term. The selection is based on a competitive proposal process, and funds may be used for release time, summer stipends, travel, supplies, and student assistants. Student scholarly activity is supported by the Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow

Student Research and Creativity Institute (SRCI) ([RD#475](#)), which has provided nearly \$377,258 for student projects since its inception in 2005. The SRCI provides up to \$10,000 per project in support for faculty-mentored student research. Award recipients may use funds for travel, supplies, and equipment. In addition to the traditional project proposals, in 2013, the SRCI implemented a mini-grant program that funded an additional eight projects for about \$7500.

In addition, the Honors Program ([RD#473](#)) has long fostered student scholarly and creative work. The Program requires an Honors thesis, representing original research or creative activity mentored by a faculty member. Members of the Honors Program receive financial support to defray expenses associated with the production of the thesis. The Student Association also provides eligible students with travel funds for conference attendance and presentations.

SVSU students also have a wide range of group and individual performance opportunities ranging from informal poetry slams to theater productions tied to SVSU's work with the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival ([RD#427](#)) and from SVSU's endowed Sims Public Speaking Contest ([RD#488](#)) to student recitals. Faculty regularly present their creative work in a range of campus and community venues.

The University supports faculty and student research through a number of channels. The Office of Sponsored Programs comprehensively helps faculty identify funding sources for scholarly and creative activities that align strategically with the University and the community it serves. The Office assists faculty in navigating how to calculate costs within the University as well as with external agency frameworks and helps faculty negotiate partnerships with community entities. It has regularized procedures for internal grants such as the Faculty Research and Professional Growth Awards (known informally as Unit Committee Awards). It also oversees reporting and compliance processes. Sponsored Programs also provides critical training for new faculty on how to fund research and carry out projects in the context of their roles as employees of a university, which often differ significantly from those experienced as graduate students. The Office currently employs two part-time co-directors (as the full-time director is retiring), a full-time assistant director, and an administrative secretary.

*The University
also fulfills
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establishment
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chairs.*

The University also fulfills its mission to support scholarly work through the establishment of ten endowed chairs (with at least one in each college). Funded through external donations, these chairs are charged with fostering high levels of research in their respective fields through garnering grant funds, establishing internal and external partnerships, and mentoring faculty. Endowed chairs are expected to publish and disseminate knowledge to the community (e.g., through seminars and partnerships) and to work with regular faculty and students on appropriate projects. Endowed Chairs are administrative appointees and are not eligible for tenure. Although they are outside of the faculty bargaining unit, Endowed Chairs do teach. However, their teaching load is significantly less than that of regular faculty—consistent with higher expectations for research and outreach. Endowed chairs typically work closely with Sponsored Programs to find funding for projects, with emphasis on projects that reach beyond

individual research and encompass the interests and needs of other faculty in the University. For example, the H.H. Dow Endowed Chair of Chemistry has developed the multidisciplinary Saginaw Bay Environmental Sciences Institute ([RD#489](#)) involving students and faculty from Geography, Biology, Chemistry, and Professional Writing, as well as regional, governmental, and community agencies. This program has been successful in providing research opportunities for students and faculty while serving the needs of the region and the agencies it engages.

3.C. The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student service.

Saginaw Valley State University has grown in both student and faculty numbers since its inception 50 years ago. Over the last decade, faculty hiring has kept pace consistently with institutional growth. Key indicators, such as a 20:1 student-faculty ratio (as counted by IPEDs) and an average class size of 21, show SVSU to be at, or better than, collegiate norms.

As discussed below, SVSU follows well-established processes to evaluate all instructors. These procedures form the basis of promotion and tenure decisions for tenure-track faculty, for reappointment and raises for endowed chairs and lecturers, and for reappointment of adjuncts. The institution employs diverse means to foster faculty success, while maintaining high standards of performance. In this vein, the University provides significant support to ensure that all instructors remain current in their fields and adept at teaching. Instructors are accessible to students both in and out of the classroom, face-to-face and online. The University takes care in hiring staff members for student support roles and evaluates them regularly.

3.C.1. The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance; establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff; involvement in assessment of student learning.

SVSU faculty numbers and undergraduate-to-faculty ratios are well within norms for an institution of its size and character. The following table tracks full-time faculty and student growth over the past five years.

	Full time faculty	Total undergrad enrollment	Undergrad/full-time faculty ratio
Fall 2008	287	7747	27.0 : 1
Fall 2009	290	8370	28.9 : 1
Fall 2010	298	8647	29.0 : 1
Fall 2011	301	8862	29.4 : 1
Fall 2012	312	8765	28.1 : 1

Note: also see the IPEDS data (which figures in adjunct faculty)

Table 3.3
([RD#21](#))

While the University has engaged in substantial hiring in recent years to replace retiring faculty and accommodate institutional growth, there remains strong continuity in faculty roles. While one third of the faculty at SVSU have been on campus for less than six years—a reflection of increased hiring due to growth and a large number of retirements in recent years—this is well balanced by the number of faculty who have been at SVSU for eleven or more years and who generally hold the rank of full Professor.

The chart below shows the distribution of faculty by years of service.

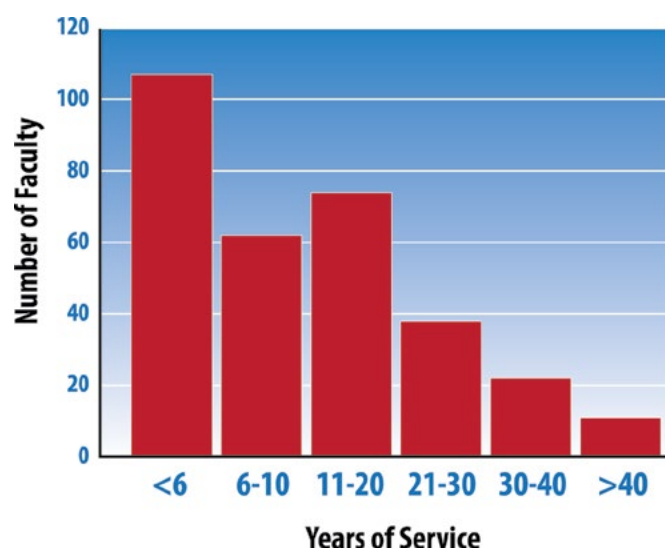


Fig. 3.1
(RD#564)

This data demonstrates faculty consistency, showing that the clear majority of SVSU faculty are not only on long-term contracts but have served the University for significant periods of time (six or more years) that have included multiple evaluations. The recent growth in numbers of new faculty balanced by high numbers of experienced faculty indicates that SVSU has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty to support the classroom and non-classroom functions.

The data above also emphasizes the importance SVSU places on the presence of full-time faculty in the classroom. The University takes these issues so seriously that the SVSU/FA Contract addresses maximum ratios for part-time to full-time faculty members in D13; limitations on full-time faculty members' outside employment, in D15; and the structure of temporary full-time appointments (which are limited to a total of two years), in D16. Part-time faculty participate in some curricular discussions, assess student learning in all cases, are often involved in more in-depth assessment conversations, and may, in some cases, form long-term relationship with departments. Nonetheless, full-time faculty members are central to all aspects of teaching, learning, and assessment at SVSU. Faculty members elected to the three standing curriculum committees (see 2.C.4) are full-time and receive course release for their committee service. Full-time faculty members, working within college and departmental structures, handle other curricular oversight functions, set expectations for student performance, assess student learning, and establish academic credential

standards (see 3.C.2). While department chairs at SVSU remain in the bargaining unit—they are full-time faculty members elected by the other full-time faculty in their respective departments—they receive release time for their duties. Similarly, faculty members who are designated by their departments and dean to take on additional responsibilities, such as assessment or program review, are full-time and receive course release or other compensation for their duties ([RD#273](#)).

3.C.2. All instructors are appropriately credentialed, including those in dual credit, contractual and consortial programs.

SVSU maintains appropriate standards for all instructors of its courses, including part-time adjunct faculty, lecturers, tenure-track and tenured faculty, and endowed chairs. As noted in 3.A.3, all instructional personnel are held to the same credential standard regardless of instructional location or modality.

The credentials for full-time instructors are clearly delineated in the faculty contract, which list the following qualifications at each rank:

Rank	Minimum Qualification	Source
Lecturers	Appropriate master's degree or equivalent. (Lecturers are not eligible for tenure.)	(RD#273a)
Instructor	Appropriate master's degree or equivalent. (Instructors are not eligible for tenure at this rank.)	(RD#273b)
Assistant Professor	Master's degree plus 15 semester hours. (Normally, completion of terminal degree required for continued employment and/or promotion.)	(RD#273c)
Associate Professor	Master's degree plus 30 semester hours. (Normally, completion of terminal degree is required prior to attaining this rank.)	(RD#273d)
Professor	Doctoral degrees such as Ph.D., Ed.D., D.A., D. Ed., D.N.S., Sc.D., M.F. A., and J.D. with M.B.A.	(RD#273e)
Endowed Chairs	Terminal degree and extensive research/creative/scholarly experience	HR Records

Table 3.4

These represent minimum qualifications; most tenure-track and tenured faculty hold terminal degrees. Faculty who are hired prior to completion of their terminal degree are normally advised that their continued employment and promotion are contingent on successful completion of that degree, normally within one or two years. (Candidates for tenure-track positions who have not finished their terminal degrees can be hired as either Instructors or Assistant Professors depending on their progress towards degree completion.)

Adjunct faculty are qualified by degrees, experience, or both. At a bare minimum, adjunct faculty possess appropriate baccalaureate degrees—though exceptions are sometimes made for exercise activity classes such as Zumba, Yoga, etc.—and most hold advanced degrees or certificates. SVSU uses no graduate assistants as instructors of record and very few in any classroom capacity at all.

Job descriptions for both full-time and part-time faculty are developed jointly between the administration (generally the appropriate dean) and departmental faculty. While minimum credentials are determined by the SVSU/FA contract, additional qualifications demanded by the discipline's expectations may be included to ensure adequate coverage of courses, balanced research and service, and strong major and minor program development. Notably, the SVSU/FA Contract says that "Credit shall only be given for a course taught by an individual properly affiliated with and accepted by the appropriate department and respective dean" ([RD#273](#)).

3.C.3 Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.

SVSU evaluates all instructional personnel regularly through well-understood processes, though these processes differ by instructor classification and bargaining unit membership (or lack thereof).

Processes for instructional personnel *not* in the faculty bargaining unit include:

Adjunct Faculty: Adjunct faculty are required to administer student evaluations in every class they teach. Specific instructions are provided, including the requirement that student anonymity be preserved. Student evaluations are collected in the deans' offices and shared with the adjunct faculty members as well as department chairs. Deans review these evaluations prior to sharing them with chairs. This procedure provides an opportunity for deans and chairs to offer feedback, resolve problems, and promote adjunct success. It is also a mechanism that alerts chairs to adjunct faculty who are not well-suited to the teaching environment, so that corrective action can be taken. Classroom observation and evaluative processes for adjunct faculty vary from department to department and program to program, although many programs include observations by full-time faculty that are reported to chairs or program coordinators ([RD#338](#)).

Endowed Chairs: The appropriate dean evaluates each endowed chair annually. A set of performance goals is established from the endowed chair's contract and specific job description. Teaching is one aspect of a larger review process that includes input from departmental and non-departmental colleagues as well as external collaborators, data from student evaluations, and examination of

any innovative or new teaching materials developed. The endowed chairs must submit annual performance summaries, highlighting their accomplishments. The outcome of the review process is used to establish salary increases and any contract extensions. Failure to perform in any area can result in non-renewal of contract ([RD#543](#)) .

Processes for instructional personnel within the faculty bargaining unit include:

Lecturers: Lecturers are evaluated in compliance with the SVSU/FA Contract ([RD#273](#)) and ([RD#273](#)). The performance expectations include teaching and departmental service. Lecturers are initially appointed to a one-year contract and then, twice subsequently, to two-year contracts. Evaluation teams — composed of three faculty members who visit classes, administer student evaluations, assess teaching effectiveness — are assigned in the first, third, and fifth year. The department provides input and the dean reviews the team and departmental reports. Successful evaluations result in reappointment until the next review. Once lecturers have completed their fifth year they are given five-year contracts and are evaluated by their respective departments using a standard Individual Evaluation Report (IER) every five years thereafter ([RD#273](#)). The quality of instruction and service also serve as the basis for salary bonuses, as outlined in the SVSU/FA Contract ([RD#273](#)).

Full-Time Temporary Faculty: Until 2013, all temporary full-time faculty were evaluated in line with D16 and H2.2 of the SVSU/FA Contract with evaluation teams of three faculty members, as defined above, conducting said evaluations and again focusing on teaching and (less so) service. In 2013, to streamline the evaluation process, the SVSU administration and Faculty Association agreed to a Memorandum of Understanding allowing such temporary faculty to choose either this process or a more limited process centering on departmental evaluation, again focusing on teaching and (less so) service. Any renewal of temporary full-time faculty — capped by section D16 to one additional year as a temporary appointment — is contingent on the results of the evaluation ([RD#273](#)).

Tenure-Track and Tenured Faculty: SVSU is proud of its evaluation process leading to promotion and tenure. The process encompasses frequent review of teaching, scholarship, and service and provides abundant opportunities for constructive peer feedback. This process is taken very seriously by both the faculty and the administration, and it fosters both effective teaching and broader faculty success. It thus serves the faculty members, the institution, and the students. The cooperative process is clearly delineated in the SVSU/FA Contract ([RD#273](#)), ([RD#273](#), article G), and ([RD#273](#), article H).

For faculty hired without experience credit, written reports are provided in the first, second, and fourth (pre-tenure) year of service to the University. Those hired at the rank of instructor must be promoted to assistant professor before tenure consideration, although they have the same evaluation timeline. The reports are produced by three-member peer review teams of faculty — two of

SVSU has contractually defined and systematically implemented processes for evaluation of academic instructors.

whom must be tenured, while the third must have at least two years of service — who visit classes, administer student evaluations, discuss research and service expectations, and integrate this information into a comprehensive statement of effectiveness. The team reports are required to address effectiveness of classroom teaching, scholarly or creative achievement, and service to the university and community. As required by contract, the faculty member's department also provides a written statement in each of these evaluation cycles. The appropriate dean, after studying the team report, the departmental comments, and other relevant information, provides a written evaluation.

In the pre-tenure year, the evaluation team also provides a specific recommendation regarding tenure, using the standard Individual Evaluation Report (IER), which assigns a numerical score between 1 and 10 (low to high) and includes evaluative comments on each of the three areas of evaluation (teaching, scholarly/creative activity, and service) ([RD#336](#)).

Throughout this period, the faculty member compiles a portfolio described in G4 and G5 of the SVSU/FA Contract and referred to as a PPC File, with the acronym standing for the Professional Practices Committee, the body that addresses questions of tenure, promotion, sabbatical, and discipline. After the faculty member's pre-tenure year — usually in the faculty member's fifth year unless experience credit has been awarded — the faculty member is considered for tenure. ([RD#273](#)).

PPC, composed of six elected faculty from across campus (one from each unit) and three administrative appointees, reviews the portfolio, all team reports, and IERs submitted by the dean, the department (through the chair), and up to three non-probationary faculty colleagues. In their review, PPC members use the same numerical scale as the IER forms. Teaching performance is the most important factor in promotion and tenure decisions — counting as 50% of the total score. Scholarly activities and service account for the other 50%, with some flexibility in the relative weights of those two components. Inadequate performance in teaching, defined as a numerical score below 6.0, automatically precludes a positive tenure or promotion decision, as does a weighted total score below 6.0. Each PPC member scores the candidate's PPC file independently, and his/her vote is determined by the composite or teaching score, whichever is lower. A majority of positive votes is required for a positive tenure or promotion recommendation.

PPC then makes a formal recommendation on tenure to the University administration. The Board of Control is the final arbiter on all promotion and tenure applications. Candidates denied tenure after their first pre-tenure year can reapply one time in the year immediately following.

While SVSU does not have a mandatory post-tenure review process, faculty seeking promotion must submit applications, PPC files (again, with all items listed in G4 including all student evaluation forms), and IERs to be considered;

submitted IERs must reflect classroom visits within the preceding two years. Faculty seeking sabbaticals must also submit applications and complete PPC files. Sabbatical and promotion recommendations are made by PPC and formalized by the Board of Control. ([RD#273](#), article M9)

Under the SVSU/FA Contract, departments or deans have the authority to bring faculty (including tenured faculty) for PPC review for “failure to maintain competence as a teacher and scholar or for repeated failure to comply with job requirements” ([RD#273](#)). This process, although implemented rarely, has been used to discipline or terminate tenured faculty members who have not maintained professional standards or competence and is thus a form of situation-specific post-tenure review.

3.C.4 The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.

Beyond the significant evaluation processes outlined above, SVSU has implemented diverse processes to ensure faculty are current in their disciplines and adept in teaching including regularly offered professional development opportunities. For new faculty, this process begins with the Faculty Summer Institute, a multi-day workshop dedicated to integrating new faculty into SVSU’s community. This Institute has been offered every year since 1997 and has traditionally focused on active learning strategies and best practices for teaching. More recently, in part because of feedback from past participants, its focus has been expanded to include professional development discussions tied to scholarship and creative work and campus/community service. Since 2007, the Provost’s Office has also invited new faculty to participate in workshops throughout their first year of service. Topics have included exemplary teaching (presented by recipients of teaching awards), grants (presented by Sponsored Programs), interpretation of student evaluations (presented by the provost and members of PPC), and curriculum processes (presented by members of CAPC, Grad Committee, and GEC) ([RD#337](#)). The new coordinator of the Faculty Summer Institute is in the process of developing a more extensive first-year experience for the new faculty. The Provost’s Office also organizes lunch-and-learn opportunities for all faculty, with topics such as online education, international programs, and diversity.

Currently, full-time faculty are contractually allowed up to \$1450 per year for professional development expenses, most of which is reserved for conference attendance ([RD#339](#)). In addition, the contract specifies that an additional sum (\$25,000) be reserved for supplemental support for faculty who present at conferences. ([RD#273](#), article D8)

Numerous faculty development programs tied to teaching are available to adjunct faculty as well. The Office of Adjunct Support offers technology,

SVSU has implemented diverse processes to ensure faculty are current in their disciplines and adept in teaching including regularly offered professional development opportunities.

pedagogy, and orientation workshops regularly for part-time instructors ([RD#338](#)). The office pays adjuncts a small sum (\$25-\$50) for attendance. Participation in these workshops has dramatically increased in the last five years, and satisfaction surveys have been positive. During the 2012-2013 academic year, these pedagogy workshops focused on teaching first-year students, in alignment with institutional attention to retention and persistence. During the 2013-2014 academic year, the focus has been on High Impact Practices, based on the LEAP (Liberal Education and America's Promise) initiative developed by the Association of American Colleges and Universities. Additionally, adjuncts who have taught for at least two semesters are eligible to participate in the LEAD program, which facilitates development of a teaching portfolio under the mentorship of a full time faculty member. Limited support for adjunct faculty travel to professional conferences—especially tied to their teaching—is also available.

The University also supports full-time faculty professional development through internal grants such as the SVSU Faculty Research Grant and the SVSU Professional Growth Grant (known informally as Unit Committee grants). These resources are allocated according to the Faculty Contract ([RD#273](#)). The guidelines for submission ([RD#478](#)) are prominently posted on the Sponsored Programs website. While all full-time faculty members may apply for these grants, most often they support early career faculty, since the University does not provide research start-up packages to new faculty. The funding history for the last five years is shown below.

Table 3.5
([RD#569](#))

Academic Year	Funds awarded	Release time awarded
AY09-10	\$64,489	36 load hours
AY10-11	\$63,549	66.4 load hours
AY11-12	\$98,465	78 load hours
AY12-13	\$75,309	58.6 load hours
AY13-14	\$68,416	64 load hours

Tenured faculty members are eligible to apply for sabbaticals every seven years. The SVSU/FA Contract defines the selection criteria as years of service, the quality of the proposal, and the quality of teaching/research/service ([RD#273](#)). Faculty submit applications for sabbaticals to the PPC, which makes recommendations to the Board of Control. Most sabbaticals center on scholarship, research, or creative activities, but, consistent with the teaching mission of the University, some are awarded for development of teaching materials or extensive course re-design.

A number of other internal grants with more specialized foci are also available. For example, an endowment from the Allen Foundation ([RD#490](#)) enables student/faculty research projects in health and nutrition, while the Saginaw Bay Environmental Science Institute ([RD#489](#)), an internal consortium, sponsors a

limited number of mini-grants for faculty whose research aligns with its mission. SVSU also recognizes excellence in teaching, research, and service through a range of awards ([RD#487](#)).

In addition, the University regularly offers professional development workshops to all faculty and staff. Members of the SVSU community can find workshops and register using this resource ([RD#491](#)) on the website. Workshops encompass technology, library, office productivity, grants, and other matters of interest to faculty and staff. The Office of Diversity Programs also offers professional development workshops in such areas as diversity, inclusion, bias, hiring, and preventing sexual harassment. These workshops are available to any individual or group on campus ([RD#413](#)).

3.C.5. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.

SVSU requires that all full-time and part-time faculty keep regular office hours. The SVSU/FA Contract stipulates that all faculty members will hold a minimum of five office hours per week, which they must post ([RD#273](#)). Four of those hours must be definite and scheduled during times that provide reasonable availability to students, and the fifth hour may be set by appointment. Faculty who teach online courses are required to hold office hours on campus in proportion to their online load, although the tentative agreement for the 2014-2017 contract calls for all faculty to hold at least two on-campus office hours per week ([RD#341](#)). Adjunct faculty members must schedule at least one office hour for each section taught, at hours convenient to their students ([RD#338](#)). Most full-time and part-time faculty members go well beyond these minimums.

All full-time faculty members have private offices for meeting with students. Faculty members are generally located in close proximity to other department members and, as much as possible, in proximity to the classroom buildings where they do most of their teaching. The University provides adjunct faculty with desks, storage, and computer access in various locations around campus. These accommodations are somewhat limited in comparison to the total number of adjunct faculty but have increased dramatically over the last five years. Under the supervision of the Director of Adjunct Support Services, the Adjunct Faculty Office also serves as a contact point for adjuncts and students and increases adjunct faculty members' accessibility.

All full-time and part-time faculty have University email addresses, which they generally include in their syllabi. These are also available through departmental web sites and the SVSU directory. University faculty make extensive use of VSpace ([RD#492](#)), SVSU's electronic learning system, which includes message board and chat room features as well as modes for posting syllabi, assignments, and grades. Technical Services provides training to help faculty set up their courses in VSpace and additional support for problems. In 2011-2012, 634 of 739 full and part-time faculty (then 82%) used VSpace at least to post basic course content.

A 2012 NSSE survey found that students have positive perceptions of faculty availability outside of the classroom. Seniors, in particular, say that they have been able to communicate with faculty about assignments, career plans, and course content. According to the NSSE survey, 73% of first-year and 84% of senior students find that faculty are available, helpful, and sympathetic. Over 90% of both first-year and senior students report that they talked to their professors about grades or assignments, and 80% of seniors report having discussed career plans with faculty members. Still, the NSSE survey results suggest that there is room for improvement, especially among freshman completing the survey ([RD#342](#)).

Students also have opportunities to work with faculty outside of the classroom through the individual research and creativity projects.

Students also have opportunities to work with faculty outside of the classroom through the individual research and creativity projects described elsewhere in this report. Additionally, faculty interact with students through co-curricular activities such as the Formula One Race Team, the Forensics Team, the History Club, Moot Court, the Chemistry Club, Business Edge, and the Health Professions Society, all of which have faculty advisors. Student Organizations are described further in 3.E.1.

3.C.6 Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and co-curricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development.

Hiring units (in collaboration with SVSU's Human Resources Office) establish qualifications for student support service personnel including all of those noted above. These qualifications are consistent with typical university practices for their particular roles. For example, staff members who work in the counseling office must have a counseling degree (either Social Work or Psychology) and a current license. Any staff member with the title of Librarian must hold a minimum of a Master of Library Science degree from an ALA-accredited institution. Academic Advising is discussed in greater detail in 3.D.3, but it is worth noting here that while the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) recommends a student to advisor ratio of 50:1, SVSU has only four academic advisors for an 8800+ undergraduate population. To help address this large gap, the Academic Advisement Center has created a Peer Advisor ([RD#493](#)) program. Six upper class students have been hired as peer mentors to incoming first-year students and are trained in general advising and counseling matters.

SVSU posts all staff positions, using an online application system to ensure minimum qualifications have been met. Most full-time student services employees greatly exceed minimum qualifications. All full-time and 20+ hour/week part-time support staff and academic professionals are eligible to participate in non-credit professional development opportunities, such as software and hardware training, and in credit-bearing courses via various tuition

assistance programs. Support staff, for example, are granted a 75% tuition waiver per the SVSU/SSA Contract ([RD#62](#)). This benefit also applies to academic professionals.

Of note to this sub-criterion, most tutoring at SVSU is delivered through the model—common throughout the academy—of peer-tutoring. The Center for Academic Achievement ([RD#95](#)) and the Writing Center ([RD#494](#)) are the two primary providers of such tutoring. The Center for Academic Achievement consolidates previous tutoring programs in math, physics, biology, chemistry, economics, accounting, and the social sciences. The Writing Center works with student writers of all levels and from all disciplines. Professional faculty and staff oversee these centers and hire, train, evaluate, and provide development opportunities for qualified student tutors. These tutors are generally upper-division students who have both achieved high levels of academic success and have strong communication and interpersonal skills. Both Centers encourage their students to participate richly in disciplinary conversations. For example, the Writing Center generally has several student tutors each year who present at state and regional conferences on writing center theory and practice.

3.D. The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.

As discussed more fully below, SVSU supports student learning and effective teaching with a network designed to meet the needs of a diverse population. This network includes the various entities, resources, and processes described above, as well as those treated here—specifically student support services, placement, advising, infrastructure and resources for teaching and learning, and instruction in the use of information.

As discussed in the preface, while SVSU enrolls a relatively high fraction of students who have been very successful in high school (high school GPA > 3.5), SVSU also enrolls substantial numbers of students with high school GPAs below 2.5 and ACT Composites below 18. Addressing this bi-modal split, as well as students in the perennial “middle,” represents a challenge for SVSU student services and shapes the implementation of teaching and learning strategies and support efforts.

3.D.1 The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.

As a regional comprehensive institution, SVSU has a student population that varies widely in terms of academic preparation, economic status, and knowledge of academic conventions. For this reason, the institution has developed numerous support services to address the needs of its various student groups including specific support for students of color ([RD#314](#)); active, reserve and veteran service members ([RD#315](#)) and their dependents; students with a

wide array of disabilities ([RD#316](#)); and the LGBTQA+ community ([RD#373](#)). Financial aid issues, critical to this population, are described in this section, while support for teaching and learning is the focus of Section 3.D.2 and advising the focus of Section 3.D.3. Broad campus culture issues are discussed in the Preface and again in 3.E.

Through judicious planning and careful use of resources, the University maintains the lowest tuition rate of the public universities in Michigan.

Through judicious planning and careful use of resources, the University maintains the lowest tuition rate of the public universities in Michigan. Nevertheless, the University is mindful of the cost of college and the burden that loans can place on students who are often working fulltime and frequently have family responsibilities to balance. Although retention issues are discussed in greater detail in Criteria 1 and 4 and the fiscal strategies for dealing with loss of state revenue are discussed in Criterion 5, it is worth noting here that the University has responded to these issues in several ways in relation to scholarships and financial aid to students.

Financial Aid policies and the administration of student loans and scholarships have become especially significant given the tuition pressures associated with consistent declines in state funding—as state appropriations have dropped from 54% of the General Fund in 1993 to 22% in 2013—and the institution’s large fraction of students with financial need. In FY 2013, the institution awarded nearly \$12 million dollars in financial aid ([RD#378](#)) to students from general fund revenues with another \$1.2 million from endowments.

The Campus Financial Services Center was established in August 2012 to provide a one-stop shop for all student financial needs and so to alleviate confusion and redirection to multiple offices that students may have experienced in the past. The impetus for this change came from an independent review and analysis of the organization of the Business Affairs Unit, which suggested that with the increased number of students needing financial services, greater efficiencies and improvements in service could be realized with a centralized operation for all financial functions ([RD#190](#)). The Center combines the front desk operations of the Office of Scholarships & Financial Aid, the former Cashier’s Office, and Student Financial Services, leading to a more satisfactory experience for students, parents, staff, and faculty, including more efficient and timely responses from the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid.

The Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid has also put in place many new electronic initiatives to meet students’ immediate needs, provide more real-time information, and realize cost saving. The Office has begun utilizing email as the primary form of communication, adjusting its policy to allow students to add two additional email addresses to serve as “carbon copy” recipients of most Office correspondence, thus allowing parents to stay in the loop if students choose to include them. The Office also made the electronic acceptance or rejection of awards available for students (which in turn provides real-time reflection in any current balance owing) and implemented an online area where students can check their current financial status and quickly link to any needed documentation or procedures to complete.

Students can visit the Campus Financial Services Center ([RD#495](#)) or the Scholarships and Financial Aid ([RD#496](#)) website to investigate financial aid packages that might include a combination of scholarships, grants, loans, and work study to support educational costs. Scholarship and Financial Aid also maintains a searchable scholarship page where students can search for both internal and external scholarship opportunities. In AY 2012-13, SVSU moved to on-line scholarship application ([RD#497](#)) software that replaced the paper application process. Students now fill out a single electronic scholarship application that is automatically submitted for any scholarships they qualify for, based on their responses to the form's questions. The system also automatically informs reviewers when there are scholarship applications to review.

3.D.2 The institution provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. It has a process for directing entering students in courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared.

SVSU's general admission requirements are readily available in the catalog ([RD#42](#)) and website ([RD#465](#)). Traditional students, under age 22, must submit an application along with acceptable ACT (or SAT) scores and have a high school GPA of 2.5 or better. Students with a GPA of 2.0 to 2.5 may be admitted provisionally if test scores or other factors indicate potential for success.

All students must complete Basic Skills ([RD#42](#)) requirements in Math, Reading, and Writing prior to graduation. These requirements can be met through satisfactory sub-scores on the ACT, through placement testing, or through successful completion of Basic Skills classes. SVSU attends carefully to placement questions and provides preparatory instruction where it is needed.

Initial math placement is based on the ACT math sub-score. Students have the option of taking a COMPASS test to improve their initial placement. The cut scores for the ACT and COMPASS tests were derived from national norms and comparisons to other institutions. About 50% of SVSU freshman require enrollment in developmental (non-credit bearing) math courses, which are offered in both traditional and computer-based formats.

Writing course placement is based on the ACT English sub-score. Approximately 90% of incoming students are placed directly into Composition I (ENGL 111), but those requiring additional preparation are placed into a developmental writing course (ENGL 080) prior to enrollment in Composition I.

In the past, reading placement was tied to ACT Composite score. Students scoring 16 or lower automatically placed into ENGL 082. Students scoring 23 and above with a high school GPA of 3.0 or higher were waived from reading courses. All students scoring between 17 and 21, as well as students scoring 22 and above with a high school GPA below 3.0 were tested using the Nelson-

Denny test. Based on assessment data and an outside consultant's report, SVSU is piloting placement using the ACT Reading sub-score paired with high school GPA and uses the COMPASS Reading test for students requesting further assessment. Approximately 32% of SVSU students are placed into basic skills reading courses.

To support the larger student population but especially students who are academically at-risk, the University has developed a number of services and programs.

To support the larger student population but especially students who are academically at-risk, the University has developed a number of services and programs, including the following:

The Center for Academic Achievement ([RD#95](#)) was formed in fall 2012 when separate tutoring services were consolidated into one physical location in the main campus library under the leadership of the Director of Academic Program Support. The Coordinator of the Center for Academic Achievement and faculty members oversee the activities of the tutors in the major content areas (math, physics, biology, chemistry). The Center provides drop-in tutoring in math, physics, biology, chemistry, accounting, economics, social sciences, statistics, and technology to students six days each week during the academic year including some evening hours. Individual tutoring sessions are available by appointment. Tutors are trained upper-division students, professional tutors, and select faculty members. SVSU has been tracking student usage of the tutoring center, shown below, and is developing a comprehensive assessment method to determine the impact of the Center on student learning, persistence and retention.

This service is enormously popular, recording nearly 18,000 visits in Fall 2012 and winter 2013 combined. Surveys done at the conclusion of each session suggest that students find the tutoring helpful and believe it improves their academic success ([RD#345](#)). However, analysis of the usage statistics indicates that this service is under-utilized by those students at highest academic risk, an issue that will be addressed through collaborations between academic and advising units ([RD#346](#)). Assessment of the impact of the Academic Achievement Center on student success is ongoing to determine if and how usage of the tutoring facilities helps realize University goals to improve student learning and increase retention and graduation rates.

The Writing Center ([RD#494](#)) has been providing assistance to student writers since 1995. The mission of the Writing Center ([RD#494](#)) is to “raise the level of student excellence in student writing, at all levels and in all disciplines.” Writing Center tutors are upper-division students who have been recommended by faculty and extensively trained in writing instruction. Students may drop in for assistance or make appointments and receive help in brainstorming ideas, understanding assignments, organizing information, developing arguments, using proper citation formats, identifying grammar and other mechanical errors, as well as expanding approaches to creative writing, and developing as critical thinkers and writers.

Center usage has grown consistently; it conducted about 500 tutorial sessions during its first year of operation but now runs about 5000 sessions each

academic year. Students who use the Center report high levels of satisfaction with the services provided there. 98% of students who used Writing Center services rate their experience as excellent or good, and 90% report that they feel more confident as writers after their tutoring sessions ([RD#300](#)). Testimonials from faculty show they see the Writing Center as an essential element in developing student writers; many faculty work in partnership with the Writing Center through both programs such as “Faculty in the Center,” in which faculty volunteer as tutors, and classroom presentations.

Workshops developed to support those faculty teaching first-year students, focus on best practices for teaching today’s freshmen and are structured around Chickering and Gamson’s seven principles of good practice in undergraduate education ([RD#347](#)). The Student Success Committee recognized that long-term student success often depends on the experience students have in their first year, and even more, in the first semester. In the 2012-2013 academic year, faculty and learning support staff collaborated to discuss how to best meet the needs of freshmen during their transition to college. Approximately 50 faculty participated, suggesting a great deal of interest in student success. Nevertheless, although the workshops were well received, there has been little ongoing follow-up or discussion of the effectiveness of this program.

Support Programs for Academically At-Risk Students

SVSU has developed a number of initiatives to assist students who are at high risk academically. Most of these programs have been implemented in the last year or two and have not been fully assessed with regard to impact on student success and retention. These include the following:

The King-Chavez Parks 4S Grant ([RD#498](#)) was awarded in fall 2011 and provides intensive mentoring services to FTIC students who meet the following criteria: ACT score of less than 20, first generation in college, and eligible for Pell Grants. The goals of the grant are to increase the overall GPA of these students to a 2.0, to achieve a first-to-second year (fall-to-fall) persistence rate of 55% (compared to the 10% rate for this population), and to reach a six-year persistence-to-graduation rate of 40%. The average first-to-second year fall-to-fall retention rate for all undergraduate SVSU students is around 70%. At this writing, three KCP cohorts of students are being mentored and monitored. The third cohort came into the university in fall 2013, so the first-to-second year retention rate will be recorded in fall 2014. While it is too soon to measure graduation rates, the respective fall-to-fall retention rates and mean cumulative GPAs for the first two cohorts are as follows:

KCP Cohort	Fall-to-Fall	Retention Rate	Mean Cumulative GPA
1	2011-2012	58.6%	2.52
2	2012-2013	66.07%	2.44

Table 3.6
([RD#568](#))

The program applies a case management approach with detailed follow-ups, including many referrals to campus support services, such as tutoring, faculty interventions on an individual level, writing center sessions, counseling, monthly group study sessions, and voluntary extra-curricular off-campus social and civic activities.

SVSU's English Language Program (ELP) ([RD#499](#)) is designed to aid international students who are non-native speakers of English with transitioning into SVSU's credit-bearing courses. The ELP offers an array of non-credit courses as well as diverse formal and informal programs to aid in acculturation processes. Ongoing evaluation of this program led to its recent move from Enrollment Management into Academic Affairs. Under the direction of the provost, SVSU is working to enrich programmatic assessment tied to student learning objectives and to develop clearer pathways into credit-bearing courses for students demonstrating entry-level abilities.

MapWorks™ (an EBI product) was instituted on campus during fall 2011. This software serves two primary functions: first, it serves as a case management tool, providing faculty, advisors, resident assistants, coaches, etc. an integrated early warning system, and, second, it contains survey questions that allow the institution to learn about students' perspectives of support and other services. The types of warnings that are commonly made relate to academic performance, class attendance, financial aid, and social adjustments. At first, the implementation was limited to freshman, and only a few faculty used it. A year later, all students were included and usage among faculty (including adjuncts) and staff increased notably. It is still too early to see any significant changes in success rates that could be attributed to the MapWorks™ tool, but it has provided helpful insights into student behaviors and attitudes. MapWorks™ is quite effective at identifying students at risk for leaving the institution. Students identified through MapWorks™ as being at-risk or at very-high risk or with multiple alerts had an average GPA of 1.41 while those not so identified and with no alerts had an average GPA of 2.63.

The Progress and Academic Review (PAR) ([RD#500](#)) program brings together first-year students with GPAs of less than 2.0 after each academic semester. The purpose of these meetings is to ensure that these students know of the academic resources available to them and to advise them of the likely financial aid consequences of their academic standing. In a similar vein, Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) intervention provides students with information relevant to registration as well as the necessary processes to appeal loss of financial aid related to failure to achieve satisfactory academic progress (2.0 GPA, pass 67% of classes).

Stairway 2 Success, ([RD#500](#)) a new initiative, was first implemented in fall 2012 and continued in fall 2013. This mandatory program for conditionally-admitted students (with a 16 or 17 ACT composite score) requires participation in three steps. Step 1 includes a six- to eight-hour program held immediately

prior to the start of fall classes. Program presentations focus on providing students with tips and techniques to succeed in their first college courses including topics such as attendance, classroom behavior, time management, prioritization, and balance, as well as addressing health issues such as sleep, nutrition, and stress management. Step 2 takes place in late September and features a SOAR+ presentation by staff from Orientation Programs, Academic Advising, First-Year Experience Programs, and Multicultural Services. In addition to reviews of registration, Online Degree Audit, and Schedule Planner, students receive instruction on a number of academic skills including note-taking and test-taking strategies, basic study skills, and exam preparation. Step 3 occurs in mid-October and features conference-style presentations on self-discovery topics facilitated by volunteer faculty and staff from Enrollment Management, Student Affairs, and Administration/Business Affairs. Topics include campus engagement; networking; effective use of academic resources, such as the Library, Writing Center, and other tutoring services; goal setting; and exploration of academic majors. Stairway 2 Success personnel will monitor students' academic progress to assess the program's effectiveness.

The establishment, or, in some cases, expansion, of the above programs is tied to on-going review of admissions policies, placement standards, Basic Skills courses, and student success. Consistent with the institution's Mission/Vision, these efforts demonstrate SVSU's ongoing commitment to be a site of educational opportunity. The University's learning support systems, preparatory instruction, and processes for orienting entering students thus embody its serious concern with questions of retention and student success. Again, it is too soon to know if the programs are improving student success, but they do remind students of the available support and policies.

Programs for Outstanding Students ([RD#473](#))

In addition to providing services to support student success in the general population and among at-risk students, the institution has a commitment to provide opportunities for high-achieving students. The institution includes in its Strategic Plan an entire section on programs of distinction, which are meant to encourage strong students to attend SVSU. As seen in the Preface, a sizeable fraction of students who come to SVSU have enjoyed high levels of success in high school. To enhance the experience for those students, SVSU offers programs such as the following:

The Honors Program allows students to pursue various majors while simultaneously encouraging enriching academic experiences in Honors courses, seminars, research projects, and social activities. Students in the program take four honors classes and complete an original thesis. Admission is competitive and based on high school GPA, ACT score, teacher recommendations, a written essay, and an interview. Up to 80 students are admitted as freshman each year.

In addition to providing services to support student success in the general population and among at-risk students, the institution has a commitment to provide opportunities for high-achieving students.

The Foundation Scholars Program admits 60 students each year and focuses on the creation of a learning community of individuals who wish to enhance their college experience with integrated social and academic activities. Students must complete either a civic engagement/service learning project or a study abroad experience. Admission is based on high school GPA, ACT score, demonstrated leadership and service in high school, and an interview.

The Cardinal Business Edge is a competitive two-year living/learning leadership development program which focuses on networking, hands-on team learning experiences, participation in research and creative work as well as corporate outings, and international travel. This program selects 25 students each year based on high school GPA, ACT score, and demonstration of leadership potential.

Additional opportunities include various study abroad programs, and the potential to participate in programs such as the Saginaw Bay Environmental Institute ([RD#489](#)), the Center for Public Policy and Service ([RD#512](#)), the Formula One Race Team ([RD#501](#)), and the Roberts Fellows Program ([RD#473](#)).

The range of activities, described above, demonstrates that SVSU has identified the needs of its varied student populations and has developed meaningful programs to address those needs, including targeted programs (Stairway 2 Success, KCP, Honors, Business Edge) as well as programs that serve all students (Center for Academic Achievement and the Writing Center). Student satisfaction information suggests that students believe these support services are significant, and the institution is exploring which of these programs are most effective and analyzing how they are able to achieve their goals.

3.D.3. The institution provides academic advising suited to its programs and the needs of its students.

SVSU offers academic advising through three distinct mechanisms: the Academic Advisement Center, select faculty interactions, and degree audit software. The Academic Advisement Center is a centralized office that offers orientations and academic advising to all students. As noted in 3.C.6, the office has four full-time advisors; other staff members also assume advising roles as needed. Advisement Center functions include:

- initial academic advising, course registration, and placement testing for all new undergraduate students;
- general advising for undergraduate students, as well as advisement on academic policies and procedures and use of the on-line degree audit system in Cardinal Direct;
- programming to assist first-year and new transfer students in a successful transition to the University, including the use of peer advisors and specialized advising/registration programs; and
- Ccoordination of the University Foundation Scholars program, course placement testing, orientation programs, and retention programming.

The Academic Advisement Center utilizes a swipe-card system for tracking usage and student satisfaction. Based on data collected in fall of 2012, students generally had positive reviews of their experiences with the center ([RD#349](#)). Well over 90% of students rated the helpfulness and quality of the advising center as good or excellent, as shown in the figure below.

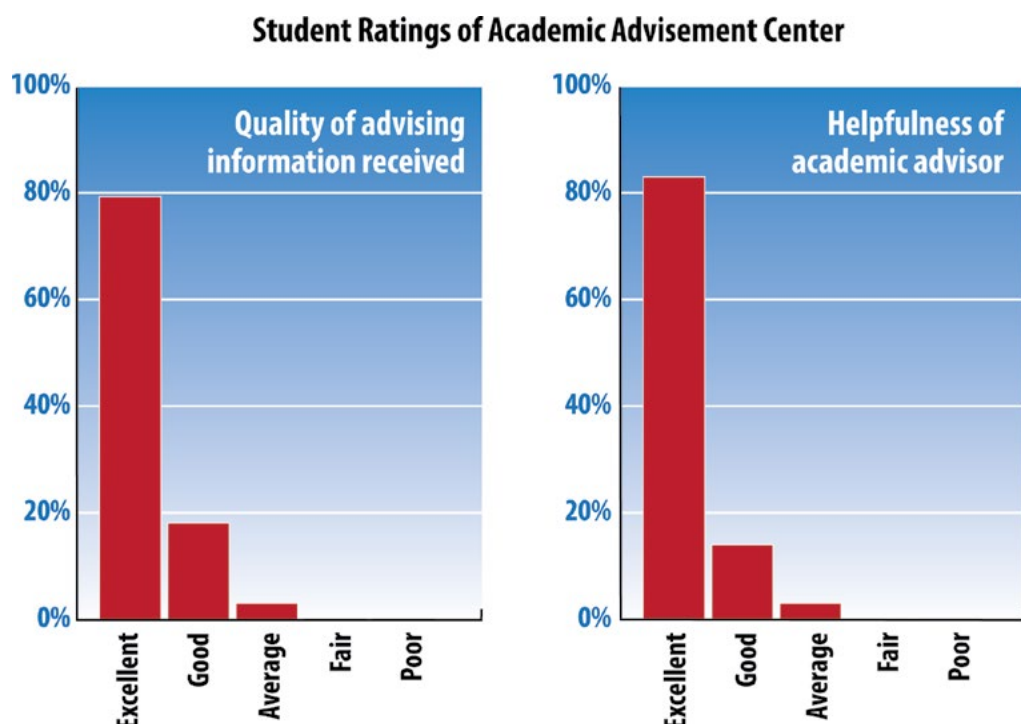


Fig. 3.2
([RD#349](#))

Advising was also assessed through the NSSE survey implemented during the 2012-2013 academic year. The NSSE data were not as positive as the swipe-card data. Specifically, 79% of freshman and 54% of seniors rate the quality of academic advising to be good or excellent. These scores reveal a somewhat lower satisfaction with the quality of advising at SVSU compared to peer institutions by both NSSE definitions and Carnegie classification ([RD#342](#)). The NSSE survey did not probe deeply into specific issues that may have resulted in these lower satisfaction scores. However, the open-ended questions of the NSSE survey confirmed these concerns. Of the 106 seniors (20% of participants) who provided responses to the open-ended questions, six students (6%) expressed frustration about academic advising. Qualitative comments received from senior respondents included statements that “academic advisers were not helpful at all” toward the end of their undergraduate academic experience.

The centralized nature of Academic Advising at SVSU relies heavily on the individual advisors having deep familiarity with the requirements and scheduling of all academic programs, which requires frequent and clear communication between the advisors and the academic departments. This is an area where improvement is needed to ensure the best outcomes for the students.

The need for members of the Academic Advisement Center to be familiar with all University programs is especially important because the SVSU/FA contract does not define advising as a formal faculty responsibility. That said, many departments attempt to augment the services offered by the Advisement Center; for reasons ranging from specialized accreditation to faculty choice, some departments have also implemented mandatory faculty advising for their students. For those programs, student registration is blocked until the students' faculty advisor meets with the student, approves the schedule, and unlocks the registration system. This has been helpful in certain credit-heavy programs such as Engineering where the courses must be taken in sequence to achieve timely graduation. Thus, faculty advisors are assigned to each student declaring an Engineering major, and registration is blocked for these students until they have met with their advisors. Exit interviews with Engineering students conducted soon after the program was implemented confirm that such advising proved useful in navigating the curriculum and facilitating their progress ([RD#350](#)).

Other programs, such as Chemistry, mandate that students meet with faculty advisors during their first year. The College of Education has instituted mandatory pre-education seminars ([RD#502](#)) as a requirement for applying to the Teacher Education programs. Still other units, such as Health Sciences, Music, and Psychology offer faculty advising and assign students to advisors but do not make faculty advising mandatory. The Nursing program has implemented walk-in advising and has encouraged participation in Nursing 101, an optional introduction to the nursing professions, to ensure that students have contact with the program prior to admission. The students who completed that course in Fall 2012 showed a 10% increase in retention and a 0.25% increase in GPA ([RD#351](#)). The program also offers informational sessions.

Special advising programs are available for students interested in attending law school ([RD#503](#)) and medical professional schools ([RD#504](#)), in which specified personnel meet with students throughout their time at the University. They help students understand the procedures and requirements for applying to these professional programs. As the University continues to heighten retention efforts, it will be critical for all academic departments and the administration to evaluate direct, faculty-based advising processes.

The University has also adopted web-based "Degree Audit" ([RD#505](#)) software to assist students in understanding the requirements for graduation within a program and in tracking their progress. This software shows credits completed as well as progress in General Education, Basic Skills, upper-division courses, etc. While students have found this to be helpful, the software only works when students maintain up-to-date information regarding their intended major and minors, credits earned elsewhere, etc., and when students understand how to read and interpret what the software shows them. In short, while the software is useful, it cannot replace in-person advising by qualified staff or faculty.

3.D.4 The institution provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning (technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites, museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).

SVSU's campus is a source of pride for students, faculty, and staff; it has an excellent physical infrastructure housing its academic functions. According to the 2013 Master Plan: "The core of campus is building-dense and well-manicured, while outer campus areas are naturalized with minimal building coverage. Building architecture is contemporary and uses brick and an overall similar style to achieve unity in character" ([RD#172](#)). The physical campus has grown significantly in the last ten years, with the additions to and renovation of Pioneer Hall as well as the construction of the Regional Education Center, the Health and Human Services Building, and the Arbury Fine Arts addition. In all cases, these projects were based on institutional growth in specific programs. In addition to the new buildings, the University redesigns or reallocates existing facilities to meet specific circumstances. For example, when lack of sufficient laboratory space limited enrollments in foundational biology classes, two classrooms were combined and converted into a teaching lab. Similarly, as enrollments in the College of Education decline, other departments, including Political Science and Sociology, have begun using areas of the Regional Education Center for classrooms and offices.

SVSU's campus is a source of pride for students, faculty, and staff; it has an excellent physical infrastructure housing its academic functions.

In 2003, the University completed a major renovation and expansion of the Melvin J. Zahnow Library that included the addition of a fourth floor featuring a formal reading room suitable for a variety of special events. The 83,000 square foot building houses the library's book, journal, and media collections and a 60-seat computer lab. Collaborative workrooms, group study rooms, and ample seating with both wired and wireless laptop capabilities are located throughout. The Writing Center and various tutoring centers have been moved several times over the last decade to accommodate continued growth; they are now also situated in the library, making this building a center of student learning support.

An analysis of classroom and laboratory usage shows that the institution has adequate facilities to perform its teaching functions. During the key times of 10am to 4pm, Monday through Thursday, classrooms are often utilized at full capacity, but they are available at other instructional times.

SVSU's technological infrastructure, lab space, library, performance spaces, clinical practice sites, and museum collections are all appropriate to its offerings and supportive of effective teaching and learning. The University maintains a high level of instructional technology to further enable effective teaching and learning. Almost all of the traditional classrooms (as well as various conference rooms across campus) are equipped with computers, data projectors, DVD players, internet access, and document cameras, offering faculty access a wide range of teaching tools.

The University recently reorganized IT to better serve the institution's needs, and an entire unit of Information Technology is dedicated to instructional technology. This unit offers training for faculty in the use of technological tools and is responsible for the maintenance of all classroom and laboratory computers. Staff members are available whenever classes are in session to troubleshoot any technological problems in the classrooms. There are over 1650 computers available for academic purposes on campus (excluding faculty office computers). About 30% are reserved for teaching labs, while the majority of the remainder is available for student use. Computers are on a four-year replacement cycle ([RD#352](#)). In 2008, SVSU received a \$1.8 million grant to support the technological needs associated with online and technology assisted learning. The University used these grant funds to provide enhanced data storage, networking, and additional computers for academic support services, such as the developmental math computer lab and the Center for Academic Achievement.

The University provides all faculty members with office computers for their instructional and research needs. Faculty members may choose from desktop or laptop models, and, within some constraints, have options for either PCs or Macs. These computers are upgraded on a four-year cycle. Other staff members have computers as well, and those machines are replaced or upgraded as needed.

The University supports VSpace, based on the Sakai open-source product, as its electronic learning system. VSpace is well regarded by faculty and staff, and more than 85% of all courses make use of at least some of its features. Dedicated staff members maintain the system, implement new features, archive course data, and provide training to faculty, staff, and students. As discussed in 3.A.3, SVSU recently hired a Director of Online and Hybrid Learning to address student, faculty, and staff needs in that area. As the institution gradually increases its online offerings, the adequacy of VSpace is being reviewed.

SVSU's science and engineering labs all have been built or extensively renovated since 2001, resulting in a well-equipped, modern, and safe environment for students. While science laboratory space is tight—due to high demand for foundational physics, chemistry and, especially, biology courses—adequate resources are available. The College of Science, Engineering, and Technology tracks demand for laboratory classes carefully, and allocates adequate funds to purchase lab supplies and consumables and to maintain equipment ([RD#353](#)). Funding for laboratory equipment and instrumentation comes from several sources. The institution directly funds small to moderate equipment that is used primarily for teaching (e.g. optical microscopes, spectrophotometers, infra-red spectrometers, and centrifuges) while external grants fund large equipment or research equipment (e.g. electron microscopes, thermal analysis equipment, mass spectrometers).

The University has four stages for theatrical and musical productions and lectures: the large Malcolm Field Theatre for Performing Arts ([RD#506](#)), which boasts a proscenium stage with an orchestra pit and seats 524; the smaller adjacent Rhea Miller Recital Hall ([RD#507](#)), which seats 179 on the main floor and an additional 95 in the balcony; the intimate Black Box Theatre ([RD#508](#)), which has variable seating on three sides of the stage; and the Zahnnow Amphitheatre ([RD#509](#)), an outdoor space that is sometimes used for summer productions. While the activities of the Conference Center at SVSU continue to expand and while competition to use venues such as the Performing Arts Theater and Rhea Miller Recital Hall is increasing, in general, there are enough facilities to support the performing schedule of the campus arts programs.

The University also houses both a small University Art Gallery ([RD#511](#)), used for student exhibits and some faculty and visiting artist shows, and the Marshall Fredericks Sculpture Museum ([RD#429](#)), which has a collection of over 2000 pieces by internationally-known Detroit-based public sculptor Marshall Fredericks (1908-1998). The Fredericks Museum hosts a range of temporary exhibits, numerous K-12 programs, and diverse other events. It also offers internship opportunities for SVSU students. An addition to the Arbury Fine Arts building has lessened pressure for classroom and studio space, although both remain at a premium.

3.D.5 The institution provides to students guidance in the effective use of research and information resources.

The library maintains an advisory committee composed of faculty from all five colleges to help assess library services as well as the collection, and statistics indicate that library resources are well-used by students.

Throughout the academic year, librarians are available to students for research assistance 70 to 80 hours per week at the reference desk, other locations throughout Zahnnow Library, and other campus locations through the Roving Reference Program ([RD#84](#)). They also provide reference assistance via telephone, text, and chat. Librarians also travel to various locations on campus and to distance sites as requested. Librarians work with faculty to assist in developing library materials and creating effective database searches for a variety of courses. Librarians may even be embedded in specific courses via V-Space.

Databases are available both on and off campus so students and faculty can access research materials at their convenience. Classroom-based library instruction provides services to about 7000 students each year, and the library includes a 60-seat computer lab for instruction sessions. These include general instruction sessions on using library resources, as well as sessions on the purposes of research, developing a research question, and using information resources to conduct research. Faculty may request sessions tailored to specific courses. The library staff has created a series of LibGuides ([RD#84](#)) on a variety

of subjects that are useful to faculty and students. Responses to surveys indicate a high level of satisfaction with library instruction, although sample sizes have been small ([RD#354](#)).

Research instruction and guidance is a core component of the First Year Writing Program. ENGL 080 (Writing Skills) and ENGL 111 (Composition I) each include sessions with library content, with the second ENGL 111 session focusing entirely on the use of research and information resources. Librarians have also reached out to instructors of upper-level courses and General Education communication-intensive courses. Program Assessment Reports reveal that research support and library instruction is an integral part of programs.

Also, orientation sessions for new and adjunct faculty include an introduction to the library with an overview of the collection, collection policies, and how to use library resources effectively in teaching and research. The library coordinates a liaison program that matches each academic department with a librarian or professional library staff member. Liaisons ([RD#84](#)) communicate with faculty throughout the year and are available to faculty and students for individual research assistance and group instruction. These liaisons receive and, when possible, act on faculty purchase requests for new materials to support teaching and research needs.

In addition to library efforts to provide guidance in the effective use of research and information resources, most majors' introductory and capstone courses include significant discipline-specific discussions on finding and evaluating sources; creating, locating, and evaluating data; following protocols for working with animal and human subjects, when appropriate; presenting research in oral and written forms; considering ethical questions tied to research; and addressing issues of academic integrity.

SVSU provides students with diverse opportunities for an enriched educational experience through programs and organizations that address their personal, professional, and academic lives.

3.E. The institution fulfills its claims for an enriched educational environment.

SVSU provides students with diverse opportunities for an enriched educational experience through programs and organizations that address their personal, professional, and academic lives. Due to the University's successful efforts at recruiting from outside the traditional four-county service region and the corresponding construction of new campus housing, the number of residential students has nearly quadrupled since 1998. Consequently, campus culture has grown and changed significantly in the last decade. Opportunities for students have been enriched and enhanced in congruence with the mission and vision of the institution.

3.E.1 Co-curricular programs are suited to the institution's mission and contribute to the educational experience of students.

The University creates opportunities for individuals to achieve intellectual and personal development through academic, professional, and cultural programs. The intellectual development of students through academic programs is the primary purpose of the University and is addressed extensively in this criterion and in Criterion 4. Engagement in co-curricular programs and extra-curricular activities also advance students' professional and personal development. SVSU defines co-curricular activities as those that foster academic and professional growth outside the traditional classroom. These are often carried out through Registered Student Organizations (RSOs) ([RD#313](#)).

Each organization is advised by a faculty or staff member. While each has its own mission and goals, all align with SVSU's Mission/Vision. These organizations are eligible for financial support that enables students to attend conferences, host events, or engage in service learning projects. The discussion below highlights a few of these diverse organizations and how they are aligned with and support the Mission/Vision of SVSU.

Many co-curricular opportunities are academic in nature and provide students with opportunities to advance their learning and develop professional networks and skills in keeping with the Mission/Vision's language, "The University creates opportunities for individuals to achieve intellectual and personal development." Thirty-nine Registered Student Organizations (RSO) identify themselves as academic or professional clubs. Examples of such include:

- *Cardinal Sins* ([RD#464](#)), a student literary/arts magazine, published twice each year, which provides, "an enriched art and literary community at SVSU" through publication of "the best works students, staff and alumni submit;"
- the SVSU Finance Club, organized by students in the College of Business and Management, which fosters academic skills that allow students to be successful in business;
- the Student Michigan Education Association, a student affiliate of the Michigan Education Association, which is dedicated to preparing future educators for their careers;
- the Student Nurses Association, open to all pre-nursing and current nursing students, which helps them develop professional and leadership skills through community work, on campus activities, and monthly speakers; and
- the American Foundry Society which promotes understanding of the metal casting industry, an important regional industry.

Numerous campus clubs exemplify the Mission/Vision language that "the University fosters an environment of inquiry and openness that respects the diversity of all whom it serves" and include:

- the Ability First Club, open to persons with or without disabilities, which concerns itself with everyday issues faced by persons with disabilities;

Many co-curricular opportunities are academic in nature and provide students with opportunities to advance their learning and develop professional networks and skills in keeping with the Mission/Vision's language.

- Conversation Pods, which offer both international and domestic students opportunities to learn about each other, promoting intercultural exchange and cross cultural competence;
- Living Proud, which furthers GLBTQA causes and acceptance;
- the Organization of Black Unity (OBU), founded to promote academic success, social involvement, and community outreach among all students at Saginaw Valley State University;
- Latino Unidos Association, a student organization whose mission is to raise awareness of the Latino/Hispanic culture;
- His House Christian Fellowship, a Bible-based student church to the campus community, which seeks to “Love God, Love People, Serve Faithfully, and Invite Others;”
- the Hillel organization, the foundation for Jewish campus life at SVSU, which seeks to engage every Jewish student on campus, from those with strong Jewish backgrounds to those with none at all; and
- The Muslim Students’ Association, whose purpose is to build a strong Muslim community as well as educate and spread awareness of Islam.

Because they are student-organized and student-run, all co-curricular activities offer opportunities for leadership development.

Because they are student-organized and student-run, all co-curricular activities offer opportunities for leadership development. However, some organizations are specifically focused on leadership or serve strong leadership roles on campus and thus directly address the Mission/Vision language, “The University prepares graduates whose leadership and expertise contribute to the advancement of a pluralistic society.” These include:

- the Student Association of Saginaw Valley State University ([RD#513](#)), whose mission states that it “represents student concern and advances student priorities, serves as a catalyst for positive University change, provides information and leadership to the student body, increases campus involvement, faithfully administers the expenditures of Student Association funds, and contributes to the improvement of the educational experience of the students;” and
- the National Society of Leadership and Success, SVSU Chapter Sigma Alpha Pi, which is open by invitation to selected students who have demonstrated academic accomplishment and leadership potential and meet other set criteria.

Diverse student groups address the Mission/Vision goal that “the University will achieve national recognition for its programs of distinction.” Students at SVSU participate in programs that achieve high levels of recognition in the region, the nation, and the world, including SVSU’s Formula One Race Team, Moot Court, Model United Nations, Saginaw Bay Environmental Sciences Institute, Theatre Festival, and GLIAC championship teams.

Finally, several organizations address SVSU’s understanding that “Through exemplary teaching, research, and engagement with the greater community,

the University will also be the premier cultural and intellectual resource for the region's schools, governments, businesses, and people." These include:

- Living Through Literacy, which strives to create meaningful volunteer opportunities for SVSU students while providing hospice patients with a life-touching experience. The Living Through Literacy program brings SVSU student volunteers and hospice patients together in an effort to record patients' life stories. By working with student volunteers, hospice patients receive the opportunity to create projects, which range from scrapbooks to life biographies and videos. Knowing that their memory will live on through a tangible heirloom can be a great comfort to both the patient and the family;
- Alpha Phi Omega, which is a national co-ed service fraternity, founded on the cardinal principles of leadership, friendship, and service. It provides its members with the opportunity to develop leadership skills as they provide service to their campus, to youth and the community, to the nation, and to members of the fraternity;
- SVSU Alternative Breaks, which is a student-led program, organized through Saginaw Valley State University's Student Life Center. A drug and alcohol-free program, it offers college students an "alternative" to the traditional break through opportunities to learn about an important social issue and then travel to appropriate U.S. or international locations to provide service relating to that particular issue. The program is entering its tenth year. Projects are carried out during winter, spring, and summer breaks, along with regional weekend breaks at different times of the year; and
- Colleges Against Cancer (C.A.C.), which is a program created to help eliminate cancer by initiating and supporting the programs of the American Cancer Society on college campuses. It is a program designed by and administered by college students from across the country and is supported by the American Cancer Society. It educates the community through advocacy, providing cancer education, hosting Relay for Life, and promoting survivorship.

3.E.2 The institution demonstrates any claims it makes about contributions to its students' educational experience by virtue of aspects of its mission, such as research, community engagement, service learning, religious or spiritual purpose, and economic development.

SVSU is an institution dedicated to the ideals of excellence in teaching and learning with a steadfast commitment to working with and in support of the larger community. While this commitment reaches across the globe, a strong regional focus and an ethic of "giving back" to the local community are deeply embedded in the culture of SVSU. These principles are clearly articulated in the institution's Vision, which states: "Through exemplary teaching, research, and engagement with the greater community, the University shall be the premier cultural and intellectual resource for the region's schools, governments,

SVSU is an institution dedicated to the ideals of excellence in teaching and learning with a steadfast commitment to working with and in support of the larger community.

businesses and people.” SVSU’s strategic plan also identifies community engagement as one of its primary institutional priorities ([RD#75](#)).

SVSU offers a diverse array of student development opportunities that extend beyond the traditional classroom.

The fundamental character of SVSU is largely defined by its emphasis on educational experiences in which students engage with local, regional, and global communities. In that connection, SVSU offers a diverse array of student development opportunities that extend beyond the traditional classroom. These opportunities are wide-ranging and, as discussed more fully below, can be experienced in every area of campus life—in academic programs, faculty-guided research, professional and student organizations, athletics, student services, international programs, and residential life. According to the most recent National Survey of Student Engagement, at least 60% of SVSU students engage in community service activities through the university ([RD#342](#)).

Institutional support for community engagement initiatives—including infrastructure, training, and funding—is also pervasive at SVSU. Each college and administrative office, including Academic Affairs, the SVSU Foundation, Student Life, Residential Life, the Athletic Department, and International Programs provide fiscal and non-fiscal resources. SVSU has subscribed to a web-based portal, OrgSync ([RD#313](#)); through this communication medium campus and community constituents may identify and list engagement opportunities for students. This resource also assists the University in tracking student engagement and supports students in documenting these experiences in a digital portfolio. Further, the University created a new permanent position, Service Learning Coordinator, to develop new collaborations of mutual benefit to students and the region, to serve as a resource for faculty and community partners, and to develop clear and meaningful assessments of engagement.

Student Life assists individual students and more than 150 student organizations in locating meaningful community service opportunities that benefit regional, national, and global communities.

Community engagement activities at SVSU include both credit bearing and non-credit bearing offerings. While this distinction has significance for some purposes, the absence of course credit in no way minimizes the educational experience students derive from the community engagement work. In both contexts, SVSU seeks to achieve the goals of advancing student learning outcomes, engendering civic responsibility, and providing strong support for local and global communities. Representative examples of non-credit and credit-bearing community engagement offerings at SVSU are provided below.

Non-Credit-Bearing Community Engagement

Student Life assists individual students and more than 150 student organizations in locating meaningful community service opportunities that benefit regional, national, and global communities. Its online database matches students and organizations to best address current community needs. Community projects are numerous and varied and have included everything from cleaning local parks, to organizing health fairs for older adults, to tutoring K-12 students in underserved locales. In AY 2012-2013, 577 students reported almost 8,500 hours of community service. Students are also actively engaged in fundraising

for community partners. For example, through their participation in Relay for Life ([RD#514](#)), students raised over \$43,000 for cancer research in AY 2012-2013. In “Battle of the Valleys” ([RD#382](#)), an annual competition between Saginaw Valley State University and rival Grand Valley State University, SVSU students have raised nearly \$275,000 for regional charities over the last eleven years and have won the competition seven times. On a global level, the Alternative Breaks program included eleven trips and involved 143 students during AY 2012-2013, including a May 2013 excursion to Nicaragua to support environmental restoration efforts. Social issues tackled include rural poverty, disaster relief, education, homelessness, hunger, and domestic violence.

Community engagement is also a central component of on-campus living at SVSU. The mission of Residential Life is to “contribute to the academic success, professional development, and personal growth of students by sponsoring leadership and service opportunities.” Becoming an involved resident is an important component of each student’s transition to adulthood and citizenship. Residential Life provides numerous opportunities that support volunteerism and service within local communities. Two freshman residence programs, the Living Leadership Program ([RD#515](#)) and Cardinals in Action ([RD#516](#)), even have an explicit community engagement requirement as an integrated part of on-campus living. Service projects have included work with schools, food banks, soup kitchens, and Habitat for Humanity.

SVSU athletics are strongly committed to community engagement as well. As a member of NCAA Division II, the Athletic Department is “committed to developing students and communities by actively engaging in shared experiences and, therefore, has targeted community engagement as one of its strategic priorities.” SVSU’s athletic community is highly visible in the community and contributes thousands of hours of community service to area charities, schools, and businesses each year. Players are engaged in volunteer work ranging from reading clinics for kids to offering assistance to the region’s senior citizens. For example, more than 600 children a year are exposed to higher education through sports during the annual Community Youth Days ([RD#544](#)). In 2012, this event received the NCAA and GLIAC Community Engagement Award of Excellence ([RD#545](#)) due to its great success in building bridges with the community. Another significant community engagement event is the Michigan Community Blood Center Student Athlete Drive, in which the Athletic Department conducts the largest one-day blood drive in the region ([RD#546](#)).

Centers and institutes also are important venues for community engagement at SVSU. For example, the Center for Public Policy and Service ([RD#547](#)) and the Center for Politics and Public Policy ([RD#512](#)) are dedicated to developing students’ civic responsibility and building community ties. Through these Centers, students are a source of information and assistance to community groups, local governments, businesses, and individual citizens in the areas of public service and democratic processes. The Saginaw Bay Area Environmental Science Institute ([RD#489](#)) offers unique opportunities for undergraduate

SVSU’s athletic community is highly visible in the community and contributes thousands of hours of community service to area charities, schools, and businesses each year.

science students to address community needs through regional scientific research, education, outreach, and partnerships with key stakeholders at the local, state, and national levels. By developing mutually beneficial collaborations, the Institute serves as a focal point for learning and scholarship through community engagement. The Great Lakes Regional Youth Leadership Institute ([RD#517](#)) is a community outreach program in which 96 local high school students are paired with 35 SVSU student mentors to create positive futures for youth who might not otherwise have this opportunity. This unprecedented youth leadership institute is the only initiative of its type developed by a Michigan four-year university.

Credit-Bearing Community Engagement

Within the curriculum, community engagement occurs primarily through service learning initiatives.

Within the curriculum, community engagement occurs primarily through service learning initiatives. To support service learning, SVSU formed a small committee composed of faculty, academic administration, and representatives from Student Services and University Communications. This committee, led by the Service Learning Coordinator, developed the following definition of service learning:

Service learning is a form of experiential learning that incorporates meaningful community service with traditional instruction and critical thinking exercises in order to (i) enhance educational experiences; (ii) teach civic responsibility; and (iii) address the needs of global and local communities, with a special commitment to the Great Lakes Bay Region of Michigan. It empowers students to engage in the educational process through community collaborations and apply what they learn in the classroom to real-world issues as actively contributing citizens. There is an equal emphasis on meeting community needs and providing substantive learning experiences to students.

Although SVSU does not currently have a formal catalog designation for service learning courses, a recent survey by the Service Learning Coordinator found that at least 15% of SVSU faculty actively engage in service learning (at least 10 hours/semester) in their extant courses and as many as 4% of courses offer a service learning component ([RD#449](#)). Service learning occurs in all five colleges and a majority of departments within each college. Examples include the following:

- In the College of Arts and Behavioral Sciences, art students work with incarcerated youth to create digital murals for local detention centers; history students archive historical records for area museums and libraries; and rhetoric and professional writing students provide grant writing assistance to local non-profit agencies;
- In the College of Business, students create marketing and advertising materials, develop business plans, and collect market research to assist regional non-profits and foundations achieve their missions more effectively and efficiently;

- In the College of Education, students tutor K-12 students who experience difficulty with reading, interview family stakeholders and conduct community activities to help educators identify ways in which to involve families in student learning, and create and implement lesson plans for special education, early childhood, and K-12 programs in local, regional, and global school systems;
- In the College of Health and Human Services, kinesiology students administer fitness assessment tests in various locations throughout the region; nursing students travel to developing countries to collect data and help local communities develop interventions specifically targeted to their most pressing health concerns; occupational therapy students conduct community needs assessments and present proposals and improvement plans to local health organizations; and social work students organize and operate a family camp that provides social, educational, and support activities for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender parents and their children;
- In the College of Science, Engineering, and Technology, mechanical engineering students develop assistive technologies for a learning center that provides educational programs for handicapped children; chemistry students work in cooperation with community partners to conduct water quality monitoring and other activities related to Great Lakes stewardship; and biology students work on food production, nutrition, and sustainability projects with local high school science programs.

In addition, community engagement through service learning is a critical component of numerous Programs of Distinction, including the Roberts Fellowship and Foundation Scholars, and Senior Capstones at SVSU.

As community engagement is a cornerstone of SVSU's Mission/Vision, the university is wholly committed to ensuring that the community engagement activities offered to students are of the highest quality and educational value. In support of this commitment, in-depth assessment methodologies are being developed and implemented throughout campus in order to better assess the impact on students, the University, and the community. Results from these assessments will be utilized to enhance and continually improve community engagement activities at SVSU.

As community engagement is a cornerstone of SVSU's Mission/Vision, the university is wholly committed to ensuring that the community engagement activities offered to students are of the highest quality and educational value.

Evaluative Statement for Criterion 3: Quality Programs

SVSU's programs are appropriate for higher education, requiring levels of performance appropriate to the degrees it offers, with consistent learning goals and quality at all locations and in the limited number of online and hybrid course offerings.

SVSU's General Education program, developed after the 2003 HLC site visit, has matured into a well-designed, well-assessed program that meets the institution's goals of improving students' critical thinking, logical reasoning, and effective communication, with due consideration of human diversity. Programs consistently engage students in critical thinking and inquiry through embedded assignments, capstones, independent research, and other creative activities.

SVSU is focused on its teaching mission and has the qualified faculty needed to carry out their classroom and non-classroom roles, including the development, delivery, and assessment of its academic programs. Evaluation of the instructional staff is robust and thorough. Teaching facilities are outstanding — modern and well equipped — and technology is adequate to support teaching and learning needs. Continued enhancement of technological services is underway.

Student support services and co-curricular activities have expanded to meet the increased demands of an ever-growing student and especially residential population. The University has developed numerous programs to address the academic and social needs of students. However, assessment of the effectiveness and impact of many of these programs is just beginning. Developing and implementing robust assessment methodologies in these areas represent future challenges.

SVSU provides academic advising predominantly through a centralized model. While student satisfaction results are acceptable, the institution sees opportunities for improvements in advising.

Co-curricular programs offer students enriched educational experiences. These programs align with many aspects of institutional mission, including intellectual and personal development; inquiry, openness and diversity; leadership; and community engagement and service. In support of its mission-driven claim to engage with the greater community, SVSU is in the process of formalizing and assessing its service learning and community engagement efforts to meet its goal of obtaining classification as a Carnegie Community Engagement Institution.





Criterion Four

Criterion Four:

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

SVSU takes responsibility for the quality of its educational programs through multi-faceted assessment and review processes that engage departments, colleges, and the provost's office.

4.A. SVSU demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs

SVSU takes responsibility for the quality of its educational programs through a multi-layered review process that includes departments, colleges, the Provost's Office, and the Academic Assessment Advisory Board; some aspects of the process are defined and supported by provisions within the Faculty Association Contract. Individual faculty members, departments, deans, standing committees (Graduate Committee, General Education Committee, Curriculum and Academic Policies Committee, Professional Practices Committee), and offices review programs, courses, and faculty qualifications to ensure that educational programs meet the quality standards of both internal stakeholders and accrediting bodies. This system of established, smoothly-functioning, and transparent processes drives the regular evaluation and review of SVSU's educational programs, including the General Education program, to ensure and continuously improve quality.

4.A.1 The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.

Academic majors are subject to evaluation and review assessment. Ongoing academic program assessment occurs through an internal assessment and planning process. All majors, graduate programs, and the General Education program engage in annual assessment using a continuous improvement model focused on student learning outcomes. In addition to the internal processes, programs are validated externally through specialized accreditation, when appropriate, or by external program review.

The annual assessment and planning process calls for individual departments and programs to define and assess learning outcomes. As discussed in 4.B, these outcomes are informed by professional standards, mapped to the curriculum, and assessed using a range of direct and indirect measures. The goal of this annual process is to evaluate program effectiveness and make continuous improvements in student learning. The University requires departments and other academic programs to submit annual reports ([RD#355](#)) that:

- identify program and department learning goals, with attention to alignment with the University Mission
- identify any changes in student learning goals
- identify specific groups, organizations, agencies or stakeholders that contribute to the development of student learning goals (such as accrediting or certification bodies, professional organization[s], internal or external stakeholders)
- assess student learning and report findings
- summarize program improvement and development, which resulted from the assessment
- address the ways in which the program addresses diversity
- identify and justify the resources needed to improve student learning or to fulfill additional responsibilities at the University

Departments incorporate their findings into an annual planning document that includes resource requests based on outcomes and needs assessments which they submit to their respective college deans. The deans summarize and recommend new initiatives and resources in the context of the college priorities and submit these reports to the provost as part of the college planning documents and annual report. The provost reviews the assessment reports and budgets and, after conferring with the deans, makes resource allocation decisions for the colleges.

Under the leadership of the associate provost, the Academic Assessment Advisory Board regularly reviews the framework for the annual assessment/ planning documents. Revisions to the forms have been made to clarify expectations, provide additional information, keep the focus on student learning, and strengthen the framework for the assessment and planning process. The program evaluation results are well documented and easily accessible to encourage the broadest possible input regarding the maintenance of quality programs. The annual Academic Program Assessment reports are available to the University community through the Academic Assessment VSpace site ([RD#481](#)).

As discussed in the Preface and Criterion 3, responsibility for the quality of the General Education (GE) program lies with academic departments and the General Education Committee (GEC), a contractually-defined faculty/ administrative committee ([RD#273](#)) that provides oversight and assessment of General Education courses and the overall General Education program. In short, review of the General Education program occurs at the course and department level through direct measures of student learning on category-specific outcomes and at the program level through committee discussion and use of the Collegiate Learning Assessment. Each department offering a course in the General Education program is responsible for assessing it annually and reporting back to GEC on a five-year cycle.

As discussed in Section 4.A.5 SVSU maintains specialized accreditation from ten accrediting bodies. Programs that are externally accredited supplement their annual assessment documents with reports, self-studies, and site visits as

required by their respective accrediting bodies. According to an interview with the provost, as accrediting agencies regularly update their accreditation criteria, responding to those changing criteria furthers University efforts to continuously improve its programs and associated assessment processes ([RD#36](#)).

In the last decade, SVSU has focused on internal academic assessment, but has recently re-instituted a regular cycle of external program review to strengthen the program assessment process ([RD#36](#)). Programs not accredited by external bodies will undergo such reviews on a five-year review cycle, instead of the suspended ten-year cycle. The Academic Assessment VSpace site ([RD#481](#)) lists their place in the five-year review rotation, and recent program reviews are discussed in Criterion 3. Each five-year review will require outside reviewers, approved by the dean and provost. Reviewers will provide written reports to the department and administration. As this is a recently renewed process, it is too early to evaluate its impact on specific academic programs, but the process should help ensure that the focus, standards, and expectations of SVSU programs align with national norms.

The curriculum process, described fully in 2.C.4, also demonstrates that SVSU takes responsibility for the quality of its programs. Large numbers of stakeholders—faculty involved in particular programs, those affected by the program, faculty at large, administrators, and students — provide input on proposals for new and revised programs and courses, as well as academic policies. These multiple levels of checks and balances ensure stable but flexible curricula that are viable, rigorous, and appropriate to the institution.

4.A.2 The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning.

Credit is assigned to SVSU courses through the curriculum committee process discussed in section 2.C.4 and in Criterion 3. The number of credits earned is related to the contact hours for on-campus courses using the convention that one hour of class time plus at least two hours of out of class work constitutes one credit. For laboratory and physical fitness classes, one credit corresponds to two to four hours of contact time. Students completing internships or other field work assignments for academic credit generally complete a total of 75-120 hours for three credits. Online courses that have traditional face-to-face counterparts with identical learning outcomes are assigned the same number of credits. According to the current Director of Online and Hybrid Learning, online courses are designed so that one hour of participation in online activities (e.g. discussion board or tutorial) plus two hours of assignments constitutes one credit hour.

The Office of the Registrar is responsible for evaluating transcripts of SVSU students applying for graduation to ensure all requirements are met, including

Basic Skills, General Education, and other University requirements. Department chairs subsequently review the transcripts of their majors to make certain all program requirements have been met.

The University does not have a practice of granting credit for “experiential learning or other forms of prior learning.” A minor exception is that four physical education credits are granted to military veterans for their Basic Training. On occasion, programs waive course requirements because of prior experience, but in those cases students do not receive credit for prior learning and are still required to meet University and program credit requirements. For example, adult learners employed in the engineering field who are returning to obtain their bachelor’s degree may petition to waive “Engineering Careers and Concepts.” If granted, this waiver neither grants credit for the course nor change the credits required for graduation, but it does exempt students from the introductory course.

SVSU accepts Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate credit from high schools, based on examination scores. Generally, a score of 3, 4, or 5 on an AP examination or a score of 4 or better on an IB (Higher Level examination) earns college credit; the details can be found on the University website ([RD#431](#)). Students may also request credit by examination using the CLEP tests; a full set of scores and equivalencies is available online ([RD#539](#)). Lastly, students may request credit by examination by arrangement with an SVSU faculty member. Students pay tuition for the course but are given an examination to demonstrate competency. This is a rare practice: perhaps one or two students per year choose this option, and those are primarily students seeking upper-level foreign language credit based on prior knowledge.

4.A.3. The institution has policies that assure the quality of the courses it accepts in transfer.

The University has well-established policies for transfer credit, which are defined in the course catalog ([RD#42](#)). In general, the institution considers credits earned at accredited degree-granting institutions. The Registrar’s Office evaluates the nature, content, and contact hours of courses before granting credit. Students must provide adequate materials to enable determination that courses under consideration are academic in nature and at college level. Credits earned at non-accredited institutions are normally not accepted, except under special circumstances, (e.g. international institutions) and then only with approval from both the registrar and the dean of the relevant college.

The University also has processes for establishing course equivalencies. The Registrar’s Office and the Coordinator of Transfer Student Programs and Services work with all community colleges in the state of Michigan to maintain currency of transfer agreements. The process for awarding specific course credit generally originates with the partner institution, which must provide course descriptions, syllabi, and other information as needed. The appropriate

The University has well-established policies for transfer credit, which are defined in the course catalog.

department determines content equivalence. In the past, the efficiency of this process has varied substantially. Some departments, when asked to evaluate equivalence respond very quickly, while others are slow to respond. Similarly, departments vary in how rigorous they are about identical content and how much documentation they require. Such agreements were sometimes made without the dean of the relevant college being informed. A recently created Transfer Student Task Force has developed a more coherent procedure, which should improve efficiency and consistency, while incorporating input from the deans. The College of Arts and Behavioral Sciences is piloting this process ([RD#356](#)).

In addition to individual course equivalencies, the University selectively transfers blocks of credits from other institutions. For example, SVSU participates in the Michigan Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (MACRAO) consortium, which facilitates transfer of General Education courses as a block instead of as individual courses ([RD#432](#)). Essentially, if transfer students have completed a 30-credit general education program that includes six credit hours in English composition, eight in math and science, eight in social science and eight in the humanities, SVSU considers its general education requirement to be satisfied. SVSU, along with the other institutions of higher education in Michigan, is evaluating the new Michigan Transfer Agreement proposed by the Michigan Community College Association ([RD#433](#)).

From the student perspective, the transfer credit process begins at the admissions stage. When the Office of the Registrar receives a student's official transcripts, credits are accepted if the courses meet the basic criteria outlined above. If there is a pre-existing equivalency agreement, credit is given for specific courses; otherwise the student receives general elective credit. However, if any course appears to be very similar to an SVSU course, the student may petition to have the course accepted as equivalent to the SVSU course. The department in charge of the program reviews the request and supporting documents (e.g., syllabus, assignments, contact/credit hours, textbooks, etc.). If approved at the department level, the college dean and the registrar must then give their approval. In some cases, approval is denied by the Office of the Registrar for technical reasons (e.g., the student did not receive a grade of "C" or better in the petitioned course). This petition process is also used for international transfer students.

The Office of the Registrar has developed a web-based system that allows students to view those course equivalencies that have already been established with institutions in the state. Students can identify courses equivalent to specific SVSU courses at other institutions or identify SVSU courses deemed equivalent to a specific course taken at another institution ([RD#434](#)). The number and kind of transfer agreements with other institutions have increased over time, driven in part by mandates from the State of Michigan. The State requires, among other things, that there be established transfer policies with community colleges. In response, the Office of the Registrar has added a transfer credit clerk, dedicated to transfer activities.

4.A.4 The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It assures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.

Course Prerequisites. Course prerequisites for all programs are determined by the faculty teaching in the program and are approved through the CAPC/GC/GEC course and program proposal processes described in 2.C.4. Any proposed prerequisites on new courses or changes in prerequisites for existing courses must be indicated and justified on the proposal forms submitted to the appropriate curriculum committee. These decisions are based on logical course sequencing, professional expectations, and learning outcomes.

Prerequisites are automatically checked when a student registers for a course, and the online registration systems blocks registration if the student has not met or is not currently enrolled in course prerequisites. In special cases, the faculty member teaching a particular course may waive the prerequisite or allow a student to be co-registered for a prerequisite. This is a manual process, requiring instructor signature and in-person registration. Prior to the start of each term, the registrar evaluates prerequisites for all registered students and de-registers students who have not successfully completed the prerequisites by the end of the prior term (or received instructor permission to enroll without the pre-requisite). The only exception is between spring and summer terms; this exception arises because spring grades are not due until after the summer session begins. Hence, there is no time to verify that students enrolled in a summer course were successful in a spring course that was a pre-requisite. While most students in this situation drop the summer course on their own and faculty are encouraged to verify that all students meet the prerequisites, occasionally a student does remain in the course.

Rigor of courses and programs and expectations of student learning. The curriculum processes defined in the FA Contract ([RD#273](#)) address all aspects of curriculum, including, in a general sense, rigor. The course number implies the level of the course. 100-level courses are intended to be freshman-level, with minimal prerequisites; 200-level are intended to be sophomore-level; 300-level and 400-level courses are upper-division, more specialized, generally carry prerequisites, and/or have content that would require greater intellectual sophistication than an introductory survey course; developmental courses have numbers below 100; graduate courses are 500 or 600 level. Departmental faculty and instructors exercise immediate authority over rigor, both in terms of how courses are designed and how they are implemented. Individual departments identify program-level learning expectations and learning outcomes through their program assessment documents ([RD#9](#)). Although academic departments do not have contractual authority to review full-time faculty syllabi and

*Through
program
assessment,
departments
determine
whether students
are meeting
learning goals
established by
the department.*

assignments or enforce standards of rigor, the assessment process has generated discussions within departments that lead individual faculty members to align their particular expectations with departmental goals ([RD#538](#)). The syllabi of adjunct faculty, normally developed in collaboration with departments, are submitted to the academic deans to ensure consistency and academic rigor.

Through program assessment, departments determine whether students are meeting learning goals established by the department. In many cases, departments have adopted standardized tests—such as the ETS Major Field Test in Mathematics, the American Chemical Society Standardized exams, the Michigan Test of Teacher Certification, and the NCLEX test for Nursing—to evaluate the rigor of programs against an external standard. Specialized accreditation and external program review also help in establishing outside reference points for appropriate rigor for programs.

Students are asked to evaluate all courses, both in terms of instructional quality and in terms of expectations, rigor, and learning ([RD#358](#)). Individual faculty use this information to adjust expectations, when and if appropriate. Academic rigor is an important aspect of faculty evaluation leading to tenure and promotion decisions. These decisions focus in large measure on teaching effectiveness, including setting appropriate standards, as judged by student evaluations, peer reviews, and the instructional materials provided in the review process 3.C.3. From the perspective of the provost, who chairs the Professional Practices Committee, faculty members seen as too easy or too vague in their expectations are not viewed favorably by colleagues or the Professional Practices Committee, nor are faculty who pitch their classes at too difficult a level.

General Education learning expectations are stated clearly in the Course Catalog, and the GEC course approval and renewal process give extensive attention to those expectations (Preface and 3.B.2). The gradual and carefully regulated expansion of courses in the General Education program (rather than a haphazard proliferation of such courses) is one indication that the GEC exercises authority over the program by renewing only GE courses that can demonstrate they have met a rigorous set of learning objectives. In AY 2012-2013, GEC reviewed the effectiveness of Communication Intensive (CI) courses and submitted a policy proposal to CAPC to revise the definition of CI and clarify the kinds of assignments that are expected for that designation. This revision was reviewed by the entire faculty, ratified in November 2013, and will be implemented in Fall 2014 ([RD#586](#)).

Since 2011, SVSU has hosted one dual-credit program for high school students, the Great Lakes Bay Early College. Students in this “four plus one program” (recognized by the United States Department of Education) may earn up to 60 college credits ([RD#435](#)). Students take the same courses as other SVSU students, assuring that the coursework is identical in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to SVSU curriculum.

SVSU also maintains and exercises authority over access to learning resources, including the following:

VSpace: Electronic Learning Management System. SVSU uses an open source learning management system by Sakai, branded internally as VSpace ([RD#93](#)). This system facilitates communication and access to learning resources for courses, student organizations, and University committees. Approximately 85% of courses employ VSpace, enhancing access to course-based learning resources such as course assignments, presentations, syllabi, grades, etc. VSpace allows students to access their courses from home, campus, or any place that provides Internet capability. The Library, Writing Center, and Math Resource Center have embedded applications that allow students to access some services from home or other locations. Most VSpace sites are only available with an SVSU login.

Library and Library Resources. Zahnow Library provides information resources and services to support the teaching and research needs of students, faculty, and staff. Spread over four floors, its collections cover a wide array of topics and a multitude of formats. During the academic year, the library is open approximately 85 hours each week, staying open until 11 pm on Monday through Thursday nights. Online databases and other resources are available at all times from both on- and off-campus computers. During final exams, hours are extended to 1 am. Reference services are available during nearly all of the library hours ([RD#84](#)).

The library offers services and resources to support learning needs including unlimited free interlibrary loans. The library also offers online services to students through an application embedded into VSpace sites. To further support the campus community, reference librarians “roam” the library with iPads, ready to assist students or faculty at any time. Reference librarians also hold hours in other buildings to assist students and faculty with their research needs. As discussed earlier, the library also hosts library instruction sessions in individual classes to enhance research ability using library resources including in-library print sources as well as online research databases. These sessions, offered at a choice of levels depending on the needs of the class, emphasize the research process and critical evaluation skills ([RD#436](#)).

Librarians work collaboratively with faculty on collection development. The colleges appoint faculty members to work with library liaisons to identify materials that support educational and research needs across campus. Other sources of information used in collection development include Choice, Booklist, and a variety of review and trade journals to supplement faculty recommendations. The library webpage outlines a clear procedure for any faculty member wanting to suggest items for the collection ([RD#437](#)). The Library Director, in consultation with the faculty member and the library liaison, considers whether to purchase suggested items. Despite rapid price increases and space constraints, the library has kept pace with the exponential growth in information resources by judicious investments in online materials and databases. The table below highlights the shift from print media to electronic

sources over the last five years. Notably, the number of print journals has decreased from 579 to 170, while the number of electronic journals has doubled from 24,000 to over 48,000 during the same five-year period. The growth in the e-book collection has been especially dramatic, rising from about 9,500 to over 152,000 titles.

Melvin J. Zahnow Library Statistics 2009-2013					
	As of 6.30.09	As of 6.30.10	As of 6.30.11	As of 6.30.12	As of 6.30.13
VOLUMES HELD					
Books	207,772	208,575	209,378	200,451	205,440
Bound Periodicals	28,291	29,096	30,889	30,522	6,286
TOTAL VOLUMES	236,063	237,671	240,267	230,973	211,726
NON-PRINT MATERIALS					
E-books	9,461	9,437	24,633	102,228	152,434
Media	25,511	25,774	25,693	27,023	27,070
Microforms	370,522	370,556	370,628	370,628	354,265
TOTAL NON-PRINT	405,494	405,767	420,954	499,879	533,769
SERIALS RECEIVED					
Electronic (<i>unduplicated titles</i>)	24,008	24,445	35,352	41,794	48,209
Print	579	457	168	170	127
TOTAL SERIALS	24,587	24,902	35,520	41,964	48,336
ACQUISITIONS EXPENDITURES					
Books	\$155,550	\$135,550	\$140,500	\$140,000	\$186,338
Serials	\$404,827	\$422,118	\$385,634	\$403,505	\$404,106
Standing Orders	\$176,671	\$178,959	\$221,259	\$218,454	\$205,080
Other Materials	\$49,800	\$45,800	\$56,041	\$59,000	\$48,430
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$786,848	\$782,427	\$803,434	\$820,959	\$843,954
PATRON COUNT	333,746	347,252	327,386	348,778	416,995

Table 4.1
([RD#237](#))

Overall, the library and library materials are accessible to students, faculty, and staff in support of teaching, learning, and research. The library takes a proactive approach to reference services and maintains a collection of materials that is adequate for the institution's growing needs. Interlibrary loan services are highly effective in obtaining any materials not in the University collection ([RD#436](#)) and ([RD#525](#)).

Tutoring Services. As described in 3.D.2 and 4.C.3, SVSU offers tutoring in many academic areas ([RD#95](#)). Prior to the Fall 2012 semester, these tutoring services were spread out across campus in distinct centers, which was confusing to students. To improve access to these important learning resources, Zahnow Library now houses tutoring services in math, physics, advanced technology, biology, chemistry, social sciences, and accounting under the umbrella of the Center for Academic Achievement. The separate Writing Center is also located

in Zahnow Library. These services are free to all SVSU students on an unlimited basis, and a swipe system, which reads student identification cards, tracks usage.

Access to Technology. Wireless devices can connect from all around campus, using either an open network (primarily for guests) or a secure network. While wireless access was somewhat uneven a few years ago, the Information Technology division has successfully improved services throughout campus. Most residential students have their own computers, as do many commuter students, but the institution provides computers in open labs, teaching labs, and multi-use labs. Computers provide access to Internet resources, standard office software, and specialized software such as SPSS, Maple, CAD, ARCGIS, and others.

Type of Lab	Unit Count	% of Total	# of Lab Groups
Open Labs (SE105, C227, OTT)	116	7%	3
Teaching	347	21%	12
Open/Teach	243	15%	6
Other Student Use	112	7%	7
Multi-Use	340	21%	15
Specialty	360	22%	46
Podiums	137	8%	1
Totals	1655	100%	90

Table 4.2
([RD#352](#))

The University also focuses on ensuring access to online materials for students with disabilities. Universal design principles ([RD#316](#)) are taught in the training required for faculty who wish to teach online or hybrid courses. In addition, Information Technology Services ([RD#520](#)) and the Office of Disability Services ([RD#316](#)) provide transcription and other services to assist faculty in developing accessible materials for all students. This process is ongoing, as technology and student needs continue to evolve.

Authority over Faculty Qualifications. The SVSU Faculty Contract stipulates specific degree qualifications for full-time, tenured faculty members as described fully in Criterion 3. Within that broad context, qualifications established for new faculty hires are determined by program needs, disciplinary specialization, and the nature of the institution. The request for a new hire is often made as part of the assessment and planning documents or is justified in terms of replacing a resignee or retiree in the context of ongoing program needs, enrollment growth, or the requirements of a particular specialization.

A published set of hiring guidelines ([RD#521](#)) for faculty positions can be found on the Academic Affairs website. The relevant department chair has the primary responsibility for submitting the job description and communicating the specific disciplinary qualifications. In addition to department members representing department interests, search committees also include non-voting student members as well as voting members from outside the department, inclusion

advocates ([RD#383](#)), and, to the extent possible, members of underrepresented groups. Applications are received electronically ([RD#457](#)) and screened for minimum qualifications ([RD#359](#)). Search teams select a short list from the resulting pool for phone or conference interviews. These first-round interviews are primarily for the purpose of ensuring that the candidates are fully qualified and have a clear understanding of the nature of the job and the institution, with special emphasis on the teaching mission. Following these interviews, select candidates (usually two or three) are brought to campus.

During campus interviews, candidates are asked to demonstrate their teaching effectiveness, either by conducting a class or by giving a seminar appropriate for an undergraduate audience, and to discuss their research plans and how those plans can be achieved within the context of the institutional mission. Discussions with potential faculty make clear that the primary mission of the institution is undergraduate teaching and that faculty members are contractually required to teach 24 credit hours per year. In many departments, there can be a heavy emphasis on introductory courses including General Education courses. Consequently, interest, ability and commitment to undergraduate teaching are important qualifications. At the same time, faculty members are expected to maintain a research agenda and engage in service to the University, so those commitments are also key qualifications.

Faculty with ABD status hired into tenure-track positions receive appointment letters with specific language defining the required timeline for degree completion. (In the past, ambiguous contractual language occasionally allowed ABD hires to be granted tenure leading to an unintended change in the intent of the hire.)

The Graduate Committee exercises additional authority over faculty qualifications for graduate teaching. It has developed an approval process ([RD#363](#)) that has increased the qualifications required to teach graduate level courses. For example, the new policy requires applicants wanting to renew their approval to teach graduate courses to submit five years of graduate course evaluations as partial evidence of their qualifications. Tenured/tenure-track faculty once approved ([RD#364](#)) by the Graduate Committee may teach the full range of courses in their discipline. However, adjunct faculty may only be approved to teach graduate courses that align with their specific area of expertise or experience.

Given the significant differences in the skills needed to teach online and face-to-face courses, SVSU has always required faculty who wish to teach online courses to receive additional training ([RD#483](#)). Currently, the University has a full time Director of Online Education, and faculty are required to take a 10-week class prior to teaching an online course. Adjunct faculty who teach online courses take a five-week facilitation course, because they are not responsible for course design and development. Those wishing to teach online must apply and be approved ([RD#522](#)).

As discussed in 3.A.3, SVSU has only one dual degree program, the Great Lakes Bay Early College Program, and those students enroll in SVSU courses taught by SVSU faculty. Concurrent nursing programs aligned with accredited community colleges engage faculty who possess the credentials required of the nursing accreditation ([RD#31](#)).

4.A.5 The institution maintains specialized accreditation as appropriate to its educational purposes.

As noted above, the University has maintained specialized accreditation ([RD#85](#)) and programs in areas that are compatible with its educational purposes and long-range strategic planning. Some are of relatively long standing while new programs, such as Athletic Training and Medical Laboratory Science, have more recently sought and received accreditation. In all cases, once accreditation was obtained, it has been maintained without interruption.

Saginaw Valley State University has been awarded accreditations by ten specialized accrediting bodies ([RD#85](#)):

- SVSU's Business programs have been accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) since 2002;
- SVSU's Chemistry program is approved by the American Chemical Society (ACS);
- SVSU's Electrical Engineering program and Mechanical Engineering program are accredited by the Engineering Accreditation Commission of ABET;
- SVSU's Education programs are accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE);
- SVSU's Nursing programs are accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE);
- SVSU's Occupational Therapy program is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA);
- SVSU's Athletic Training education program (ATEP) is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE).
- SVSU's Medical Laboratory Science program is accredited by the National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (NAACLS);
- SVSU's Social Work program is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE); and
- SVSU's Music programs are accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM);

SVSU seeks specialized accreditation for a program when that status will strengthen the program and benefit students through increased professional opportunities. The ultimate goal is for all professional programs to be nationally accredited so that students will have post-graduation employment opportunities. This endeavor requires significant human and financial resources,

SVSU seeks specialized accreditation for a program when that status will strengthen the program and benefit students through increased professional opportunities.

but the institution has been committed to investing the necessary resources to accomplish it. Moreover, accredited professional programs are crucial to attracting international students; the majority of those students enroll in accredited engineering, education, and business programs.

Sometimes, accreditation requires significant restructuring of SVSU programs. For example, the occupational therapy program changed its bachelor degree to a master's level program because the accrediting body changed the requirements for entry-level occupational therapists to the MS. The University determined that the demand for an Occupational Therapy program was high, so it developed new graduate courses, added clinical hours (requiring the addition of a full-time clinical placement officer), and doubled the number of faculty. Similarly, the recent addition of the Doctor of Nursing Practice ([RD#523](#)), SVSU's first doctoral level program, resulted from an anticipated shift from a masters-level credential to a doctoral-level credential by the accrediting body.

The Marshall Frederick's Museum ([RD#429](#)) also has been accredited recently through the American Alliance of Museums. This rigorous accreditation validates the operational practices, mission, and impact of the museum and expands opportunities for exhibits on loan from other museums.

4.A.6 The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution assures that the degree or certificate programs it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its missions, such as employment rates, admission rates to advanced degree programs, and participation rates in fellowships, internships, and special programs (e.g. Peace Corps and Americorps)

The University regularly publicizes graduate success stories, but, thus far, has been limited in its ability to systematically collect, analyze, and publish data related to the success of its graduates. The offices for Career Services, Alumni Relations, and Institutional Research (OIR) are mounting joint efforts to tackle the challenge of evaluating the success of SVSU graduates. Historically, various programs and offices have done such tracking sporadically, and the data has not been collected in a central place. Because these efforts have been decentralized, different offices across campus are using different software packages to track their students, and the data is not easily amenable to consolidation. Nevertheless, these offices continue to improve their communication with each other and are collaborating on initiatives to measure graduates' success ([RD#446](#)) and ([RD#447](#)).

In order for SVSU to qualify for "No Worker Left Behind under the Workforce Investment Act" funding, over the past six years Career Services, with help from OIR, and has conducted an institution-wide survey of graduates. Response rates

to the surveys averaged about 25%, and may be skewed because unemployed alumni may be less likely to respond.

Placement Rates*

	2009	2010	2011	2012	Average
Graduates	1633	1603	1593	1828	1664
Response rate	28%	24%	14%	20%	22%
Employed		90%	88%	89%	89%
Advanced study		20%	27%	18%	21%
All Placements	93%	95%	97%	96%	93%

	2009	2010	2011	2012	Average
ABS	92%	94%	94%	91%	93%
CBM	94%	92%	93%	92%	93%
COE	92%	97%	100%	100%	96%
HHS	100%	100%	98%	100%	100%
SET	97%	95%	94%	98%	96%

Table 4.3
(RD#537)

*Placement included employed, enrolled in advanced study or not seeking employment

In all cases “placement” includes individuals who were employed, enrolled in advanced study, or not seeking employment. Based on the data described above, SVSU’s placement rates appear to be strong. During the last four years, the overall placement rates average 93%, with students in the Health Sciences having the best results. While this data is useful, Institutional Research, the Alumni Office, and Career Services are seeking ways to improve response rates to acquire more accurate and reliable information.

In a 2012 initiative, the OIR used a variety of methods to determine SVSU students’ success in enrolling in post baccalaureate programs. Information provided by the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) indicates that over 32% of SVSU undergraduates continue their education at four-year institutions within just a few years of graduation, and information gathered through alumni surveys indicates as many as 38% of SVSU graduates may eventually complete graduate training. According to NSC data, as many as 40% of SVSU students choosing to continue their education after completing the bachelor’s degree may choose SVSU for graduate-level study, indicating that the University is already established as a valued source of graduate education by its bachelor degree recipients.

The Office of Academic Affairs and the OIR have found that detailed information on the pursuit, enrollment, and academic success of SVSU alumni in graduate or post-baccalaureate programs has too often depended on discretionary self-reported responses to surveys (RD#360). Almost all of these projects have resulted in such low response rates that it is difficult to reach clear, valid conclusions. However, these offices are helping implement change. They are adding questions to the SVSU Student Satisfaction Survey asking respondents whether they intend to pursue graduate or post baccalaureate

professional studies. A baseline understanding of student intentions will be used in conjunction with revised survey procedures currently being considered by the Office of Career Services and the University Foundation/Alumni Office. Work is underway to make graduate school intent a part of the Graduate Application Survey currently being developed by the Office of Career Services and to include questions on graduate intent or accomplishment within follow-up Career Services and University Foundation surveys of alumni. OIR will coordinate the compilation and distribution of these surveys and will assist in ensuring that information drawn from respondents can be used to develop a clearer understanding of trends in graduate-school plans and enrollment.

At the college level, academic departments do gather informal and anecdotal stories of their students' post-graduate successes. A few departments independently collect limited data on their graduates and, although it is not required, report this information in their annual Academic Program Assessment reports.

For example, the Physics program reports that 100% of their recent graduates (Physics and Physics Education) are either employed or enrolled in advanced study. The Engineering programs conduct exit interviews of graduating seniors, which indicate that in 2011 about 55% of students had jobs prior to graduation, with another 25% in the interview stage ([RD#350](#)).

The Engineering program also surveys alumni every three years focusing on how well the program prepared them for their careers. The most recent survey showed that more than 90% are employed full-time, with 90% of those in engineering fields. This same survey indicated that 96.4% of respondents were employed or enrolled in graduate programs, ([RD#532](#)), however, the return rate for the survey was low (15%).

Several programs in the College of Health and Human Services, such as Nursing, Kinesiology and Occupational Therapy, have begun using Facebook to maintain contact with graduates and track their success, but these efforts appear to be relatively informal. The College is also in the process of purchasing software that will allow students to be tracked from initial enrollment through ten years of post-graduation.

The pre-law and pre-health programs collect data about students who take the LSAT and GMAT, and they attempt to identify students who are accepted to law and medical schools. However, these are not programs in the sense of being academic departments that offer coursework. Rather, they function as specialized advising offices, and contact with the pre-law or pre-health advisers is not mandatory, although most students applying do seek the help. In 2013, 25 students applied for admission to health professional programs. As of October 2013, fifteen (60%) were accepted and ten (40%) are still pending. Of the fifteen accepted, eight planned to attend allopathic (MD) schools, two enrolled in osteopathic (DO) schools, two in dental schools, one in podiatry, one in a

Master of Public Health program, and one in a post-baccalaureate program with guaranteed admission for 2014 at a DO school ([RD#533](#)).

As summarized in 4.B.2, SVSU uses data from licensure examinations to provide evidence that students completing degree programs at the institution meet professional standards for employment or advanced study. Licensure examination pass rates (where available) are posted on relevant department web sites. As examples, students graduating from the Occupational Therapy Program ([RD#526](#)) achieved an 83% pass rate in 2012, an indicator of strong performance. Similarly, about 90% of students in the Master of Science in Nursing program passed their certification exams ([RD#527](#)).

Finally, recognizing a general problem among the state universities, the State of Michigan passed an appropriations bill that requires universities to report aggregate data on its students, including graduates. To assist in this effort, the Michigan Presidents' Council is currently sponsoring a survey of graduates from Michigan's public universities. SVSU provided the Council with its graduation lists, and the Council will try to survey alumni from the past year. The Council hopes to get a better response rate through extensive follow-up on surveys that individual universities may lack the resources to do. Additionally, a recent state law requires all Michigan public universities to put information including placement rates on their respective websites ([RD#378](#)).

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

SVSU demonstrates its strong commitment to educational achievement and continuous improvement in student learning through a well-established process of academic program assessment. This current system was put in place following the 2003 HLC visit; initial results were documented in the Monitoring Report submitted in December 2006 ([RD#97](#)). The Academic Assessment Advisory Board, formed at that time, led the effort that resulted in the current system of well-defined program goals and assessment measures ([RD#8](#)). The General Education assessment system is equally rigorous, employing parallel kinds of evidence ([RD#365](#)). Moreover, the numerous program accreditation reports provide additional evidence of educational achievement, as do certification reports from the College of Education.

The Assessment Advisory Board developed the Academic Program Assessment Guidelines document that is fundamental to SVSU's assessment processes ([RD#355](#)). This document informs the individual department reports that all departments in all five colleges submit each year. Each department has defined learning goals for its programs, assessment measures for those goals based on effective assessments practices, and methods for using such information to improve programs. The assessment process is collaborative and deeply

SVSU demonstrates its strong commitment to educational achievement and continuous improvement in student learning through a well-established process of academic program assessment.

embedded in the institutional culture. It includes all faculty members to varying degrees, including adjunct faculty (especially in the General Education program). Deans review their college assessment reports and forward them to the Provost with recommendations for resources as discussed in Criterion 3. The process is relatively transparent, with all programs' annual assessment reports posted to an accessible VSpace site ([RD#481](#)).

There is, of course, some variation from program to program in terms of the quality and depth of assessment, but the process is designed to provide feedback to programs that need to improve their assessment methodologies. Assessment workshops are conducted regularly to further faculty members' understanding of best practices for assessment. Assessment processes employed to meet the requirements of external accrediting or certification bodies meet and often exceed the requirements of the University assessment programs and so inform and influence the institutional practices. The University also has developed and maintains an effective system to assess its General Education program, as described in 3.B.

Assessment of the University's various co-curricular programs has not been consistent or systematic. Co-curricular activities and professionally-focused student organizations often enhance student learning, and some, such as Model UN, have become embedded in the curriculum and assessment process. However, others, while they may enhance students' professional experiences, are not directly assessed.

4.B.1 The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.

Goals for every program are available from departmental websites, making them easily accessible to internal and external audiences, including students and other stakeholders. General Education learning goals ([RD#528](#)) are supposed to be on all GE course syllabi, although no mechanism exists to ensure compliance with this expectation. Nonetheless, all of the category goals and objectives are accessible on the university website.

All academic programs assess student learning and achievement of learning goals through the annual Academic Program Assessment and Planning reports, archived on the Academic Program Assessment VSpace site ([RD#481](#)).

When academic programs filed their first annual assessment reports under the new assessment system, many had yet to develop effective programmatic assessment methods. While faculty were comfortable evaluating student success with regard to course-level goals, they needed to think about how specific courses contributed to meeting program goals. This work led to largely constructive (rather than defensive) conversations about how to improve

individual courses and also how to see those courses as scaffolding within the curriculum.

As a result of that extended effort, every academic program now has a clearly stated set of student learning goals and objectives, and their annual reports discussed above detail each program's assessment methods. Learning goals and assessment measures also have been established for Basic Skills courses and for General Education at the program, category, and course levels. Departments develop learning goals that are aligned with disciplinary or accrediting bodies' standards, informed by external stakeholders' needs, and constructed in collaboration with a variety of stakeholders. When appropriate, programs work together to improve their work. For example, the College of Education has collaborated with interdisciplinary groups of faculty from subject departments in Arts and Behavioral Sciences and Science, Engineering and Technology to revamp subject-specific teacher certification programs to meet the student learning goals required by the State of Michigan and by national accrediting agencies. This process has led to significant changes in course requirements and course sequencing to better align with state standards and to better prepare students in the College of Education to meet expectations in their subject areas.

As described in 4.B.2 below, programs identify goals for student learning, map the goals to the curriculum and identify ways to measure student achievement. Finally, departments use the data to improve outcomes at both the course and program level as noted in 4.B.3. Departments and colleges tie resource requests (faculty lines, special one-time equipment requests, etc.) to these assessment/planning reports, also noted in 4.B.3.

As discussed in Section 3.B.2, General Education outcomes are assessed annually at the course and department level and are reviewed every five years by the General Education Committee at which time assessment research methodology, findings, and improvements are presented for review. Additionally, the Collegiate Learning Assessment is employed annually to assess the broad tripartite goals of general education ([RD#540](#)).

4.B.2 The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.

The department/program assessment reports, as well as certification and accreditation reports, document that SVSU assesses learning goals regularly. Departments are not required to assess all learning and program goals each year; they may develop a cyclical approach so that all eventually are assessed within a reasonable time period. For example, in the Engineering programs, there are twelve student outcomes that are assessed over a two-year period.

In general, the trend among programs has been to deepen and broaden assessment measures and to employ multiple measures. Such measures vary

Every academic program now has a clearly stated set of student learning goals and objectives, and their annual reports discussed above detail each program's assessment methods.

from program to program and include direct measures such as examinations, papers, other original works, capstone projects, other senior projects, exit exams, standardized tests, licensure exam scores, and external adjudication, as well as indirect measures, including interviews and surveys. The results of these assessments are analyzed and used to improve programs through changes in pedagogy, course content, course sequencing, or addition of resources, as is more fully discussed in 4.B.3.

While assessment of learning outcomes in co-curricular activities is less formalized, these activities are an integral part of the educational experience for SVSU students. Nearly all departments support a professional or academic student organization, such as the Forensics Club (Communication), the Student Nurses Association, the Criminal Justice Club, or the Society of Women Engineers. These organizations have stated goals that include some combination of education, outreach, professional development, and social activities. These clubs foster student learning outside the classroom and develop leadership skills for those students who serve as officers. A full list of current academic/professional organizations ([RD#313](#)) along with their missions and goals is on our website.

4.B.3 The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning

In addition to the analysis of assessment information described above, the Academic Program Assessment and Department Planning Report requires departments to summarize the “specific actions that have been undertaken to improve student learning.” In their reports, departments provide examples of how they have used their assessment data to make appropriate changes to the curriculum or co-curricular activities. The reports contain numerous examples of programs adding, dropping, revising, or re-sequencing courses in response to evidence regarding program effectiveness. An illustrative example from each college and from the General Education program follows:

The College of Arts and Behavioral Sciences. Through a variety of indirect and direct measures, the Criminal Justice department determined that learning experiences in the classroom were effective at conveying subject matter knowledge. Evidence on discipline-specific subject matter knowledge showed significant improvement from the department’s original pre-test (at the beginning of the introductory course) to the first follow-up (at the end of the introductory course), and a statistically and practically significant additional increase was evident on the final follow-up test (at the end of the senior capstone) ([RD#366](#)).

In contrast, in the student critique, more than 60% of students indicated that the department should put additional emphasis on equipping them to describe and analyze data. This information, coupled with other direct and indirect

measures, led the department to give greater attention to students' ability to find, understand, and employ numeric and statistical information. It also incorporated numeric understanding learning objectives into core courses. Since this shift in AY 2010-2011, self-reported competencies in these areas improved significantly, and direct measures of seniors' abilities to understand and use data in evidence-informed writing has improved significantly, with more than 80% able to create a professional written product. The need to equip students to understand evidence also fueled a request for a mini-computer lab to engage students in hands-on data analysis in conjunction with their class work and in support of student engagement in student and faculty research. This request has been granted, and the laboratory should be operational AY 2013-2014 ([RD#366](#)).

The College of Business and Management. The College of Business and Management has completed the two cycles of measurement/assessment for their undergraduate and MBA (graduate) programs and is implementing changes to its curricula. It is also undertaking other initiatives to close the loop to assure competence in four undergraduate CBM and five MBA learning goals. The College assessed student performance relative to those goals using course-embedded assignments ([RD#153](#)). In 2012-13, the following interventions were approved within the College, based on the results of the 2011-12 assessment activities:

- the development of a case that integrated all four CBM learning goals for the senior capstone course, MGT 429;
- the redesign of an assignment that measures two of the learning goals for ECON 335; and
- the use of higher-level CBM core courses (ECON 335, FIN 304, MGT 429) in the AACSV assurance of learning process to more accurately capture the competencies of CBM majors and minors

In addition, ongoing assessment has pointed to a number of deficits that are currently being addressed, including:

- reviewing the content of RPW 300 (a course in ABS) and consulting with the department responsible for that course regarding modifications to better meet the needs of CBM students;
- having faculty teaching ACCT 213, FIN 304, and MGT 429 provide students with more instruction about and opportunities to use appropriate outside resources and metrics, such as industry averages, when evaluating corporate performance;
- having faculty teaching MGT 324 and MKT 331 provide more intensive instruction on the various types of global markets as well as additional treatment of off-shoring of core functions; and
- setting up meetings of all faculty teaching courses that address ethics, corporate social responsibility, and sustainability (MGT601, CBM600, CBM695, ECON 650A, MGT 621A, MGT 621B, MKT 631A, and MKT 631B) to address content and methods and to discuss suggestions for improvements, including course coverage, common resources, and activities that might be useful.

The College of Education. A primary learning goal for all teacher education programs—Teacher Education-Middle and Secondary (TEMS) and Elementary Education, including Early Childhood (EE)—is to assess student work effectively. This goal is mapped across numerous courses in the TEMS curriculum. In TEMS 310, “Introduction to Classroom Assessment,” secondary candidates learn to “use assessment appropriately,” “construct assessments for use in the classroom,” “modify assessments to meet the needs of all learners,” and “use assessment and evaluation results for informed decision making.” For TEMS 312’s Application Paper, candidates create an assessment and then state how the assessment measures student progress, what data analyzed from the assessment tells about student learning, and how insights gained can be used to plan instruction/differentiation. EE introduces candidates to assessment in its methods courses (TE 301, 318, 341, 331, 330, and 311). Candidates learn to pre-assess prior to teaching, to assess student progress during a lesson, to design post-lesson assessment(s) aligned with the lesson’s goal(s), to use results from pre-assessments to design/select appropriate learning strategies and instructional materials, and to use post-assessment data to plan differentiated instruction for future lessons and/or for re-teaching. In TE 482 and 489, Early Childhood candidates complete additional assessments of both individual students’ performance and programmatic effectiveness. COE faculty demonstrate area K-12 partners’ use of data systems for formative and summative student performance data and discuss how this data can be used to plan effective, differentiated instruction. During field experiences, candidates observe teachers assessing students and using data to diagnose student needs. Candidates incorporate assessment techniques into their lesson/unit planning, and they evaluate their impact on student learning in their field and student teaching lessons.

Key candidate assessments include the lesson and unit plan assignments/rubrics and the Danielson-based rubric, which rates field performance. TEMS 310 and 312 also play key roles in gauging secondary candidate knowledge and application of assessment. The elementary lesson plan and reflection rubrics require “an analysis of student performance” from candidates to plan further student instruction and the integration of “formal and informal assessment techniques...for formative and summative assessment that inform... knowledge of students’ progress...” The unit plan rubric includes items related to assessment: alignment of assessment to learning goals, pre-assessment, instruction based on assessment results, checking for understanding while teaching, post-assessment, and analysis of student achievement. The field rubric addresses assessing learning and differentiating instruction; giving high-quality feed-back, tracking and assessing student learning via technology, and soliciting and using information about students’ experiences, learning behavior, needs, and progress via informal assessments. Employers rate SVSU graduates on their “Essential skills to assess student learning” on the Follow-Up Survey.

As COE faculty reviewed data on candidates’ performance, they found that, while teacher candidates effectively design and administer assessments, they are less effective at using the assessment data to inform instruction. Thus, COE set

the following goal: improve candidates' use of assessment data to inform/plan/differentiate instruction.

To address this goal, COE faculty will:

- demonstrate/model/illustrate the use of data/data analysis to inform pedagogy;
- review/revise assignments/rubrics to ensure inclusion and assessment of the above;
- collect data on candidate performance with host teachers and field supervisors;
- analyze collected data to inform course/program/pedagogical adjustments that promote continuous improvement; and
- set goals and document all upcoming reports.

College of Health and Human Services. In 2009 the Kinesiology Department identified weaknesses in student learning related to functional anatomy; in response, a re-structuring of the functional anatomy course resulted in significant gains in student learning, with 80% classified as proficient, 17% classified as acceptable, and only 2% as unacceptable ([RD#367](#)). Another example comes from the undergraduate Nursing program, which is built heavily on simulations and thus focuses heavily on labs. Recently, the program piloted the use of senior mentors in the lab. Assessment data revealed that these mentors were very helpful in facilitating student learning, and eight mentors have been added to the program ([RD#329](#)).

College of Science, Engineering and Technology. As a result of assessment during the 2011-2012 cycle, both the Mechanical and Electrical Engineering programs noted concerns regarding certain analytical skills. When their programs were smaller, Mechanical and Electrical Engineering had developed a cross-listed course in advanced mathematics for engineers: ME/ECE 302. However, outcome assessment showed that the course was not meeting the needs of either program. Mechanical Engineering was concerned that students were not adequately proficient in programming and statistics, while Electrical Engineering felt it did not address advanced mathematical topics sufficiently. Although both programs needed advanced engineering mathematics, the particular topics were different. As a result the course had become a shallow treatment of too many topics, and ultimately both departments noted deficiencies that hampered student success. They resolved the situation by separating the cross-listed ME/ECE 302 course. ECE still retains ECE 302, Engineering Analysis, which focuses on the math needed for EE, while ME has restructured further to create ME 202 (statistics, Six-Sigma, and programming) and puts modeling and other advanced math topics in ME 384. Now students are able to focus more deeply on the content needed for success in their specific programs. The impact of this revision will be evaluated in the 2013-2014 assessment cycle ([RD#331](#)) and ([RD#332](#)).

General Education. During AY 2012-2013, the General Education Committee carefully reviewed a University Writing Program report surveying CI courses ([RD#327](#)). The survey was intended to serve two purposes: to better understand how well transfer of learning is taking place between the First Year Writing Program and CI (Communication Intensive) courses in the General Education program and also to better understand how well transfer of learning is taking place between the Writing Center and CI courses.

55% (n = 34) of faculty teaching CI courses responded to the survey. Faculty were asked to provide feedback with regard to their knowledge about the student learning goals for CI courses. They were also asked about their perceptions regarding student preparedness and ability to demonstrate reaching the CI goals. The survey found that faculty employ a wide range of strategies in CI courses to develop student writers. Although few survey responses linked explicitly to CI course outcomes, many may be implicit. However, there also appeared to be some lack of clarity about CI course outcomes. For example, three respondents to one question stated that they include no informal writing, although CI criteria require 10 pages of informal writing.

After reviewing this survey and other data, the General Education Committee evaluated the language associated with CI courses. The Committee determined that the course objectives needed to be better organized and more clearly articulated. As a result, the course objectives were rewritten. The General Education Committee presented the proposed changes at an open faculty forum in April 2013. No major objections or concerns were raised after the forum, and a proposal to make the changes in the catalog language was submitted to CAPC in early Fall 2013. All departments reviewed the proposed changes, which CAPC passed and the Faculty Associated ratified in November 2013 ([RD#586](#)).

In addition to direct curricular revision, programs in all five colleges have developed other strategies for improving student learning.

In addition to direct curricular revision, programs in all five colleges have developed other strategies for improving student learning. Some have added more intensive faculty advising to supplement or replace that offered by the Academic Advising Center, and some have developed seminars to enhance student preparedness for graduate and professional schools or employment. This has often been done in the context of co-curricular organizations rather than through classes. Departments often discuss such work in their annual assessment reports.

Once college deans have reviewed the department reports, they submit Academic Unit Summary Reports to the Provost in which they answer the following questions for each of their departments based on those reports ([RD#375](#)):

- What were the major findings regarding student learning in the academic programs?
- What other critical findings did the department identify?
- How did the department respond to those findings above?
- Is there evidence that the departmental response has been effective in

addressing the findings?

- Please summarize resources identified in the report AND directly linked to assessment findings.

The deans use this information in conjunction with their own analyses of enrollment patterns and college-level needs to prioritize staffing and resource requests. With due consideration of college-level recommendations and in consultation with the deans, the provost allocates funds based on institutional priorities. Deans discuss the allocations as well as the assessment findings with assessment representatives and department chairs to bring closure to the process.

The Provost's Office maintains spreadsheets showing how resources are requested each year in response to the needs identified on annual planning reports. Some resource requests are fairly minor and are handled by department or college budgets. The Provost's Office evaluates more substantive requests, such as those for new faculty lines or major upgrades in technology, and prioritizes them based on documented need. For example, the Provost provided the Colleges of Science Engineering and Technology and of Health and Human Services with new laboratory equipment and increased budgets for laboratory consumables. In the College of Arts & Behavioral Sciences, the Provost approved licensing for Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software for Geography and provided needed equipment for the Art Department to initiate a digital photography program. The Provost also supports ventures such as hosting the American College Theatre Festival. Faculty lines that have opened through retirements in the College of Education have been reassigned to areas of significant growth, such as Health Sciences. New lines, for example in Biology and Nursing, have been created in response to enrollment needs ([RD#36](#)) and ([RD#531](#)).

4.B.4 The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.

The basic principles of Academic Program Assessment ([RD#80](#)) at SVSU are available on the Academic Affairs website and include the following:

- The goal of assessment is to further a culture of student learning at SVSU; assessment measures are employed to help achieve that goal;
- The emphasis of assessment is on program evaluation to improve student learning;
- Departments/programs define their own program goals and determine how they are to be addressed; the Academic Program Assessment Advisory Board facilitates the process;
- For assessment to be effective, results of assessment activities must be used to further develop programs; and
- Assessment results are used in decisions regarding resource allocations.

Faculty members within programs develop assessment goals, map those goals to the curriculum, develop assessment methodologies, implement the assessments, evaluate the findings, and develop plans for continuous improvement.

The faculty is involved in the assessment process at nearly every step. Faculty members serve on the Academic Assessment Advisory Board that both develops the reporting instrument and provides assessment workshops. Faculty members within programs develop assessment goals, map those goals to the curriculum, develop assessment methodologies, implement the assessments, evaluate the findings, and develop plans for continuous improvement. Each program appoints a faculty member as the assessment representative, and release time is available for this work 3.C.1. The role of faculty in the process is thus very extensive and has allowed the development of an academic culture that understands both the process and importance of assessment. Developing this culture has taken time and significant faculty development. That development has taken the form of assessment workshops geared towards understanding the process and expectations. These were held more frequently in the past as the processes were being developed. Several in-house University publications featured “how to” articles written by SVSU faculty to facilitate understanding of assessment practices ([RD#481](#)). Currently, as assessment is widely accepted and practiced in the academic units, workshops are offered more occasionally—most recently in April 2013 — but assessment is discussed at college and department chair meetings and one-on-one with the department chairs and assessment representatives regularly.

The Academic Assessment Advisory Board developed SVSU’s basic assessment process, which was outlined in the 2006 Monitoring Report, nearly a decade ago and at that time, a number of University representatives attended assessment workshops and conferences, such as those offered by the HLC and the Assessment Institute at Indiana University-Purdue University of Indiana. Additionally, speakers and consultants have been brought to campus. Knowledge gained through these efforts and nearly ten years of implementation has led to program level assessment that employs multiple measures, both direct and indirect, and links assessment outcomes to improvements and resources.

To ensure that the University maintains currency in best practices for assessment, the institution continues to send between two and twelve representatives to the annual HLC Conference each April, and has sent faculty and staff to the HLC Assessment workshops for the last two years. Faculty have also participated in CLA workshops, both on and off campus, intended to improve outcomes in critical thinking within the General Education program. The chair of the Academic Program Assessment Advisory Board also participated in the Performance Assessment in Higher Education program offered through the Harvard Graduate School of Education in 2009 ([RD#530](#)). Adjunct faculty members participate in the implementation of program and General Education assessment, and departments are responsible for working with them on that process. Many departments, especially those with specialized accreditation, such as Education and Business, have developed assessment workshops that are offered as part of the adjunct faculty orientation at the beginning of each academic year. Attendance is generally voluntary, but adjunct faculty receive a small stipend for participation. The participation rates for these workshops have grown continuously, a reflection of the campus-wide culture of assessment ([RD#481](#)).

The processes for assessing student learning at SVSU are mature, effective, and well integrated. Evidence of effective assessment practices is extensive. Program goals are developed with input from appropriate stakeholders. Assessment of those goals occurs on an annual basis, and the results are used to make programmatic improvements. The process was developed based on best practices in assessment, including significant faculty participation, and has been tailored to suit the culture and resources available at SVSU.

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

The University has ambitious, clearly defined goals for improving student retention, persistence, and completion rates and is committed to achieving those goals. Factors that contribute to relatively low graduation rates—including the academic profile of the student body, financial need, and first generation college student status—are partly a consequence of SVSU’s mission of providing opportunity. SVSU is engaged in detailed analyses of how those factors may undermine student success and is developing strategies and programs to help mitigate them. SVSU is committed to improving educational success for all students it admits.

4.C.1 The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence, and completion that are ambitious but attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations, and educational offerings.

Consistent with the institutional mission to provide access and opportunity in higher education and as discussed in the Preface, SVSU accepts students ([RD#21](#)) with a composite ACT ≥ 16 and a high school GPA ≥ 2.0 . Within this student population, there is great diversity of academic preparation, financial need, and institutional engagement. First to second year retention rates hover around 70%, and six-year graduation rates fluctuate between 38% and 42%, both consistent with the student profile discussed in 4.C.2. As articulated in the Strategic Plan, SVSU’s goals are to increase “the FTIC retention rate from first year to second year by 2% annually to reach a goal of 77% by AY 2014” and to increase “the rate of six-year student baccalaureate degree completion from 42% in fall 2010 to 45% as of fall 2014” ([RD#75a](#)) and ([RD#75b](#)). These goals represent significant RPC rate improvements, and achieving those goals will require the coordinated efforts of Academic Affairs, Enrollment Management, and Student Affairs. Ultimately, the University can achieve these goals, but it will require attention, targeted strategies, and resources.

The University has ambitious, clearly defined goals for improving student retention, persistence, and completion rates and is committed to achieving those goals.

4.C.2 The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs.

SVSU collects and analyzes information on retention, persistence, and degree completion and compares such data to peer and aspirational institutions both within Michigan and beyond. Data utilized includes high school GPA, ACT scores, financial need (unmet need and Pell Eligibility), race and ethnicity, initial placement in developmental courses, and status as first generation college students. Those independent variables are used to analyze student success in terms of SVSU GPA, retention, and, ultimately, six-year graduation rate.

As seen in the figure below — which presents material from the Common Data Set for 2006 student cohorts for graduation rates and for 2011 student cohorts for first-to-second year retention rates — SVSU ranks in the bottom third of Michigan Public Universities with regard to six-year graduation rates. Within those fifteen institutions, graduation rates range from 28% to 90%, with the predominant factor being admissions selectivity. While SVSU's performance is not unexpected given its enrollment profile, the institution is committed to improving its persistence and retention rates through shaping of the enrollment profile and providing adequate and targeted services for those who need academic or other support. To support these initiatives, two new positions were created: a Coordinator of First-Year Programs and a Director of Retention. The horizontal lines in the figure show SVSU's goals for first to second year retention (77%) and for six-year graduation rate (45%).

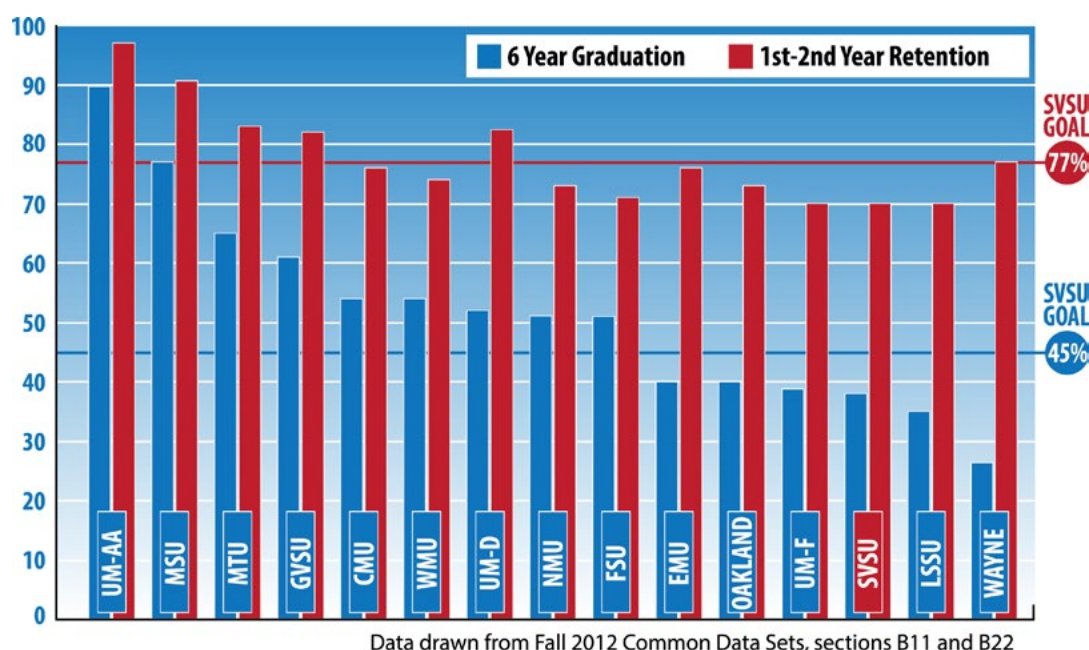


Fig. 4.1
(RD#21)

In 2012, the University formed a Student Success Committee to plan and develop strategic approaches for improving retention and graduation rates, while remaining consistent with the institutional mission of providing access and opportunity. This committee is composed of key administrative personnel

including the Provost, the Vice President for Enrollment Management, the Vice President for Student Affairs, two academic deans, the registrar, the Director of Institutional Research, and the Special Assistant to the President on Diversity Issues. While faculty members have not served directly on the Student Success Committee, they have participated in sub-committees formed to address specific issues.

Academic Factors

The Student Success Committee has analyzed the impact of student preparation as measured by ACT, ACT sub-scores, and high school GPA — all often cited as key factors for success at SVSU.

The data were analyzed in several different ways, but the most fruitful predictor of graduation rates came from a somewhat unique method. Using IPEDS data obtained from the Common Data Sets on various University websites, committee members compared student academic profiles. The figures on the bar graph below show the enrollment profiles of SVSU (red bars) and a peer institution, Central Michigan University (CMU, blue bars). While these two institutions report similar average ACT and high school GPA's, they have substantially different graduation rates. SVSU hovers around 40%, while CMU has a graduation rate of over 50%.

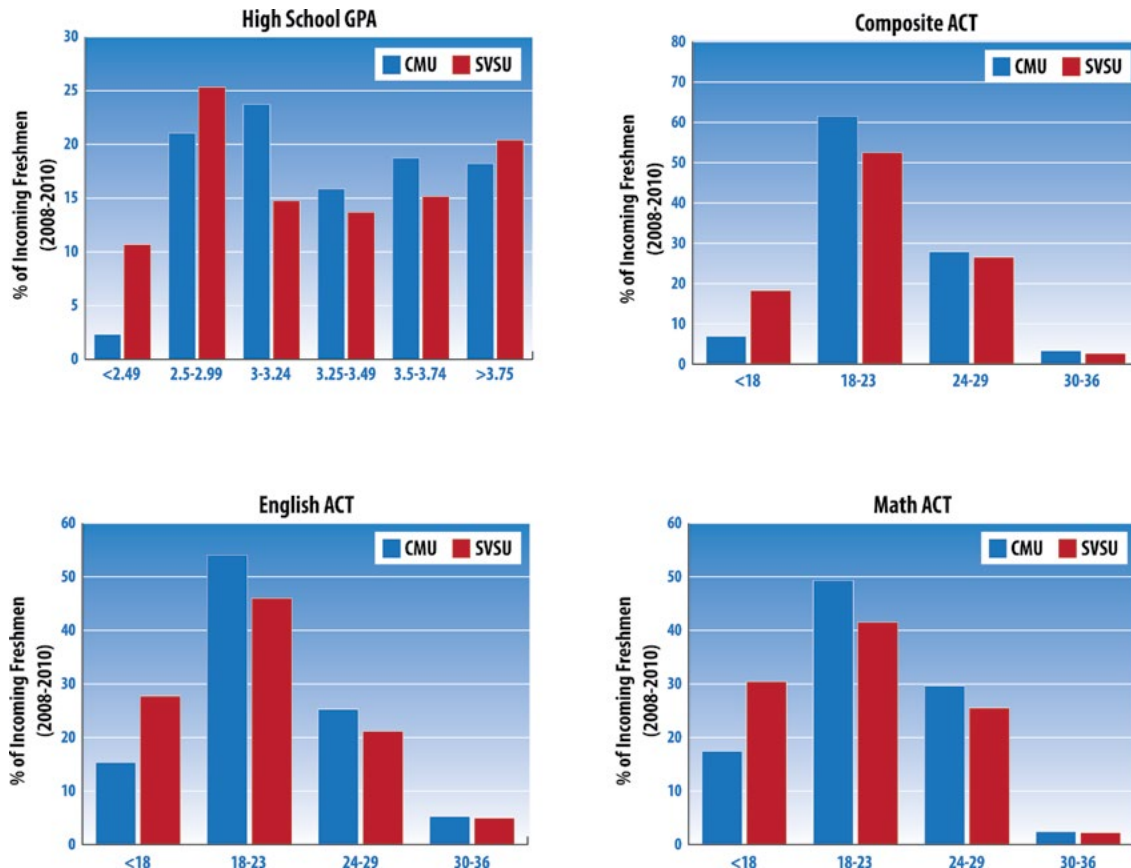


Fig. 4.2
(RD#541)

While the *average* academic preparation may be similar, there are marked differences in student profile as shown in the figure above. For example, the percentage of SVSU student with high school GPA's less than 2.5 was about 10%, while for CMU that percentage was about 4%. The percentage of students with composite ACT scores below 18 at CMU was less than half of that at SVSU. Conversely, the percentage of SVSU students with English ACT scores between 30 and 36 was essentially identical to the percentage at CMU. Similar data were obtained for nine other institutions and were correlated with six-year graduation rates and first-to-second year retention, also obtained from the Common Data Sets. Exploratory data analysis revealed that the best predictor of six-year graduation rates was the percentage of students with high school GPA less than 2.5.

Linear regression (shown below) revealed that there is a strong negative correlation between the percentage of students with high school GPA < 2.5 and institutional graduation rates. The next strongest correlation was with the percentage of students entering with a Math ACT sub-score of less than 18, but there was little correlation with the percentage of students in the lowest grouping of English ACT.

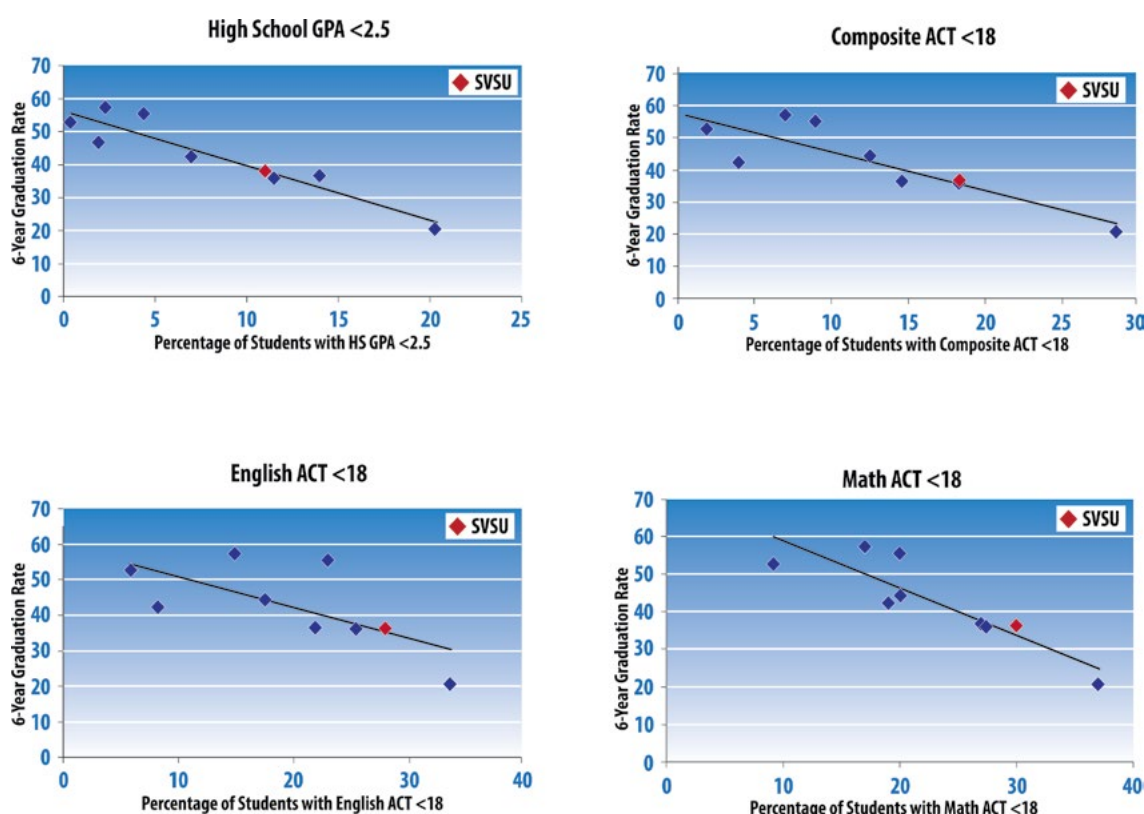


Fig. 4.3
(RD#541)

This analysis confirms that SVSU's retention and graduation rates are consistent with the enrollment profile of the student body and thus provides a realistic perception of the challenges faced when balancing the institutional goal of opportunity with the increased emphasis on graduation rates. SVSU is committed to the success of its admitted students, wishes to remain an

institution of opportunity for students with a reasonable chance of success, and seeks to provide necessary support for those at risk.

Despite strong correlations in the aggregate data, for individual students, high school GPA and the various ACT scores correlate only weakly with SVSU GPA—with significant scatter in the data. Simply using GPA or ACT as a determination of “risk” for individual students is not adequate for SVSU. Instead, the institution is developing a more holistic view of student “risk” through the implementation of MapWorks™. Advisors and faculty use this tool to identify behaviors and attitudes that contribute to overall student success. The Retention and Advising offices have implemented MapWorks™ surveys for the last few years, and the results have revealed a number of important insights ([RD#534](#)). For example, in 2011 89% of incoming freshmen expected to earn a GPA of greater than 3.0, while 55% simultaneously report that they are struggling in classes. Conversely, only 1.2% of the students expected to have first semester GPAs of less than a 2.0, while the realistic estimate is currently about 26%. Importantly, of those students struggling in classes, only 9% have had significant discussions with their instructors. This type of information is extremely valuable to faculty who teach first-year classes, and it is shared with them so they can identify early intervention strategies for students who are at risk.

Currently, the Student Success Committee is examining the MapWorks™ data to determine if students who left the institution within one year exhibited motivational, attitudinal, or behavioral issues early in their first semester. This data will be used to develop appropriate interventions for these students. The Student Success Committee has also examined retention, particularly first-to-second year retention of the 2011 and 2012 cohorts, in the contexts of ACT scores, placement into developmental courses, Pell eligibility, and first generation college student status. Correlations with any one predictor were not good, presumably due to the multitude of academic, financial and psychosocial factors that play into first-year success. The Committee used National Clearinghouse data to determine the fate of students who left after one year, and they determined that the majority of such students continue their education at community colleges near their hometowns. Those students who left for community colleges or dropped out completely were often struggling academically at SVSU, with average GPAs less than 2.0 ([RD#542](#)).

While long-term graduation rates have been evaluated for cohorts beginning in 2005-2008, the graduation time frame is too long to determine the impact of changes in placement policy or pedagogy; instead, first-to-second year retention is used as an appropriate metric. The Committee examined first-to-second year retention for the 2011 and 2012 cohorts in terms of academic, financial, and first generation college student status. The chart below, based on 2011 and 2012 student cohorts, highlights some important factors. Students who are Pell Eligible have a retention rate of 65%, while 74% of those who are not Pell Eligible return. 61% of students with ACT composite scores below 21 are retained, while 77% of those with ACT composite scores over 21 return. Of very well prepared

students with ACT scores over 25, 89% return, a rate comparable to more selective institutions. Status as a first generation college student also affected first-to-second year retention somewhat, with those whose parents had no college experience returning at a rate of about 66% and those whose parents had at least some college, at 72%. These variables were also examined in pairs; for students who were both academically at risk and Pell Eligible, the first-to-second year retention rate declined to 59%.

Table 4.4
(RD#570)

Return Rates for Students		
	NO	YES
Pell Eligible	74.1%	65.0%
First Gen in College (FG)	71.8%	65.9%
Comp ACT ≤ 20	77.0%	61.1%
20 < Comp ACT ≤ 25		71.1%
Comp ACT > 25		88.8%

As part of this retention analysis, the Committee has been examining data on students who place into developmental courses.

At SVSU, slightly over 50% of students in the 2010-2012 cohorts placed into Math 081 (Pre-Algebra, 19.5%) and Math 082 (Beginning Algebra, 31%). Math 103 (Intermediate Algebra, often considered basic skills math) accounted for another 13% of freshman math placements.

Graduation rates for students who place into developmental math at SVSU are similar to those observed nationally. Students in the 2005 and 2006 cohorts who placed into Math 081 had a six-year graduation rate below 20%; those who placed into Math 082 had a 35% six-year graduation rate. Among students who placed into math courses at or above Math 103, the six-year graduation rate was over 51%. Clearly, math placement and success in developmental math courses is strongly correlated to overall academic success.

Table 4.5
(RD#353)

Course	FTIC Cohort Size	Graduate in 6 years	6 year Graduation Rate
FTIC overall	2666	1030	38.6%
Math 103 & higher	1193	611	51.2%
Math 082	857	297	34.7%
Math 081	616	122	19.8%

In the Fall 2008 cohort, about 70% of students were reading at a level deemed appropriate for college success. Students entering SVSU are placed into reading on the basis of ACT scores and placement tests as discussed in 3.D.2. There are four possible outcomes of the placement procedures:

- 1) Waived – the student did not have to take any additional reading courses;
- 2) English 104: Strategies for Academic Success;
- 3) English 103: College Reading and Learning; or
- 4) English 082 Foundations for College Reading and Learning and—after successful completion of this course—English 103: College Reading and Learning.

Less than 2% of the Fall 2008 cohort were placed into the 0-level developmental course (English 082). 10% placed directly into English 103, and 17% placed into English 104.

For students in all categories of placement, losses were highest in the first year of the student's paths. As shown in the chart below, students who were waived from all reading course requirements had the highest retention after the first and second years. Student success declined with placement into more remedial courses. The slightly higher retention of the lowest placements may be a sample size affect, since there were very few students in this group. Nonetheless, it is clear from these data that, similar to the results presented for math above, the need for developmental reading is correlated with poor retention and success.

Approximately 9% of incoming students place into a developmental writing course. Analysis of retention and persistence rates tied to this course is still in the early stages. However, First Year Writing (FYW) is engaged in efforts to assess retention and persistence within their two courses, ENGL 080 and ENGL 111, which ultimately may lead to better retention and persistence rates at the University. Faculty are examining carefully the Midterm Assessment that was piloted in winter 2013. Faculty members collected midterm pass/fail data and compared them to the final pass/fail rates of FYW across the board. The

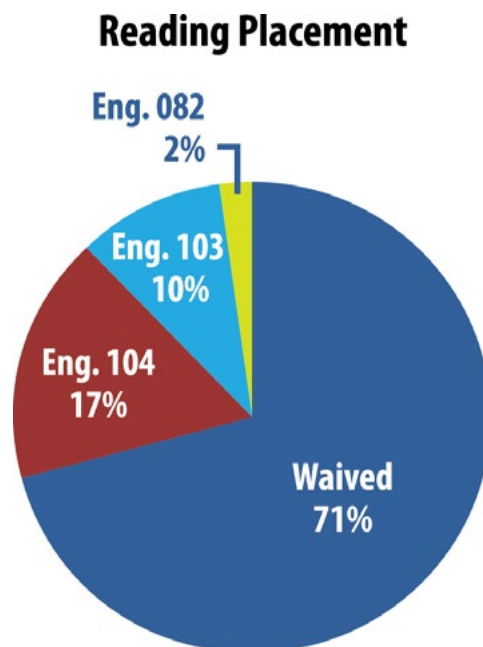


Fig. 4.4
(RD#572)

Reading placement	Retention after 1 year	Retention after 2 years
Waived	75.7%	64.5%
English 104	67.9%	55.0%
English 103	62.1%	41.0%
English 082	63.3%	43.3%

Table 4.7
(RD#572)

number of students who failed the midterm correlated closely to the number of students who failed the course. If this is repeated in the Fall 2013 semester, the FYW Committee will discuss how to use the midterm as a predictor of students who are at risk and how to implement strategies during the second half of the semester to help this particular group of students.

Beyond these factors, the Student Success Committee is evaluating a range of other concerns. First, roughly 33% of SVSU students are first generation college students and may be unfamiliar with university policies, expectations, and academic culture. This affects their ability to succeed in unfamiliar surroundings, and many are unaware of the scope of services available to them. Even simple and sometimes seemingly obvious requirements such as meeting registration deadlines are challenging. Discussions with students have led the institution to evaluate its orientation processes to better enable students to navigate institutional requirements. Also, discussions with advisors indicated that a handful of bottleneck courses presented another impediment to graduation and that students are frustrated by their inability to register for courses needed for degree completion. This is partly a consequence of fiscal constraint; SVSU keeps tuition costs low partially through running a lean schedule with few under-enrolled courses. Sometimes, this has had the undesired consequence of limiting students' abilities to enroll in mandatory classes.

4.C.3 The institution uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to improve its persistence and completion rates as warranted by the data.

SVSU has developed initiatives to improve student success through collaboration of the administrative, academic, and student services units.

In response to analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data described above, SVSU has developed initiatives to improve student success. Some are administrative, such as expanding orientation to ensure understanding of University requirements or streamlining the registration and scheduling processes. Some are academic, such as revamping developmental education, both in terms of assessing need and improving pedagogy. Finally a series of support programs were developed in response to the needs of students.

Administrative Initiatives

Expanded Orientation

As described in 2.B, the institution ensures that it represents itself and its requirements completely to students. The expanded, three-stage orientation process is a mechanism for accomplishing this that is especially geared to students with little experience in academic culture. As discussed in 2.B, this orientation is designed to inform, and later remind, students of University policies, procedures, requirements, and resources, including how to navigate the registration process and make effective use of scheduling and degree audit software.

Registration Process

Students reported a number of issues with registration processes, particularly that they could not enroll in the courses they needed for timely degree completion. A number of changes to streamline the registration process have been implemented. These include the following:

- expanding registration periods;
- adjusting priority registration so that underclass students do not register before upperclass students;
- offering timelier responses to adding courses and sections to better meet the needs of students during initial registration periods;
- exploring easier ways for students to file online requests for courses/sections that they want;
- establishing a course schedule review team;
- reviewing MAPWorks student survey data dealing with registration issues; and
- eliminating obstacles for students approved to register by the Financial Aid Office, but who have pending loans.

Because of specific intricacies of SVSU's registration software, electronic waitlists cannot be implemented at this time. Eventually, that will be adjusted, but, in the meantime, the University employs "wish-list" technology during peak registration times. Students may request an additional section of a course, and, when five students have done so, the relevant department and dean are notified. The requests are monitored, and, when students indicate sufficient interest, the University adds new sections as space and staffing allow.

Academic Probation Policy

With changes in the federal policies for Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP), it became important for SVSU to align its academic probation policy to be consistent with federal requirements. Therefore, the University recently ratified revisions to the Academic Probation Policy ([RD#403](#)), which provides early notice of academic risk. In addition, beginning with the Fall 2012 orientation, students sign a "contract" indicating that they understand and/or were informed about SAP policy ([RD#405](#)) and academic probation policy. If they receive an SAP warning and/or are placed on academic probation, they will be required to participate in an academic support/intervention program. In addition, the advising office has undertaken a major communication campaign to inform students already on campus about these changes.

Shaping the Student Profile

The analysis of the data above clearly demonstrates that academic preparation is a critical factor in student success, retention, and graduation. SVSU is committed to offering access and opportunity to all students who have the potential for success. To accomplish the potentially contradictory goals of access and improved retention rates, the University is taking a hard look at its enrollment profile and developing effective and appropriately targeted support services.

The atypical distribution of SVSU's enrollment profile—somewhat bi-modal in terms of high school GPA and skewed somewhat towards lower ACT scores—has arisen from the institution's mission of being simultaneously an institution of choice for high-achieving students and an institution of opportunity for those with the potential for success. To realize its commitment to be an institution of choice, the University has invested significant financial aid resources in high achieving students as merit based scholarships (e.g. Presidents, Dean, Foundation Scholars, etc.) ([RD#496](#)). A recent analysis by a financial aid consultant indicates that the enrollment yield rates (admissions to enrollments) are highest (~40%) at the two ends of the preparedness spectrum and lowest in the middle (~30%) ([RD#343](#)). However, the data suggest that students in the middle group experience high rates of success at the institution ([RD#344](#)). SVSU is developing new strategies to use financial aid to increase the yield of students in the middle group, to develop a more typical enrollment profile, and to improve retention significantly within the framework of the Mission/Vision.

Student Success Initiatives

One of the most important aspects of improving student success has been to ensure that the issues are understood by the campus community.

One of the most important aspects of improving student success has been to ensure that the issues are understood by the campus community. In the last three years, student success, retention, and graduation rates have begun to be shared and discussed openly with faculty and staff. Historically, such information was not easily accessible to faculty and staff, requiring either specialized programming requests or institutional research staff time. This often led to delays in obtaining data and a restricted ability to use it to drive initiatives. To address this situation, the University invested in CROA (Colleague Reporting and Operating Analytics), a data analytics tool that is now accessible to select offices on campus. Appropriate training is being offered to various users, so that colleges and other units will be able to explore and track student success without requiring programming or institutional research staff to assist.

In the context of changes in the SAP regulation and analysis of institutional data, SVSU decided to focus a major effort on first-year success, and more specifically, first-semester success factors crucial to retention and ultimately persistence to graduation. A model for this work was a study by the University of Texas-Austin, which found that first-semester GPA was, by an order of magnitude, the best predictor of persistence to graduation. Consequently, SVSU has planned a number of initiatives to support students in their first semester and first year. These programs, including the Faculty Engagement of First-Year Students, the Center for Academic Achievement, Stairway 2 Success, PAR, the KCP program, and academic tutoring services, are reviewed in 3.D.

Developmental courses are intended to provide the requisite skills for student success. However, as described in the previous section, the long term success of students who place into these courses is difficult to guarantee. To address the efficacy of developmental courses, in the past few years placement criteria and pedagogy have been the subject of significant review, discussion, and revision. The math and writing placement process has been revised significantly to place

students in classes where they have the best opportunities to gain the skills they need to be successful. Similarly, revisions in the placement process for reading are being finalized.

In 2009, the SVSU Math Department changed the placement procedures for math courses. Prior to 2009, the ACT score was used to determine if a placement test was needed, and, if so, students took a paper and pencil test during orientation. Because of the large number of students needing the test, this caused serious logistical problems during orientations. Further, there were only two versions of this paper test, and they had been used for several years. Students could take the test twice, which necessitated keeping track of which form each one had used so that on a subsequent attempt they would not get the same test, and there was strong evidence that the integrity of the tests had been compromised. The Math Department developed and, in Fall 2009, implemented a more efficient and secure process for student placement ([RD#535](#)); students are now placed according to their ACT math sub-score, and those who wish to improve their placement have two opportunities to retest using the COMPASS test.

Averaged over the last eight years, the success statistics for developmental math courses have been lower than desired; specifically, Math 081 has seen a freshman success rate of about 45% and Math 082 has seen a freshman success rate of about 58%. 55% of students who place into Math 081 eventually pass, while about 65% of those students who place into Math 082 eventually pass. Most students who pass these courses are successful on their first or second attempt ([RD#353](#)).

Computer-based sections of both developmental math courses have been in place for several years, and currently about 15% of sections are offered in that format. Some students report that they prefer the tutorial-based pedagogy, partly because it offers individualized instruction and decreases the stress and anxiety associated with high-stakes tests in traditional formats.

Beginning in fall 2011, pass rates in Math 081 showed significant improvements. This correlates to the semester that mandatory online homework was included as part of the course grade. Pass rates were not affected when the placement procedure changed. Freshman performance in this class appears to be similar to the overall class ([RD#353](#)).

Pass rates in Math 082 appeared to decline in 2010, the first year of the new placement procedures. Many students who would have been placed into Math 081 previously were now in Math 082. Despite this initial drop in pass rates, the percentage of students passing rapidly increased after that first year, and now appear to be stronger than before the change in placement procedures. Overall, freshmen do about as well as the class as a whole. Beginning in fall 2013, mandatory online homework, similar to that used successfully in Math 081, was implemented.

Over the last few years, the Mathematics Department has created a technology-assisted developmental math sequence that has been growing continually. Beginning in fall 2012, a dedicated computer lab was made available and staffed every day to allow students ample time for completing the concept modules. Students who persistently fail developmental math benefit from this new self-paced mastery model, especially those with math anxiety who struggle with traditional testing situations.

Also designed to improve student success in math, MathFitPlus, a transitional summer math camp for incoming freshmen, was first offered in 2010. This camp saw success for some students who improved their placements considerably through intensive work with faculty and tutors. This camp was discontinued after three years because frequently students who improved their placements did not fare as well in their subsequent math classes as those who improved their math skills more slowly over normal academic semesters.

First-year writing faculty are working on a FYW/CI Norming Project. Two faculty members are piloting a norming assessment that looks at the differences in how FYW faculty and CI faculty norm/grade the same set of papers to help them understand how students will transition from writing courses into Communication-Intensive courses in the General Education program. These faculty members bundled a set of ENGL 111 midterm essays and asked three cohorts of instructors to grade them: the FYW committee, the FYW faculty (including full-time and adjunct), and several members of the CI faculty. They also will ask CI faculty to provide a narrative regarding their expectations for incoming students. The resulting review will assess how much overlap in grading standards and expectations exists between these two groups. This has never been done at SVSU before, and FYW faculty believe that this project will help them address issues of transferability and future success for FYW students.

This group of faculty is also piloting a “Special Attention” initiative in fall 2013. The FYW Coordinator reviewed the ACT English and Writing scores for all the registered FYW students. An email was sent to each ENGL 111 instructor with the names of any students whose ACT scores were within one point of the SVSU cutoff for placement in 111. Names were also included for students who had an unusual difference between the English and Writing scores (i.e., a very low English score and a very high Writing score, and vice-versa), or an unusual difference between an ACT score and a high school GPA (i.e., a very high score with a very low GPA). Instructors were not provided with the scores or specific reasons that students were included; they were simply alerted to students of concern. Instructors will be re-contacted at the end of the semester and asked what percentage of their Special Attention students successfully completed the course ([RD#548](#)).

Per discussions above and in Criterion 3, discussions on the reading program are on going.

4.C.4 The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs reflect good practice. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDs definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)

To guarantee fair reporting and internal and external consistency, the University uses standard IPEDS definitions for retention, persistence, and completion. The Office of Institutional Research (OIR) is responsible for collecting, maintaining, analyzing, and disseminating data relevant to enrollment, retention, persistence and graduation. OIR reports data annually as required by state and federal agencies including the Higher Education Information Database for Institutions (HEIDI) and Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). Internally, the institution also develops specialized reports including pass rates for individual courses (usually defined as C or better), sometimes broken out by particular subgroup (e.g., minority students or those with demonstrated financial need). However, in all cases the University uses common or standard definitions for purposes of clarity and integrity in reporting.

Evaluative Statement for Criterion 4: A Culture of Continuous Improvement

As SVSU has matured as an institution, the quality of the teaching and learning environment has matured as well. The tagline, "Something more. Something better," which is often attached to SVSU communications, is an appropriate description of the overall academic experience. Inspired by the University Mission of creating opportunities, respecting diversity, and pursuing and propagating knowledge, the learning community strives to develop strong programs that lead to successful and productive graduates.

With well-established assessment and planning methodologies in place, departments are able to assess student learning allowing them to identify and request the resources they deem necessary for continued improvement. Additionally, considerable resources from across the university community support and amplify educational opportunity. External accreditations, as well as five-year reviews of programs without specialized accrediting agencies, provide an additional assessment designed to promote continuous improvement. University infrastructure consisting of a number of well-defined committees that evaluate course offerings and faculty performance, further the development and improvement of a quality educational experience.

In parallel with the development of strong academic programs, the University has devoted significant energy to assuring students' success, both in the early

Inspired by the University mission of creating opportunities, respecting diversity, and pursuing and propagating knowledge, the learning community strives to develop strong programs that lead to successful and productive graduates.

stages of their education and also in their post-graduation endeavors. In response to detailed analyses of success data, both staff and faculty participate in multiple efforts to support the success of first-semester students, including tutorial services, mentoring, advising, and quality of life programming. Academic programs, as well as individual faculty, have revamped developmental, introductory, and gateway courses to help students make a successful transition to the rigors of university study. To date only modest increases in student retention and persistence have been realized, but they are creating a change in the campus culture. Faculty and staff are more aware of issues surrounding retention and persistence and place greater emphasis on helping students take advantage of the opportunities the University offers.





Criterion Five ■

Criterion Five:

The institution's resources, structures, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. The institution plans for the future.

*The University
is well
positioned
to support
its current
programs and
to maintain
and strengthen
them in the
future.*

5.A. The institution's resource base supports its current educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

The institution's continued enrollment growth coupled with the transition to a more traditional, on-campus student body has both enabled and necessitated constant enhancements to the physical campus, expansion of programs, and growth in the faculty and staff. This has been accomplished in the face of declining state appropriations by the mitigating effect of increased enrollment, along with strategic program development, lean scheduling models, efficiencies in staffing, energy cost savings measures, and growth in endowments and gifts. The University is well positioned to support its current programs and to maintain and strengthen them in the future.

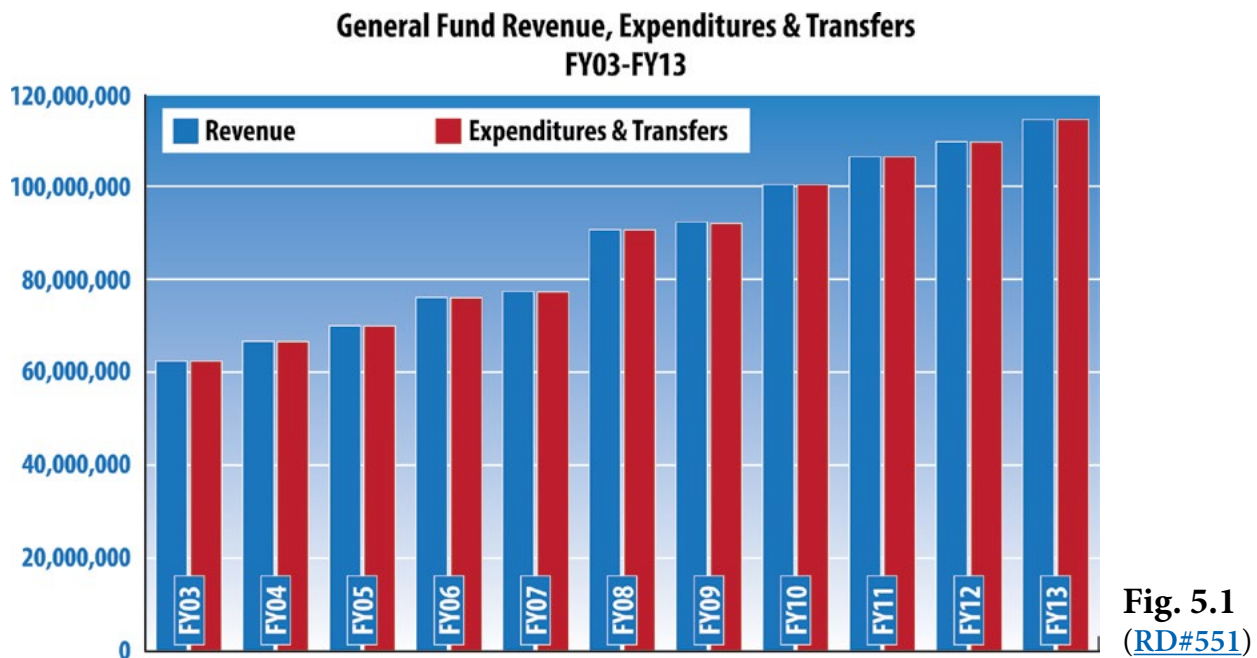
5.A.1. The institution has the fiscal and human resources and physical and technological infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.

Fiscal Resources

Saginaw Valley State University's total FY 2014 budget is approximately \$180 million, with a General Fund Operating budget of approximately \$116 million. The revenue base is predominantly from tuition and fees (\$88 million) and state appropriations (\$26 million), with about 2% coming from grants, endowments, and other sources ([RD#550](#)).

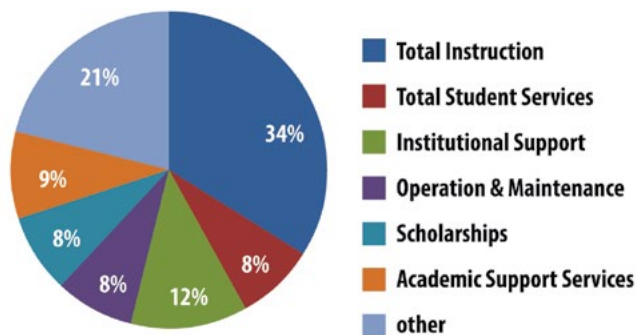
SVSU's financial statements indicate significant positive financial performance in areas such as growth and maintenance of reserves for the general fund and auxiliary operations, growth in unrestricted net assets available for capital projects and academic program enhancements, improved liquidity, investment-grade credit rating, and absence of unfunded liabilities for post-employment obligations. In the last decade, unrestricted net assets have grown from \$16 million to \$47 million ([RD#182](#)).

SVSU's General Fund Revenues and Expenses have grown substantially in the last decade. The graph below, with the revenues indicated in blue and expenses in red, shows both growth in the operating budget and a consistently balanced budget.



Throughout this decade of enrollment growth and physical expansion, the institution has retained its strong focus on teaching and student needs. A comparison of expenditures for 2003 and 2013 shows that the percentage of the general fund that supports instruction has increased from 31% to 34% over the last ten years, and the amount spent on student services, scholarships, and academic support has risen from a total of 16% to 25% over the same time period. Of special note is the increase in academic support services, including the library, tutoring centers, and information technology. These trends clearly demonstrate that SVSU continues to use its resources to support its primary missions.

Distribution of General Funds 2013



Distribution of General Funds 2003

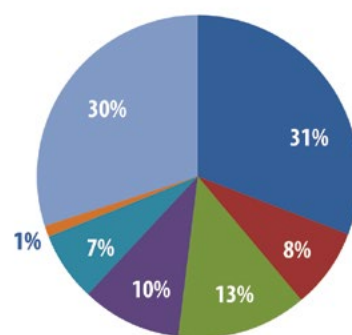


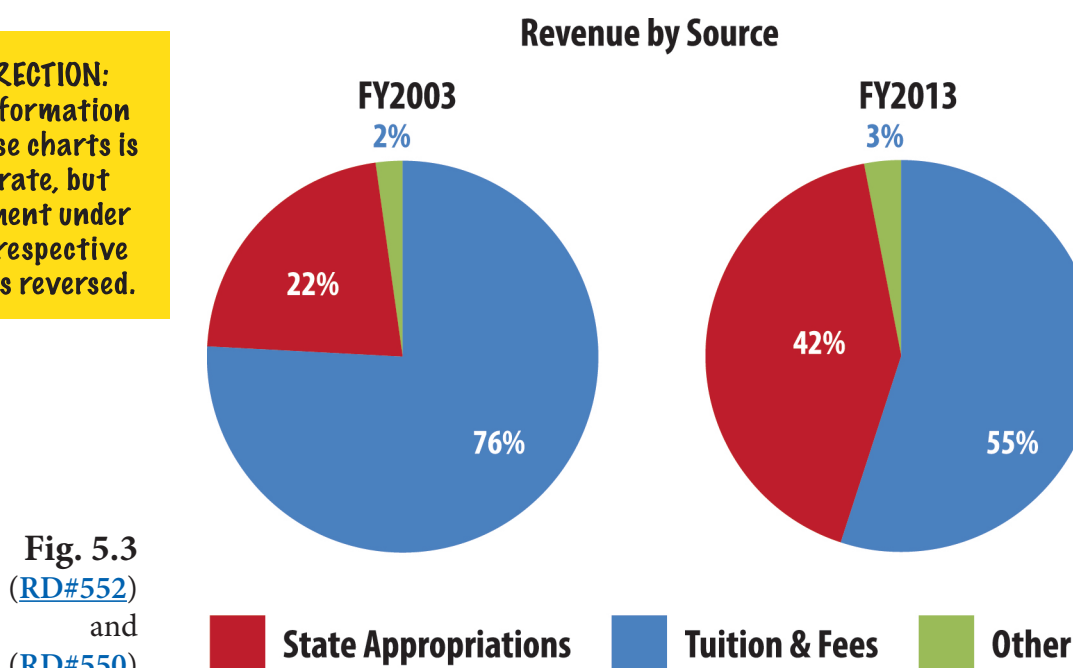
Fig. 5.2
(RD#188)

As required by the Higher Learning Commission, on an annual basis SVSU reports its Composite Financial Index (CFI), a weighted combination of the Primary Reserve Ratio, the Net Operating Revenue Ratio, the Return on Net Assets Ratio, and the Viability Ratio ([RD#376](#)). The institutional Composite Financial Indices for 2010, 2011, and 2012, were 2.9, 3.0, and 2.2, respectively. These indices, which are significantly larger than the HLC threshold of 1.1, are evidence of sound financial health.

SVSU's financial rating provides additional evidence of its fiscal strength. Moody's Investors Service gave SVSU an A1 rating, recognizing "strong growth in financial resources, healthy operating performance, and a conservative debt structure" while noting that SVSU will "continue to generate favorable operating performance" ([RD#189](#)). Similarly, Standard and Poor's Rating Services gave SVSU an A long-term rating, also noting solid financial practices and adequate financial resources ([RD#191](#)).

SVSU has experienced a significant shift in its funding model in the last decade. State support had declined significantly, and the institution has become more dependent on tuition and fees. In 2003, 42% of the University's General Fund Revenue came from state appropriations, while 55% came from tuition and fees. By 2013, state appropriations accounted for only 22% of operating revenue; 76% of the institution's funding was from tuition and fees.

CORRECTION:
The information on these charts is accurate, but placement under their respective years is reversed.



As can be seen from the chart below, between 2003 and 2010, the state appropriation gradually decreased on a per student basis from \$3986 to \$3563, while the university's total appropriation generally rose due to steady and strong enrollment growth. (see Preface, Figure 1) In 2011, the decline in state funding was not fully mitigated by the increased enrollment numbers, and 2012 was a year of severe cuts to higher education in the State of Michigan, which have only been partially restored as of FY 2013.

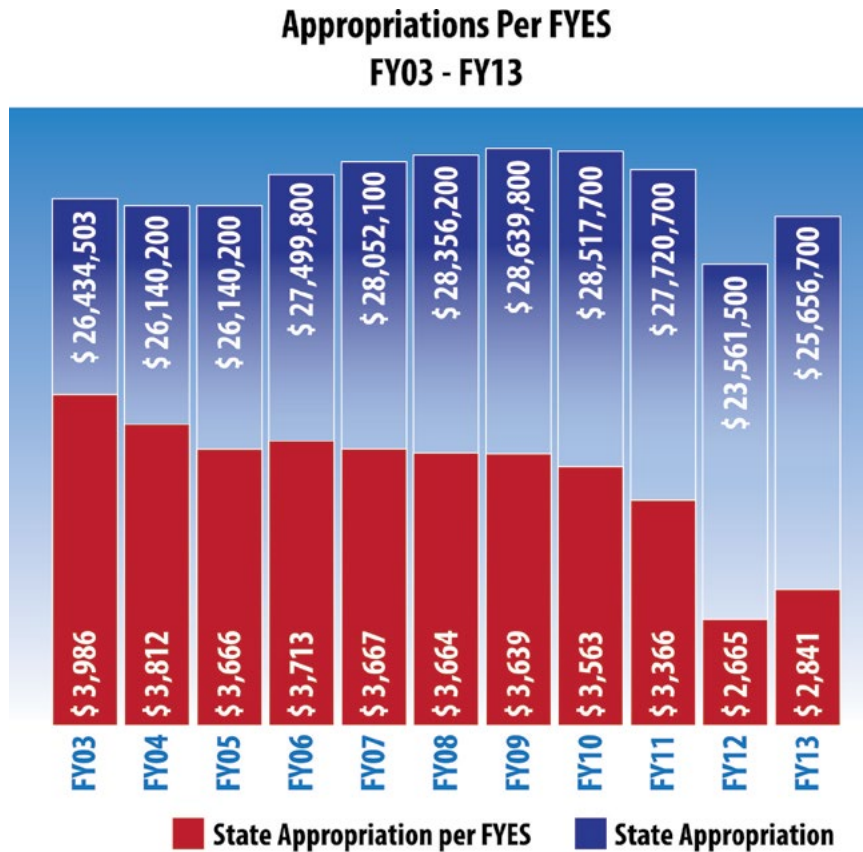


Fig. 5.4
([RD#173](#))

In light of this challenging economic situation, SVSU has raised its tuition an average of 6.2% per year since 2003 ([RD#199](#)), but the institution has also remained committed to keeping costs to students as low as possible. It charges the lowest tuition and fees of any public university in the state as indicated in the chart on the following page. The State of Michigan established incentives encouraging universities to hold tuition increases to a minimum; SVSU has continually stayed within the restraints for tuition/fee rate increases.

Tuition & Fees for Michigan Universities • Fall 2013

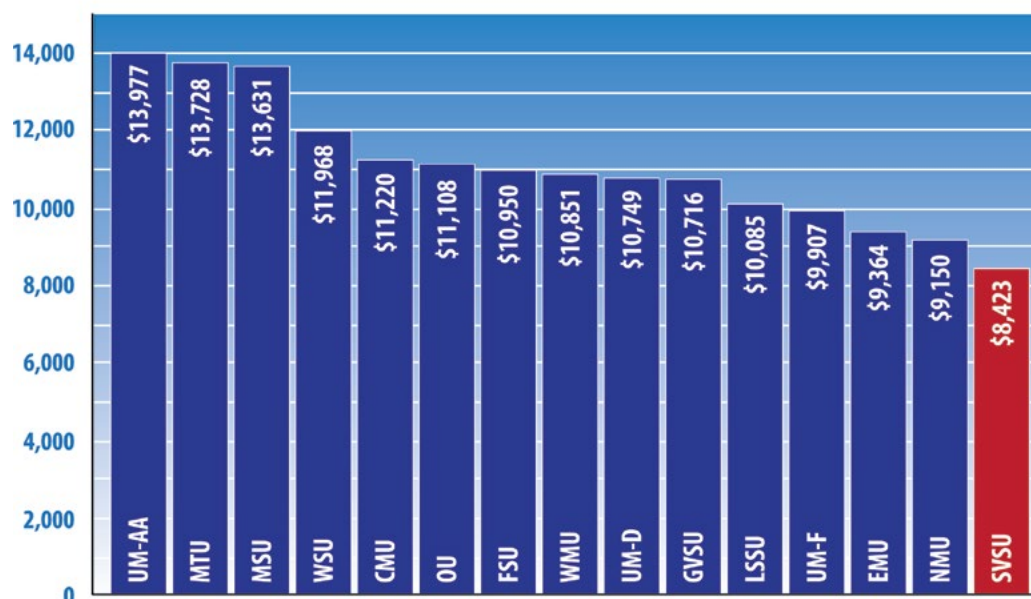


Fig. 5.5
(RD#197)

The University has been able to maintain low tuition through multi-year conservative budget planning along with the consistent enrollment growth; the shift to a more traditional student population taking larger credit loads; and an increased residential population, which generates additional revenues from auxiliary functions, such as housing and dining services.

With compensation serving as the largest institutional expenditure, SVSU has been able to maintain quality benefits and manage costs through health insurance caps; salary benchmarking; and, most importantly, restrained staffing levels utilizing an evidence-based approach in determining needs for faculty/staff positions. Recent contracts with the Support Staff and Faculty Associations have resulted in fair, but not exorbitant, annual increases of 2% to 2.5% in salary and 3% to 4% in health care contribution caps. As discussed below, enrollment growth, particularly in residential students, has necessitated increases in faculty and staff, but these needs are considered carefully. SVSU operates with fairly lean staffing. The ratio of staff to students is quite low compared to other universities in Michigan, at 10.7 (all employees) FTE to 100 FYES (fiscal year equated students) (RD#385). The University has also been careful about adding or revising programs in ways that would significantly change staffing requirements.

The University also has realized significant cost savings through collaborative purchasing and energy conservation measures, as well as other operating efficiencies and process improvement efforts. The expenditures on utilities demonstrate how SVSU has saved significantly through energy conservation measures. Despite growth in the physical campus from 1.3 million square feet (2006) to 1.52 million square feet (2013), and rapidly increasing energy costs, utility expenditures have decreased. In 2006, the institution's general fund utility expenditures were \$2.34 million, and in 2013, they were \$2.26 million. At \$1.49/square foot, SVSU has the lowest utility cost of any state university in Michigan

(RD#186). These savings have been realized through strategic contracting of energy sources and energy conscious construction; both Pioneer Hall (renovated in 2007) and the Health and Human Services Building (constructed in 2011) are LEED silver certified, and the Health and Human Services building incorporates the largest geothermal heating and cooling system in the state. Other contributing factors include energy conservation efforts such as the installation of exterior LED lighting and high efficiency fluorescent fixtures inside.

Endowments

The SVSU endowment has nearly tripled in the last decade and has increased dramatically since the 2008 recession from \$39 million in 2009 to \$63 million as of June 30, 2013 as shown in the chart below. The institution currently is engaged in an endowment campaign, “Talent, Opportunity, Promise: The Campaign for SVSU,” in conjunction with its 50th Anniversary celebration. The fundraising goal is \$25 million and at the time of this writing, the foundation had raised nearly \$17 million.

The SVSU endowment has nearly tripled in the last decade.

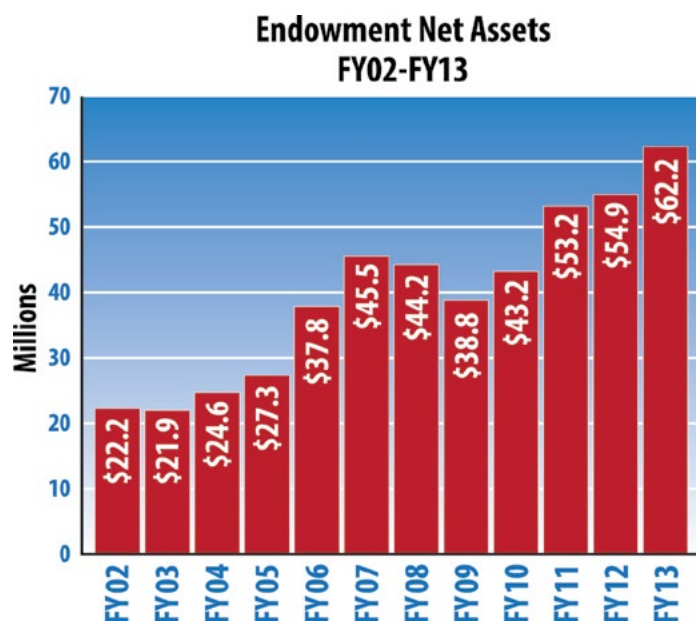


Fig. 5.6
(RD#377)

The SVSU Foundation handles gifts and endowments. Its Finance and Investment Committee is responsible for directing all investment activity related to the endowment in accordance with the SVSU Foundation-approved investment policy. The Foundation Treasurer chairs the Finance and Investment Committee and reports directly to the Board on all investment activity. This committee utilizes the services of an independent investment advisory firm, which is responsible for researching investment opportunities, reporting on investment results, and developing investment strategies with the Investment Committee. The investment performance of the endowment has improved significantly with the implementation of a new investment strategy and

the engagement of the current advisory firm in 2005. (Prior to this period, endowment assets were allocated equally between two managers who made investment decisions independent of an overall strategy.) Endowment returns have exceeded the benchmark NACUBO/Common fund returns for five consecutive years. Endowment distributions were \$1.3 million in FY 2012 and reached an all-time high of \$1.8 million in FY 2013 ([RD#206](#)).

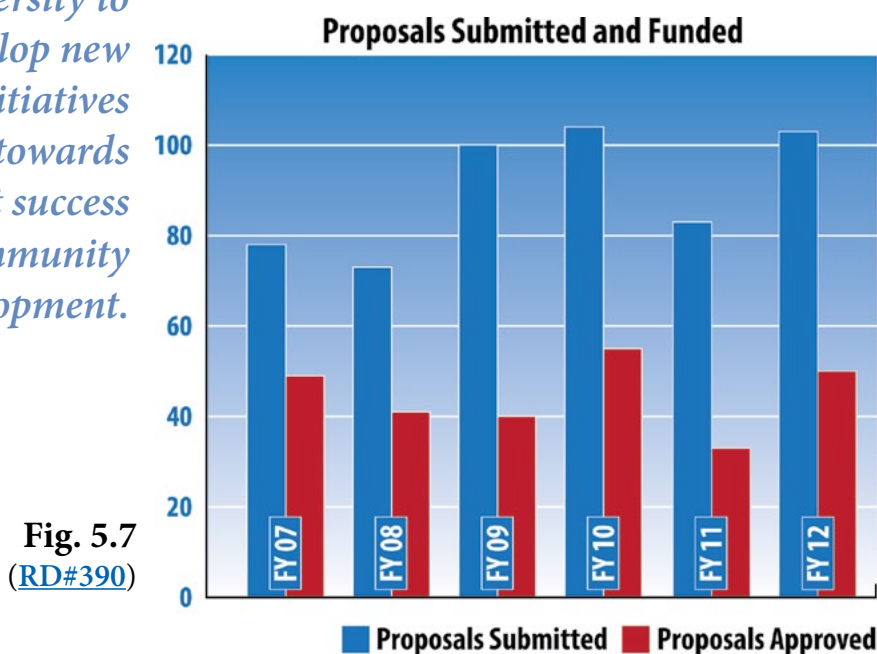
The University's endowment provides over \$1.2 million in scholarship support and supports the ten endowed faculty chair positions. The endowment also supports numerous high-value opportunities for students, including international travel; leadership programs such as Gerstacker, Kantzler, and Roberts Fellows; the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute; and the Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Student Research and Creativity Institute ([RD#388](#)).

Grants and Research Funding

External grants enable the University to develop new initiatives geared towards student success and community development.

As discussed in C.3, given the SVSU Mission/Vision, the institution expects faculty and students to engage in scholarship and research. External grants support this expectation as well as enable the University to develop new initiatives geared towards student success and community development. Internal

support is available, as discussed in detail in Criterion 3, but faculty and staff are also active in obtaining external research grants. The number of proposals submitted to external sources has been fairly constant over the last six years, and the accompanying graph indicates a success rate of about 50%, with some variation year-to-year. These grants



come from a variety of sources, including federal and state agencies, as well as foundations, businesses, and community organizations. The preponderance of grant funding (85%) comes from the federal sources, including the U.S. Department of Education and the National Science Foundation. In 2012, a total of \$3.3 million was awarded for research and other sponsored projects.

All five colleges received grant funding in 2012, with 30% awarded to the College of Science, Engineering, and Technology; 29% to the College of Education; 13%

to the College of Health and Human Services; 10% to the College of Arts and Behavioral Sciences; and 1.4% to the College of Business and Management. The remainder was spread between institutional grants and the Center for Business and Economic Development. External grants support all six areas of the Strategic Plan by allowing extra funds for student/faculty research, recruitment and retention initiatives, new and distinctive programs, technological infrastructure, cultural events, and community outreach.

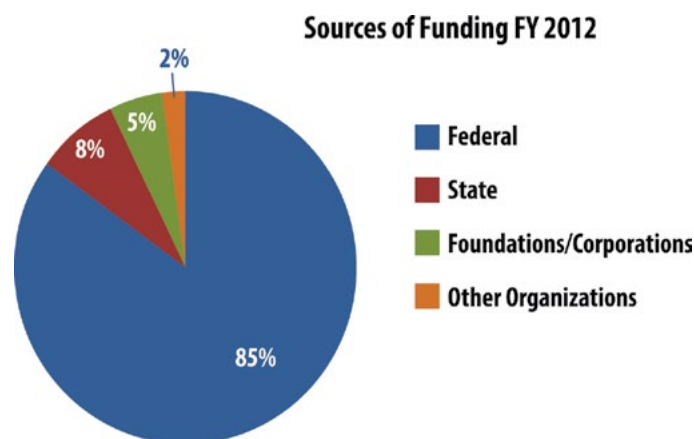


Fig. 5.8
(RD#390)

Human Resources

The University has the human resources to support its teaching mission and to maintain administrative units at the appropriate levels to meet its strategic objectives.

The Fiscal Year Equated Student (FYES) number increased by 34% between 2002 to 2012, and staffing levels increased by nearly 40% to support the growth of the institution. The number of full-time faculty members (lecturers, instructors, and tenure-track and tenured professors) rose from 244 to 306, an increase of over 30% (RD#192) and (RD#553). While the headcount of adjunct faculty has increased faster than that of the full-time faculty, adjunct faculty are restricted in the number of credit hours they may teach, and the proportion of load hours taught is limited by the faculty contract, preventing an over-reliance on contingent faculty (RD#273) and (RD#273). Aside from their role in meeting increased demand for sections, adjunct faculty often provide additional, specialized expertise in many disciplines, including foreign languages and applied music.

The number of full-time administrative professionals increased in headcount by 29%, and the number of University Police increased at a rate of 50%—both to support the enrollment growth and the increase in the campus resident population (RD#192). Staff growth specifically to support the increased needs of residential students included positions in residential life, student counseling, and other similar student support areas. Other employment units, such as campus facilities, secretarial, and clerical increased at a more conservative rate.

The most significant change in staffing headcount was experienced in part-time administrative professionals. The majority of the additional positions

The University has the human resources to support its teaching mission and to maintain administrative units at the appropriate levels to meet its strategic objectives.

were established to support new and ongoing strategies. Examples include the increase in writing and other academic tutorial/support areas—directly in relationship to retention initiatives—as well as additional ESL specialists due to the growing number of international students with limited English skills.

In direct response to the institution's focus on teaching and learning and its commitment to serving as an intellectual resource and cultural hub for the region, the University allocates its personnel resources so that the division of Academic Affairs has the largest number of employees (54% of the workforce). Academic Affairs is diligent in monitoring enrollments to avoid a proliferation of under-enrolled courses or programs. The Administration and Business Affairs division—which includes Campus Facilities, Information Technology Services, Scholarships and Financial Aid, the Controller's Office, the Conference Center at SVSU, Human Resources, University Police, and Athletics—is the next largest unit, comprising 26% of the University employees. The Enrollment Management division has 6% of the workforce, and Student Affairs, 3%. The remainder of the staff, including University Communications, is assigned to the President's office.

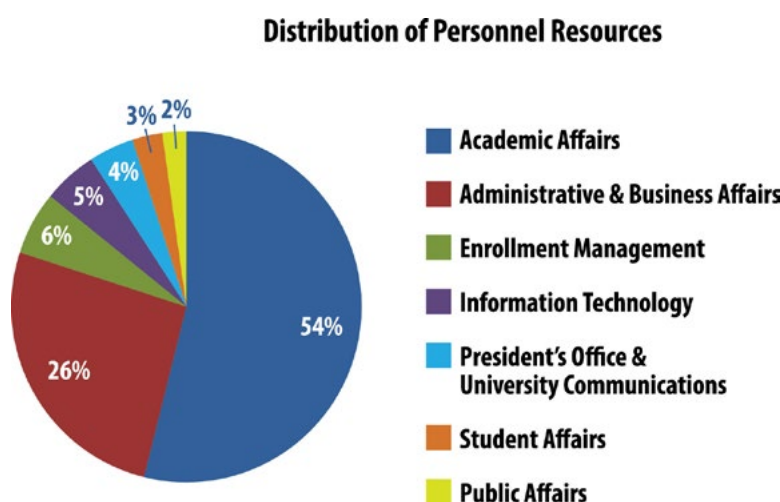


Fig. 5.9
(RD#357)

Campus Facilities and Technology Infrastructure

Campus facilities are modern, well-maintained, and appropriate to higher education. The campus is a safe and attractive place to live, work, and learn. The University has thought carefully about campus development through a series of Campus Master Plans (RD#172), the most recent one the result of a strategic initiative in the 2011 Strategic Plan (RD#70).

The following guiding principles laid the foundation for the plan, all of which speak to the type of campus community and environment the University envisions. The plan asserts that SVSU will:

- continue the patterns of growth started in the 1967 plan. This ensures coherence in function and effective use of the university land;
- strive toward environmental, economic, and social sustainability. This

- reflects good stewardship of economic and natural resources;
- create an identifiable sense of place unique to SVSU. The campus should reinforce the branding of the institution and generate a source of pride for its students, faculty and staff;
- be visually coherent. This ensures consistency in architecture and design standards across campus;
- enhance interaction. This is intended to create spaces to facilitate networking and interactions among diverse groups of students, faculty, staff, and visitors;
- enhance the pedestrian-oriented core of campus and balance modes of transportation. This suggests priorities on walking and bicycling, while minimizing automobile usage on campus;
- increase the sense of safety and accessibility on campus. By providing a safe and accessible campus, we best serve the needs of our constituencies;
- strengthen connections to the local and regional community. The campus should be welcoming and accessible to visitors; areas adjacent to campus should be developed appropriately to increase interactions between the greater and campus communities; and
- anticipate flexibility. The campus should be adaptable to changing technologies and future growth.

Linked to its strategic goal of developing, maintaining, and enhancing its physical facilities and technological resources to support excellence in teaching, learning, and campus life, the institution has engaged in extensive long-range planning for capital projects, which includes both physical and technological needs. As seen in Table 2 in the Preface [P.2.] in the last decade, the University has added over \$190 million and nearly 1 million square feet worth of space to the campus, with the most significant expansions in student housing, classrooms, laboratories, library, and other academic facilities. The construction of the Regional Education Center and the Health and Human Services building, as well as the Pioneer Hall and Arbury Hall expansions and renovations, demonstrate support for increased needs for academic facilities ([RD#198](#)).

Since 1998, campus housing has been built to accommodate nearly 2000 additional students, resulting in an on-campus population of about 2700 students. This dramatic increase in residential student population resulted in an increasing demand for extra-curricular activities and additional space to accommodate them. The growth in intramural sports, student clubs, and a student population that remains on campus evenings and weekends required the expansion of the student center and recreational facilities. The student center expansion provided an additional 29,000 square feet. The recreational center, enlarged by 48,000 square feet, includes new fitness equipment, an indoor running track, and three basketball courts. Campus walking trails and intramural fields further enhance recreational opportunities for students. The University also has expanded convenience dining, food services, the bookstore and the Conference Center. It also added a new health center, which serves both the campus community and the general public.

The growth in intramural sports, student clubs, and a student population that remains on campus evenings and weekends required the expansion of the student center and recreational facilities.

At the same time, deferred maintenance represents a growing claim on resources. Aging infrastructure, such as roofs, chillers, lighting, heating, air conditioning, electrical wiring, etc., requires considerable attention and resources. Consequently, as the campus transitions from a growth pattern to one of stabilization, it has shifted its emphasis from capital projects for new buildings to needed renovations of older ones, such as the Ryder Center (arena, pool and field house updates) and Wickes Hall, the central administration building (basic infrastructure renovation). SVSU submitted a capital outlay request to the state seeking funding for the renovation of Wickes Hall. The University received legislative approval for planning the project but is awaiting additional legislation to authorize funding and construction.

Technology

Information technology expansion and upgrades over the past ten years have been significant. The Information Technology Services (ITS) operating budget has doubled since 2003 with extensive capital outlays for such projects as an increased number of computer labs, the installation of “smart” podiums in nearly every classroom, routine replacement of technology for student labs and faculty offices, and enhancements to campus-wide wireless access. The budget has also supported changes in residential housing to meet the current technology needs of students ([RD#392](#)).

After a period of rapid technological growth at SVSU, coinciding with a re-organization within the Division of Business and Administrative Services, the unit conducted a thorough assessment of the Information Technology Services department including an evaluation by an external consulting firm ([RD#16](#)).

That assessment included a series of recommendations and laid the foundation for a vision and strategic plan. That vision was to further establish ITS as a vital strategic partner within the campus community and to leverage technology to support and enhance the academic and administrative affairs of the University. In addition, ITS defined over 34 strategic initiatives to be undertaken over a three-to-four year timeline, 24 of which are in progress or have been completed ([RD#187](#)). The University has committed the resources necessary to accomplish these initiatives, as seen, for example, in the implementation of a University portal and mobile application, the addition of the Colleague Reporting and Operational Analytics (CROA), and the deployment of a campus-wide pilot test of lecture capture, among other vital services. In addition, ITS has been re-organized to support future demands, streamline operations and improve services ([RD#218](#)).

Positioning SVSU for the Future

In 2011, the University hired the Pursuant Ketchum consulting firm to guide its preparations for the 50th Anniversary fundraising campaign carried out through the Foundation Office. Based on the firm's evaluation of both internal and external consumers, it became clear that key institutional stakeholders felt that SVSU was underrepresented in the public's eye ([RD#394](#)). The Office of Undergraduate Admissions also annually reviews the Student Insights Market Research for Higher Education report completed by high school students in the State of Michigan ([RD#536](#)). The data from these venues suggest that although the University makes a favorable impression among those who are familiar with the institution, there is still a general lack of awareness about SVSU. This information has led to increased initiatives to enhance SVSU's presence in the community, not only to position it for a successful endowment campaign, but also to foster stable student enrollment by recruiting a larger market-share of high school graduates.

To achieve higher levels of recognition among community members and prospective students, the University identified a group of its key employees, including members of the President's staff, to assist with standardized presentations at community events, business and organization meetings, etc. ([RD#395](#)). These presentations highlighted successful SVSU alumni and students, community outreach initiatives, programs of distinction, and experiential learning opportunities, for example, as part of a concerted effort to inform the broader community about the opportunities available to prospective students, to demonstrate the value SVSU adds to the region it serves, and to provide a mechanism for community feedback regarding SVSU's mission.

5.A.2. The institution's resource allocation process ensures that its educational purposes are not adversely affected by elective resource allocations to other areas or disbursement of revenue to a superordinate entity.

With input from many units, discussed more fully in 5.A.5, global resource allocation decisions occur at the level of executive administration. The long-range planning for the University takes place primarily in the President's Planning Council, which meets bi-monthly and consists of the President, the four Vice Presidents, the Special Assistants to the President for Diversity Programs and Government Relations, the Executive Director of the University Foundation, and the Executive Assistant to the President. The President allocates resources in concert with the Executive V.P. for Administration and Business Affairs and the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs. These senior University officials have a long history of working together cooperatively to provide resources in a way that permits the University to achieve its mission-driven goals. Planning and budgetary decisions take into account information derived from sources such as the Campus Master Plan, the University Strategic

Plan, and analysis of budget projections and enrollment trends, as well as needs that have been identified in all units of the University. These needs are determined through departmental and unit planning processes, such as the extensive academic program assessment and planning reports described in Criterion 4. As stated by President Gilbertson, “Stability and institutional confidence have been guiding factors in helping to preserve the institution and its commitment to its mission, even in difficult times.”

As a state university, there is no superordinate entity to which resources can be diverted. The administration allocates resources in line with the principal function of the University. The Executive V.P. for Administration and Business affairs, commenting on how allocations are made, stated: “Academic needs do come first, but we still must do other things without lessening support for our main mission—teaching” (RD#319). The President reinforced that statement in his discussion with HLC self-study committee chairs, cited above, stating clearly that all budget allocations are made with the intent of adhering to and strengthening the University Mission/Vision.

Auxiliary functions (other than Athletics and the Marshall Fredericks Sculpture Museum) are fully self-supporting and provide overhead reimbursement to the General Fund. The institution does provide resources to Intercollegiate Athletics from its General Fund. Similarly, to supplement revenues, the institution provides partial support to the Marshall Fredericks Sculpture Museum, both in space and staff. However, athletics and the museum both support the more global missions of the University and, at 2.5% and 0.15% of the general fund budget respectively, the support provided represents a modest investment (RD#185).

The centralized processes used by the University are an effective means by which it ensures that budget allocations are made to support goals in the Strategic Plan and keep the budget focused on the core mission of the University. Resource allocations are fully appropriate to the mission of the institution.

5.A.3. The goals incorporated into mission statements or elaborations of mission statements are realistic in light of the institution’s organization, resources, and opportunities.

As indicated in Criterion 1, the goals stated in the University’s Mission/Vision statement and its Strategic Plan were developed through a process that involved input from multiple constituent groups, including faculty, staff, students, and Board of Control members. In its Strategic Plan the University articulates how it intends to implement the goals included in the Mission/Vision statements. The goals stated in the Strategic Plan were carefully drafted to fulfill the Mission/Vision and to be both obtainable and supportable with available and projected resources.

The President and his staff report twice a year to the Board of Control on the progress the University is making toward meeting its Strategic Plan goals. A review of the completed 2008-2011 Strategic Plan and the 2011-2012 continuation ([RD#70](#)) shows that the University consistently achieved the goals that it set forth in the plans, demonstrating that they were both realistic and obtainable ([RD#72](#)).

As discussed above, the institution has allocated and will continue to allocate resources in support of its fundamental mission. As elaborated in 5.A.1, the institution has planned carefully for the future, understands the challenges ahead, and has positioned itself well for long-term stability and strength.

5.A.4. The institution's staff in all areas are appropriately qualified and trained.

The University has developed a series of policies and practices governing the hiring of faculty and staff that are designed to ensure that job candidates are qualified for the position for which they applied. The Human Resources web page lists advertising guidelines and hiring procedures, including recruitment checklists for faculty, secretarial/clerical, and campus facilities positions ([RD#19](#)). Before any position is authorized, an appropriate position description that includes qualifications and experience requirements must be created and approved.

For staff positions, the hiring unit and the Human Resources Office work collaboratively to develop a job description. For faculty positions (3.C.2) the job position is developed by the department in conjunction with the Dean and with the approval of the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs ([RD#521](#)). The hiring process for administrative professional positions is similar to that of the faculty. Support staff hiring procedures are described in the Support Staff Contract ([RD#62](#)).

Hiring recommendations are made to the appropriate divisional vice president for approval before any offer of employment may be made. In addition, both the Director of Diversity Programs and Human Resources personnel review the recommendations to affirm that the interview and selection process has been conducted in accordance with the University's Recruiting Policy. All applicants must pass a background check before they may be hired. These are carried out through a contract with Hireright and include education and prior employment verification ([RD#73](#)).

Annual staff reviews and the faculty peer review process ensure that personnel are maintaining the skills and knowledge required for their positions. In-house professional development is offered in many areas, including safety, diversity, state and federal compliance, and use of application software ([RD#491](#)). Faculty receive annual support to attend professional conferences; in other units, such conference attendance is common and offered when it benefits the employee and

the institution. Professional development opportunities for faculty and staff are described more fully in sections 3.C.4 and 3.C.6.

5.A.5. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring expenses.

The University's core operating and capital budgets are centrally developed by the President in consultation with the Executive Vice President for Administration and Business Affairs and the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs. The President and Vice Presidents are responsible for the performance of their respective areas of oversight. Budget reports are provided to the University's operating units on a regular basis; this provides unit managers with current information on program financial activity and performance relative to budget. Ultimately, the vice presidents are responsible for ensuring that their reporting units operate within allocated resources.

The President and Executive Vice President for Administration and Business Affairs are responsible for overall budget revenue and expenditure forecasting, based on such factors as enrollment trends, anticipated state allocations, and market performance. They also identify major budget issues, such as renovation or significant repair of facilities, and monitor aggregate budget activity throughout the fiscal year.

The University's Board of Control, after discussion with and recommendations from the University administration, approves the annual operating budgets for the general fund and auxiliary operations. The Board's Business, Finance, Audit and Facilities Committee consults with and advises the University administration throughout the fiscal year on business and financial issues. It also reviews plans for capital projects, both long and short term. Projects in excess of \$250,000 are subject to Board of Control approval ([RD#104](#)).

The University builds its general fund and auxiliary operating budgets with a two-year time horizon. Capital projects recently have moved to a ten-year forecasting period. The ten-year capital plan is reviewed on a regular basis with recurring feedback being given by various individuals, including those in Business Affairs and the Vice Presidents who influence the plan.

The budget system that is in place at SVSU does not mandate that departments generate their own resources, although overhead on grants is shared with supporting colleges. Allocation of fiscal resources to the principal organizational units on campus is centralized, and decisions are made by the President along with the Executive Vice President for Administration and Business Affairs and the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs. Discussions about resource allocation are based on inter-unit cooperation and focus on the betterment of the University. At the same time, the implementation of the budget is highly decentralized with the heads of units determining how to disperse funds within

their respective units. Implementation of the budget is delegated to appropriate directors, deans, chairs, etc. ([RD#402](#)). All expenditures require a multi-step review by the account manager and supervisor, with final approval by the divisional administration. Procurement card purchases must be reviewed by the account supervisor and the Controller's office. The Controller's office also must approve any position description before it can be posted on the employment website.

5.B. The institution's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission.

The organizational structures and institutional practices of the University ensure that its internal constituencies participate in University governance. Faculty, staff, administration, and students serve as members of standing and ad hoc committees. The Board of Control actively engages in its oversight responsibilities, and Board members (in part through the two standing Board committees) are kept well-informed about the University's academic policies as well as employee and financial matters.

5.B.1. The institution has and employs policies and procedures to engage its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students—in the institution's governance.

The University has a long-standing practice of regularly seeking input concerning governance issues from its various internal constituent groups. The Board of Control participates in governance of the University through policies and procedures defined by their bylaws ([RD#104](#)). Full Board meetings are open to the public, and the Board often hears presentations from faculty and staff concerning a wide range of issues, including enrollment, budget, institutional and specialized accreditation, student affairs, new programs and initiatives, student success, and other matters of institutional interest. A representative from the Student Association attends Board meetings and, at every full Board meeting, a representative of the Faculty Association gives a report.

The administration models the practice of meeting regularly and sharing information. The President meets with his Planning Council twice a month and usually meets with his full staff semi-monthly. The Provost/VPAA meets with the deans and directors several times a semester and also has separate meetings with the deans. Deans meet with department chairs, and department chairs meet with the faculty. The other vice presidents routinely meet with the directors in their divisions, who in turn meet with their units. It is a common practice at the University that in many of these staff meetings the members participate in round tables in which they share information with their colleagues. This practice

The organizational structures and institutional practices of the University ensure that its internal constituencies participate in University governance. Faculty, staff, administration, and students serve as members of standing and ad hoc committees.

enables the staff members to become better informed about the important issues on campus. Decision-making occurs at each of these levels, as appropriate to the issue.

As discussed earlier, 2.C.4 the Faculty Association contract stipulates four standing committees, the membership of which consists of faculty and administrative staff. In addition to the three curriculum committees and the Professional Practices Committee, faculty serve on ad hoc committees and task forces on issues of academic interest including, technology, online/hybrid teaching, academic success programs, strategic planning, and assessment. Faculty are integral to the planning and implementation of new programs, new policies, and other new initiatives.

The University Student Handbook contains a section on Student Rights and Responsibilities. Article 2.1 stipulates students' rights to "express their views on issues of institutional policy" and says that "through membership on various standing and ad hoc committees," "students may participate in the formulation and application of institutional policy affecting academic and student affairs" ([RD#308](#)). Students serve on the three curriculum committees, and participate in the hiring processes for faculty and student affairs staff members. Students participate in grade grievance ([RD#80](#)) and student conduct hearings ([RD#308](#)). Students also serve on advisory boards for academic programs, policy bodies, and co-curricular groups ([RD#398](#)).

When issues of broad concern, such as the Strategic Plan and the Campus Master Plan, are under consideration, they are presented and discussed at multiple open forums allowing input from the entire campus community. Faculty also hold open forums to seek input from internal constituents on academic matters such as the General Education curriculum, the assessment and planning policy, online/hybrid learning, and contract negotiations. Students also have the opportunity to bring issues of concern directly to the President, who holds open forums throughout the academic year.

5.B.2. The governing board is knowledgeable about the institution; it provides oversight for the institution's financial and academic policies and practices and meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.

The Board of Control has constitutional and statutory authority for general oversight of the University and to control and direct all expenditures from institutional funds. The SVSU Board operates within the guidelines of the SVSU Board of Control Bylaws ([RD#104](#)) that identify the responsibilities this body retains for itself and those responsibilities that are delegated to the University's President. The Board of Control approves the University's annual general fund operating budget and the annual auxiliary budget. In addition, the Board

approves all capital expenditures and projects costing in excess of \$250,000. See 2.A for a full discussion of the fiduciary responsibilities of the Board of Control.

To facilitate its understanding of University issues, new Board members go through an in-depth orientation. Further, the Board of Control has established two standing committees ([RD#104](#)) that advise the Administration on matters under the authority of the Board. These committees meet after every regularly scheduled Board meeting and are chaired by University Vice-Presidents. Through this committee structure Board members interact with the University administration and gain information on matters relevant to their responsibilities, which informs their advice on these issues.

The specific responsibilities for each committee follow:

- Academic, Student Services, and Personnel Committee. Chaired by the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs, this committee reviews academic issues, such as revisions and additions to academic programs, as well as considering student services matters, and personnel concerns; and
- Business, Finance, Audit, and Facilities Committee. Chaired by the Executive Vice President for Administration and Business Affairs, this committee focuses on matters such as the annual audit, organizational changes, investment practices, budget issues, long term capital planning, major construction projects, employee compensation issues, and contracts.

Due to its central role in planning and operations, any revision to or update of the University's Strategic Plan is brought to both standing committees for discussion and review before consideration by the full Board.

Board of Control members often participate in campus life. For example, they are invited and often attend major functions such as the All-University Awards Banquet, Board of Fellows breakfasts, and pre-commencement luncheons or dinners where they meet and talk to faculty and staff. Such occasions provide them with informal opportunities to learn more about the operations and interests of the campus as a whole. Through both formal and informal means, the members of the Board of Control gain understanding of the institution.

Board of Control members often participate in campus life.

5.B.3. The institution enables the involvement of its administration, faculty, staff, and students in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes through effective structures for contribution and collaborative effort.

In matters relating to curriculum and academic policies, there are three standing committees, the Curriculum and Academic Policies Committee, the Graduate Committee, and the General Education Committee, described in detail in 2.C.4 and 3.B. All three committees have membership composed of elected faculty, academic administrators appointed by the provost, and a student representative.

All curriculum and academic policy proposals are posted on the VSpace sites of the respective committees, enabling all faculty and staff to review the proposals and post comments on them. All departments and programs that are affected by program or course proposals are responsible to vote on proposals and share the vote and any comments or concerns through VSpace. The relevant deans also vote and comment on every proposed curriculum change. After recommendation by the relevant curriculum committee, proposals are forwarded to the full faculty for discussion and formal ratification. This formal structure requires significant involvement from faculty, students, and administration on all curriculum matters.

The Professional Practices Committee addresses such issues as promotion, tenure, sabbatical applications, and in rare cases, discipline. This committee's membership is made up of elected faculty and administrators appointed by the provost. As described in detail in 3.C.3, a typical faculty member will be evaluated three times by a total of nine different peer reviewers before tenure consideration. Departmental colleagues and deans also provide significant input at each phase of the review. Students contribute to the process through their course evaluations, which are an important component of faculty PPC files ([RD#358](#)). This process thus involves all the affected constituents—faculty, administrators, and students.

The University forms ad hoc committees to deal with a number of diverse topics, including assessment, student success and retention, technology, and online and hybrid learning. Each of these committees has members that represent the faculty and the administration.

5.C. The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.

The Strategic Plan serves as the principal document that specifies key institutional priorities and their connection between the mission and long-term goals of the institution.

The University Strategic Plan and the process used to develop it reflect the values and culture of the institution. As discussed earlier, the current Strategic Plan was developed through the work of five committees, each of which focused on one of the main areas of the plan. In selecting the faculty and staff to serve on these committees, the University made a conscious effort to create diverse committees that balanced cross-functional roles and varying levels of experience. This approach informed the long-range planning process with deep institutional knowledge and fresh perspectives ([RD#400](#)).

The Strategic Plan serves as the principal document that specifies key institutional priorities and their connection between the mission and long-term goals of the institution. This plan is used to develop divisional and departmental goals throughout the year and to identify areas requiring resources needed to attain these goals. An annual progress report documents results and outcomes of actions and initiatives ([RD#72](#)).

5.C.1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities.

As stated in Criterion 1 and earlier in this Criterion, the allocation of major resources in the University is a highly centralized process, with decisions ultimately made by the President in consultation with the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Executive Vice President for Administration and Business Affairs. This process ensures that University resources are distributed in accordance with the institutional mission and priorities. When considering resource allocations, the distribution of funds towards academic and student support functions shows commitment to the mission and awareness that “academic needs do come first.” The Academic Affairs unit makes up the majority (54%) of University personnel in line with the Academic Improvement Goals of the Strategic Plan ([RD#357](#)).

A further example of how the University aligns resources with institutional priorities and goals is the Strategic Plan’s strong focus on student success, with particular attention to retention efforts and persistence to graduation rates. The current Strategic Plan calls for the University to “increase retention, academic program completion, and six-year persistence-to-graduation rates” and to “enhance its... technological resources to support excellence in teaching, learning, and campus life” ([RD#75](#)). These goals renew the University’s commitment to target these important areas that it made in its previous Strategic Plan.

To meet the student success, retention, and persistence to graduation goals in the Strategic Plan, the University determined that it needed better data collection. To provide more timely access to important student and course information to administrative staff, in 2013 SVSU purchased Colleague Reporting and Operational Analytics (CROA) for \$260,000. This system allows access to statistics tied to student success and enables staff to design interventions to improve outcomes.

The institution also invested in MapWorks™ software, which faculty and others use to alert the advising staff about students who are experiencing academic difficulties or having problems with adjustment to the college environment. In addition, this product includes the ability to survey students and elicit important information about students’ academic and social expectations and how well those expectations are being met. This data has allowed advising staff to intervene to help students resolve their individual problems, but the system has not been in place long enough to determine its impact on success and retention. Thus far, the University has spent \$105,000 on this product. To facilitate timely progress to degree completion, the University has also spent \$30,000 for College Scheduler, a program that helps students plan out an optimal course schedule to meet their specific needs.

Other technological improvements include the purchase and installation of portal software in 2013. This new system will assist in more effective communication

To meet the student success, retention, and persistence to graduation goals in the Strategic Plan, the University determined that it needed better data collection.

with students regarding expectations, requirements, and support services. Pilot studies involving the use of e-Portfolio and lecture capture software are underway. The intent of the e-Portfolios is to facilitate assessment over multiple courses and to help students develop their own portfolios for potential employers. The lecture capture system, installed in essentially all classrooms on campus, allows faculty to record part or all of their class presentations and permits students to access these recordings to review course material outside of class. As of October 2012, the total cost for this additional technology has been \$425,674.00 ([RD#101](#)).

Within units, the institution has been effective at shifting resources to meet current priorities without compromising activities in other areas. For example, as enrollments in the College of Education have declined as a result of the poor job market and decreased post-baccalaureate requirements for teachers, Academic Affairs reassigned faculty lines that became available due to retirements or resignations to growth areas such as health sciences. As a result, the percentage of the total instructional costs allocated to the College of Education has decreased from about 30% to about 11% over the last ten years, while the allocation to Health and Human Services has dramatically increased from 1% to about 13% ([RD#184](#)) and ([RD#185](#)).

The resources committed to achieving the University mission and the goals it set for itself in its Strategic Plan are significant. Evidence clearly demonstrates that the University takes seriously the need to align the allocation of its available resources to meet its primary mission.

The resources committed to achieving the University Mission and the goals it set for itself in its Strategic Plan are significant. Evidence clearly demonstrates that the University takes seriously the need to align the allocation of its available resources to meet its primary mission. The institution allocates and reallocates resources effectively to meet the needs of the institution and its students.

5.C.2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting.

The processes for the assessment of student learning, program planning, budgeting, and resource allocation in the division of Academic Affairs are well defined and fully described in Criterion 4. All academic departments and support offices within the division prepare annual Academic Program Assessment and Departmental Planning Reports. In these reports departments articulate the student learning outcome goals for their programs; how those goals support the mission of the University; how the department assesses the desired outcomes; what the department has learned as a result of its assessment measures; what actions the department has taken to improve student learning; and what, if any, new or updated resources are necessary to improve the department's student learning outcomes.

As discussed in Criterion 4, departments forward their reports to their respective deans for review and comment. The deans are responsible for determining if the resource requests are linked to student learning outcomes, for identifying

which requests they support, and for prioritizing such requests. The deans send the reports, with their comments, to the Associate Provost who reads the reports and consolidates all the resource requests, which are then reviewed by the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs. In consultation with the deans, the provost determines which resource requests to support. Requests for additional staff lines, equipment, and capital projects that directly support student learning outcomes or provide increased enrollment receive priority.

Within Academic Affairs, each dean has a supplies and equipment budget that is used to support normal operations ([RD#402](#)). Deans may distribute some portion of those funds to departments based on needs. In making those decisions, deans consider impact on teaching along with routine factors such as the size of the department and project costs.

The Office of Academic Affairs, along with the individual academic units, maintains a close relationship with the offices within the Enrollment Management division. Enrollment projections are generated within a five-year time frame and are based upon historical trends, economic data, changes within geographic trends, student demand and behavior, etc. Each semester, the deans and the provost/VPAA monitor reports providing enrollment data and credit hour production by college, department, and program to anticipate how these might impact the resource requirements of each college ([RD#406](#)). In addition, attention is given to the number of students within the various majors, and, in some cases, pre-majors that “feed” into academic programs. Academic units utilize enrollment trends to determine what courses and how many sections to schedule to meet student needs and interests ([RD#353](#)).

Non-academic offices employ a less formal approach to assessment, evaluation, planning, and budgeting. No formal format is used in the process; however, each office develops goals through the review of prior year outcomes and establishes benchmarks for the upcoming year. For instance, the Admissions offices monitor application rates, orientation reservations, enrollment reports, and trends such as high school graduation rate projections and economic growth in geographical communities. Upon review and analysis, the offices establish goals along with descriptions of potential resource needs. Smaller requests are addressed during the budget process, while larger requests might result in formal proposals to the division vice president.

The University Strategic Plan drives planning and goal setting for the Administration and Business Affairs (ABA) division as a whole and each unit within it. Each unit engages in distinct planning processes based on its particular responsibilities ([RD#318](#)). The Information Technology Services (ITS) unit, for example, developed its own strategic plan that guides the operations of the unit ([RD#440](#)). Regular meetings between the unit directors and their Vice President generate decisions and actions related to policy and resources within the specific units. Although the University operates on an annual cycle, requests for resources and personnel within the ABA division may be made throughout

the year as the needs of the unit require. The vice president conducts an annual review of each unit to discuss goals and expectations, although there is no specific reporting document associated with this review.

External reviews by consultants supplement internal processes to evaluate such efforts as the strategic use of financial aid ([RD#343](#)) and online learning ([RD#324](#)). These external reviews have also provided feedback on the operation of various units in the division, including Information Technology Services ([RD#16](#)), to improve operations and maximize the use of resources in ways that support student success.

5.C.3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.

The University Strategic Plan and the processes used to develop it reflect the values and culture of the institution.

The University Strategic Plan and the processes used to develop it reflect the values and culture of the institution. As discussed above, the current plan emerged from the work of five committees, each of which focused on one of the main areas of the plan. Each committee was composed of a range of stakeholders, and some committees had external members ([RD#400](#)).

In 2012, the University undertook an extensive planning process to update the Campus Master Plan, which had not been done since 1996 ([RD#172](#)). Because of the expansive growth of the institution, it was imperative that there be a modernized plan to reflect the current campus and its constituents and provide ideas and initiatives to guide future campus planning decisions. The new plan is a flexible document that is able to evolve as goals change. It illustrates the next steps in campus growth and aligns them with the over-arching principles of the Master Plan.

The Master Plan Task Force included the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Executive Vice President for Administration and Business Affairs, the Vice President for Enrollment Management, the Vice President for Student Affairs/Dean of Students, and the Assistant Vice President for Campus Facilities. To accomplish its work, the Task Force sought community input on key issues pertaining to the future development of the campus. In addition, it held open forums with the SVSU campus community and asked attendees to identify likes and dislikes about the campus—specifically, areas to be preserved, areas to be enhanced, and areas to transform. An open discussion followed this process to encourage better understanding of the views that had been expressed, with the results reflected in the document.

Another example of institutional planning processes may be seen in the reorganization that took place when Information Technology Services moved into the Division of Administration and Business Affairs. The division hired Moran Technology Consulting, an external consulting firm, to evaluate campus technology services. As part of their analysis, the consultants met

with representatives of all campus divisions, including faculty, administrators, students, and support staff. The firm considered the views of all internal constituents in the recommendations made in the final report ([RD#16](#)).

Similarly, when SVSU initiated an external review of its online and hybrid policies and programs by Eduventures, input from faculty, students, Information Technology personnel and administrators was considered. In addition to targeted meetings with various groups and individuals on campus, the consultants also held four open forums to solicit information about how the University could best move forward with its plans for online/hybrid instruction ([RD#324](#)).

The University also engages various constituent groups in less formal planning processes, such as the President's regular open forums with students and discussions with members of the Board of Fellows and the Alumni Board.

5.C.4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity. Institutional plans anticipate the possible impact of fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue, such as enrollment, the economy, and state support.

SVSU tries to anticipate the impact of fluctuations in enrollments, state support, and general economic conditions. The institution has demonstrated its ability to adjust to changes in state appropriations and to thrive even during the long period of decline in state funding.

SVSU pays careful attention to factors that could affect the stability of the institution. In recognition of declining numbers of high school graduates in the state ([RD#389](#)) and the decline in demand for graduate-level teacher education programs, the University established a Right Sizing Task Force in fall 2011 and issued its report in winter 2012 ([RD#14](#)). This task force, composed of faculty and staff, was charged to take a comprehensive look at all areas that could influence the institution's capacity to serve its constituents and to establish a five-year outlook for total enrollment as well as goals within specific categories, such as international student enrollment, size of the freshman class, transfers, and graduate enrollments. The task force analyzed external economic and demographic factors, such as areas of population growth and decline, as well as Michigan's employment outlook through 2018. In addition, it noted the growth and interest in specific programs such as nursing and criminal justice and expected declines in general business and education. Based on all the factors it considered, the Task Force recommended that the long-term goal of enrollment growth move to a pattern of enrollment stability at approximately current levels of about 10,000. The Task Force also recommended that to supplement negative demographic shifts within Michigan, SVSU extend its reach outside the state of Michigan and increase enrollment and diversity of international students. The

The institution has demonstrated its ability to adjust to changes in state appropriations and to thrive even during the long period of decline in state funding.

Task Force concluded that while the institution offers an appropriate range of courses, it should remain attuned to emerging programs.

Such processes, along with the effective planning and responsible budgeting discussed in 5.A, reflect a realistic and sound understanding of the institution's capacity and show that SVSU considers the potential impacts of known demographic and economic shifts.

5.C.5. Institutional planning anticipates emerging factors, such as technology, demographic shifts, and globalization.

Technology

Recognizing that the rapidly changing technology landscape could have significant consequences for the ability of the University to meet its mission, the University identified two technology-related areas in its Strategic Plans that it felt needed to be addressed. These included reviews of the Information Technology Services unit and online/hybrid learning.

As part of the review processes, the University engaged external consultants to examine both ITS and its online/hybrid instruction policies and procedures. The first (in 2012) was the comprehensive review of the Information Technology Services unit by Moran Technology Consulting discussed previously. The consultants looked at the unit's organization; its ability to serve students, faculty, and staff; SVSU software utilization; and its infrastructure capacity ([RD#16](#)). The University has acted on many recommendations in the consultants' final report, including the implementation of the new ITS governance plan ([RD#75](#)) and the creation of an Executive IT Committee to make recommendations about how best the University should move forward with IT initiatives, including major software and hardware purchases. This committee—which includes the Executive Vice President for Administration and Business Affairs, the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Vice President for Enrollment Management, the Executive Director of ITS, and the Dean of Science, Engineering and Technology—began its work in 2012. It has approved such important purchases as a new student portal and the Colleague Reporting and Operational Analytics (CROA) software.

The 2013 Strategic Plan calls for the “development of a comprehensive plan with faculty and staff for online/hybrid instruction” ([RD#324](#)). To help with the development of that plan, the University engaged the services of Eduventures to assist in the development of an online/hybrid strategic plan. In response to the consultants' report, ([RD#324](#)) the University established the position of Director of Online/Hybrid Learning and an advisory committee made up of faculty and staff. The Director provides extensive professional development for full-time and adjunct faculty who plan to teach online. A new orientation for students who enroll in online/hybrid courses has also been produced. SVSU is

strategically expanding online and hybrid course offerings, particularly in the spring and summer sessions, with due consideration for instructional quality.

Also, in response to the growing use of social media by students, faculty, staff and community constituents, the President convened a Social Media Committee in October 2013 and charged it with “identify[ing] best social media practices for recruitment and retention of students, engagement of alumni and community members, and strategic marketing and communications initiatives.” The Committee was also asked to “examine relevant social media platforms and recommend policies related to their use” ([RD#222](#)).

Globalization

The University has been concerned about how best to implement measures that would ensure that its students, faculty and staff are better equipped to function in an era of increasing globalization. The 2011-2012 Strategic Plan called for the development of a plan to make faculty-led study abroad trips a regular part of academic programs ([RD#70](#)). The 2013 Strategic Plan broadened the University’s goals for internationalization to include increasing enrollments of international students and diversifying the countries of origin of the international student population. The Plan calls for the institution to promote and expand the internationalization of academic programs and co-curricular activities and to expand international relationships with sister institutions. In 2013, the University also made an organizational change, moving the Office of International Programs (OIP) from the Enrollment Management division to Academic Affairs to enable the University to more effectively implement its goals of integrating international experiences into regular academic programs.

Demographic Shifts

Please see the discussion in 5.C.4 above.

5.D. The institution works systematically to improve its performance.

As the University’s Strategic Plans and reports for the past ten years show, SVSU is committed to identifying areas for development and meeting specific goals related to them that enable the University to realize its mission and vision. The improvements that have occurred across University divisions have resulted from increased inter-division cooperation and more focused attention to outcomes and evaluation, flowing from both internal assessment and external evaluation and review. The benefits resulting from such careful attention to the goals of the Strategic Plan have helped to bring about the culture of assessment, planning, and evaluation that now exists on the campus.

The improvements that have occurred across University divisions have resulted from increased inter-division cooperation and more focused attention to outcomes and evaluation, flowing from both internal assessment and external evaluation and review.

5.D.1. The institution develops and documents evidence of performance in its operations.

The University evaluates the operations of its various divisions using both internal and external measures. The vice presidents of each of the four divisions are responsible for developing the assessment and evaluation measures that they use to determine the effectiveness of their respective divisions and how well they are meeting the goals of the Strategic Plan. The University updates its Strategic Plan annually to show progress toward meeting the stated goals. These updates are presented to the Board of Control and distributed internally.

Each year the University summarizes major success indicators in connection with its mission and institutional goals in an annual report. The 2012-2013 Annual Report contains updates on key areas within the University, including business operations, academic partnerships and collaborations, community and regional collaborations, student life, athletics, arts and culture and facilities ([RD#171](#)). The report also highlights new projects and initiatives and presents multi-year outcomes.

Academic Assessment

The academic units within the University engage in annual program assessment and planning as described in various sections of this self-study, particularly Criterion 4B. In their reports, each department completes a section focused on what the department learned as a result of its assessment of student learning and what strategies it has undertaken to improve student learning. In addition, academic departments are periodically reviewed by specialized accrediting agencies or, for programs without external accrediting agency relationships, through an external program review. These reviews ensure that the academic programs are current and meet nationally accepted standards.

Fiscal Evaluation

Annual external financial audits, conducted to review the University's financial operations, provide clear evidence of its sound fiscal condition ([RD#554](#)). University's internal fiscal policies are used to promote fiscal integrity and sound business practices, including standard accounting procedures and adherence to state and federal policies and procedures. In addition to independent external audits, the University undergoes state, federal, and accreditation audits to document its compliance with policies and procedures associated with investments, financial aid, student academic records, and athletics.

Annual Performance Evaluation

The University also seeks to improve its operations through annual performance evaluations of its administrative professional and support staffs. Staff members,

in consultation with their immediate supervisors, complete Performance Management Forms, indicating their goals for the year and results for each goal ([RD#458](#)). Supervisors review the forms, meet annually with each staff member, and provide written evaluations of each employee's performance. The President, whose performance is reviewed annually by the Board of Control, reviews the vice presidents.

Institutional Research

The SVSU Office of Institutional Research (OIR) serves as the primary office responsible for providing data and reports in conjunction with institutional planning, policy formation, and decision-making. This office manages the submission of data for the various reports as required through Integrated Post-Secondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Michigan Higher Education Institutional Data Inventory (HEIDI), and Common Data Sets. These sources are referenced regularly to provide peer comparisons when evaluating tuition and rate increases, room and board fees, as well as comparing operating costs, trends, and other patterns of change.

The Office of Institutional Research assists non-academic units with evaluation of their activities. It provides data analysis assistance with reports from external sources, such as the NSSE report, as well as with internal surveys, such as the Student Satisfaction Survey. The non-academic units also use a variety of other means to collect data about the effectiveness of their programs and activities.

5.D.2. The institution learns from its operational experience and applies that learning to improve its institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability, overall and in its component parts.

The University is committed to learning from its experiences and using information and analysis to make improvements in each of its divisions. Vice presidents review annual internal and external data tied to their divisions and, in discussion with unit personnel, make determinations about how best to improve operations consistent with the Strategic Plan. The President's Planning Council discusses these division plans.

The University utilizes the information that it has acquired from its operational experience in a variety of ways, many of which are discussed earlier in this self-study. A representative sample includes the following:

The University demonstrates its commitment to continuous improvement in academic areas through the use of information derived from its annual program assessment and department planning reports, accreditation and external program reviews, and internal data sources. The University has used this information to develop new strategies to address student success, retention, persistence, and graduation rates. At the department level numerous curricular

revisions have resulted from the faculty's analysis of student learning data. A fuller discussion is provided in Criteria 3 and 4.

As the number of students living on campus increased, the University became aware of the need to provide more and better student services to these students. In 2010, the division of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs was re-organized into two divisions. This enabled the staff of the new division of Student Affairs to provide more focused attention on areas such as student life, housing, counseling, and recreation. This re-organization permitted the staff of Enrollment Management to intensify recruitment efforts to overcome declining numbers of high school graduates and to focus on improved retention and persistence by developing new approaches to improving student success. See Criterion 4.

In the area of financial services, students expressed concern over the complexity of dealing with financial aid, tuition payments, etc. In 2010, the University undertook a financial aid assessment and determined that a better approach was needed to improve student services. As a result, the University spent \$2 million to create the new Campus Financial Services Center, designed to provide students, faculty, and staff with a central location for financial transactions. Students needing assistance with scholarships, financial aid, housing and meal plan fees, and tuition payments now have a single location to serve them. The staffs from Financial Aid and the Cashier's Office were all re-trained so that they could each assist with any of the financial transactions handled at the Center. The result has been increased efficiency and improved service. The University also examined the processes that it was using to inform students about their financial aid awards. The University benchmarked practices at other institutions and asked for a consultant review from the vendor who provides the University's administrative software. The result was the implementation of an email notification system to inform students about financial aid awards, verification needs, etc. The new system is more efficient and resulted in an annual cost savings of \$34,000.

In 2012, Information Technology Services (ITS), which had been reporting directly to the President, was re-assigned to the Administration and Business Affairs (ABA) division. This move was intended to permit the President more time to address University-wide matters and to provide more supervisory oversight of ITS. Shortly after becoming part of the ABA division, external consultants were engaged to provide a review of the ITS operations. The consultant's report included a number of strategic initiatives, including a re-organization of the unit, which has occurred. Another recommendation was to streamline the support functions of the unit to better serve faculty, staff, and students. Previously, it had been necessary to call one of six telephone numbers to get technology support assistance. In response to the report, ITS purchased new job-tracking software, re-trained support staff, and created a single telephone number to be used to obtain technology support, whether for

hardware, software, or network issues. The result has been increased efficiency and improved support for users.

Over the past decade, the University has made numerous changes to improve its performance. These include unit re-organization, curricular changes, and the development of new initiatives and strategies to address the broad area of student success—all of which have been intended to permit the University to better meet its mission and vision and to achieve the goals set forth in the Strategic Plan. Some initiatives were based on internal assessment, others on evaluative consultant's reports.

The University has used its resources to adapt to growth in student enrollment. This required “right-sizing” the University, along with implementing appropriate programming initiatives and addressing faculty and administrative staffing as well as facility and infrastructure expansion while maintaining core values, and current standards of operation. The Financial Statements are evidence of the University's sound fiscal condition, showing adequate reserves for future planning, a conservative approach to debt management, and no unfunded liabilities. Most importantly, the evidence reveals that the University is positioned to take on the upcoming challenges of maintaining its student population at current levels while enhancing student and community experiences. These initiatives are laid out in the current Strategic Plan.

The University has definite and clear data to assess and revise the institution's goals and to define goals for future planning based on realistic expectations and success indicators. The evidence of performance and the information that the University has gained from its assessment and evaluation processes, have continued to allow it to be successful in improving institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability—overall and in its component parts.

Evaluative Statement for Criterion 5: Resources and Planning

The sound financial condition of the University enables it not only to support its current educational programs but to strengthen their quality in the future. The institution will maintain its ongoing core functions but is well positioned to undertake new initiatives and program enhancements as articulated in the Strategic Plan. The organization and centralized planning and budgeting structures support the mission and educational needs of SVSU's student population, and provide support services for efficient and effective operations. The growth in academic units and academic support services reflects the evolution of the institution to one increasingly focused on retention efforts and persistence to graduation rates.

Over the past decade, the University has made numerous changes to improve its performance. These include unit re-organization, curricular changes, and the development of new initiatives and strategies to address the broad area of student success—all of which have been intended to permit the University to better meet its mission and vision and to achieve the goals set forth in the Strategic Plan.

The campus infrastructure is well suited for the size of the student population, providing outstanding educational facilities and the amenities college students demand. The campus is well maintained and demonstrates attention to a “green” environment.

Given its sound financial condition, sufficient staffing in all divisions, a well-designed and maintained campus, including a solid IT infrastructure, SVSU is well-positioned to continue to serve its region’s higher educational needs. The institution is anticipating flat or slight declines in enrollment as it reaches its “right-size” while the numbers of high school graduates are beginning a long decline in the state. SVSU recognizes the need to compete for a larger market share of students in Michigan, to expand international markets, to increase retention and persistence, and to budget conservatively as it faces the enrollment challenges of the future.

The University has worked systematically to improve its performance. Documented assessments and evaluations have led to organizational changes including the development and enhancement of initiatives to improve functions in academic affairs, business affairs, enrollment management, and student services. Based on both internal assessments and evaluative consultant reports, these improvements have allowed the University to realize its mission and vision effectively and efficiently and to achieve the goals set forth in the Strategic Plan.

The systematic and integrated planning inherent in the Strategic Plan that has characterized the University for many years has positioned it to be able to maintain its strong academic programs, strengthen its student services, and maintain its fine campus facilities, despite reductions in state support over the past decade. The University remains committed to its Mission/Vision and Strategic Plan and has the resources to continue to serve its region as an intellectual and cultural hub.





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