VISITING COMMITTEE REPORT

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Choate Rosemary Hall
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04/08/2018 - 04/11/2018
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Miss Porter's School
Farmington, CT

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Introduction

Founded in 1885, the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc. (NEASC) is the nation’s oldest accrediting agency. Since its inception in 1885, the Association has awarded accreditation to educational institutions in the six New England states that seek voluntary affiliation.

The governing body of NEASC is its Board of Trustees which oversees the work of four Commissions:

- Commission on International Education
- Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
- Commission on Independent Schools
- Commission on Public Schools

The evaluation program which the schools undergo is a three-fold process: the Self-Study conducted by the school, the evaluation by the Visiting Committee, and the follow-up program carried out by the school to implement the findings of its own Self-Study (Part II), and the valid recommendations of the Visiting Committee and the Commission. The Commission on Independent Schools oversees the entire process.

Each school is evaluated in terms of compliance with the Standards for Accreditation, the quality of Part II: Reflection, Recommendations, and Issues for Further Discussion, and how well it is serving the needs of its students. Because each school is different, the base that undergirds the evaluation is the school’s own statement of mission and core values.
Mission

Current School Mission Statement:

St. Paul's School is a fully residential academic community that pursues the highest ideals of scholarship. We strive to challenge our students intellectually and morally – to nurture a love for learning and a commitment to engage as servant leaders in a complex world. Founded in the Episcopal tradition, St. Paul's School models and teaches a respect for self and others; for one's spiritual, physical, and emotional well-being; for the natural environment; and for service to a greater good.

Adopted 2007

History and Culture

As envisioned in 1856 by its founder, Dr. George Cheyne Shattuck, and the first Rector, Henry Augustus Coit, the mission of St. Paul's School is to help form the character of each student and to develop the mind, body and spirit of each of these young people who join the school community. We accomplish this mission by living in a fully residential community and cultivating intellectual curiosity, freedom of inquiry, and a passion for learning. Indeed, the St. Paul's School motto begins with the words, “Let us learn….” The commitment to learning through living in community has always been foundational to the St. Paul's educational experience.

Encapsulated in the mission statement, the pursuit of enduring knowledge and the ideals of academic scholarship; social and civic responsibility; spiritual, physical, and emotional development; and respect for self, others, and the natural world have remained central to the identity of St. Paul's.

The School offers students an unusual degree of personal freedom and privilege, and in return, it asks them to live responsibly and with self-restraint. Students are free to make choices with the guidance and support of wise and caring teachers and within a framework of reasonable expectations. The adolescents and adults live, work, learn and play together in this residential community. Community members learn to participate in myriad activities, to nourish close relationships, to offer mutual support, and to appreciate differences in background and opinion. In short, it is expected from each member of the community that he or she will accept a share of the collective responsibility and will contribute towards its improvement. This concept of school as community is manifest in the daily life of its members through morning chapel, daily class commitments, weekly advisee dinners, seated meals, athletic and extracurricular activities, and residential dorm gatherings. In this setting, the dedication of the faculty extends far beyond teaching. Each adult also acts as mentor, adviser, and role model, offering guidance and reassurance to students as they navigate the difficult shoals of adolescence and accept increasing responsibility for their lives. All full faculty live on campus in attached or detached housing and all faculty serve as advisers within the eighteen residential houses, supporting at least four and not more than seven students, tracking their progress at all levels of community life, and acting as liaisons with their parents and teachers. More recent efforts have aimed at equity with regard to faculty workload, working to align the gifts of individuals with the needs of the School. Each faculty member contributes significantly to the life of the School and the support of students in at least three key areas: primary teaching (within or outside the classroom), advising, and coaching in athletics or some other extracurricular commitment.

There have been significant moments throughout the life of the School including the arrival of the first faculty and students of color in 1957 and 1959 respectively, the beginning of coeducation in 1971, the introduction of Independent Studies (late 60s), the expansion of the Arts (early 70s), the creation of the interdisciplinary Humanities curriculum (early 90s), the recent launch of the collaborative partnership with the University of Pennsylvania Teaching Fellow program, and the ongoing strategic commitments to support innovative teaching, bridge the divide between academic disciplines, and support active and meaningful engagement with the local community.
Throughout this history, the School has been blessed with exceptional resources: a dedicated faculty, a talented student body, and superb facilities. These include the most recent additions of the Lindsay Math and Science Center, the Penner Center for Innovative Teaching, the Friedman Community Center, the relocation of the arts into the academic quad, and the upcoming completion of the Crumpacker Art Gallery. However, underlying these bricks and mortar additions is a deep commitment to fully embracing the enduring principles and core values that have long defined the School while also exploring their application in the twenty-first century. This has necessitated critical and thoughtful reflection on the culture of the School while identifying areas for improvement.

In the past ten years, the School has endeavored to be “a student of itself” by examining the policies, procedures, and practices of the expressed and the implicit curriculum, through exploring innovative and creative pedagogy, and by affirming a developmental approach to whole-child education within a fully residential, Episcopal School committed to the values of inclusivity, social responsibility, and service to a greater good. Teachers are committed to disciplined scholarship and active learning, while demonstrating the flexibility and creative thinking necessary to embrace innovation in the classroom. New curricular initiatives reflect a thoughtful approach to learning through scope and sequence curriculum mapping and increased attention to social-emotional learning within and outside the classroom. Renewed commitments to professional development have strengthened the diversity of teaching and support faculty in their efforts to lead and work collaboratively with students to strengthen a more inclusive community. Collectively, these efforts are best expressed in the Integrated Curriculum, designed to ensure the implementation of the School's mission by focusing on the development of the self within the relational context for learning. Other recent initiatives underscore the strategic focus of the School and the direction for the future: strengthening a more inclusive community and providing access for a more diverse student body (racial, ethnic, socio-economic), developing a program of civic engagement focused on the local Concord community, and engaging in ongoing, meaningful, and targeted assessment of School programs and data to inform future strategic efforts.

(Sources: some passages were excerpted from the NEASC Self Study 2007 and the Strategic Plans 2013, 2017)

**Process Followed by School**

St. Paul's School started its self-study with a visit from a NEASC representative so that the faculty could fully understand the accreditation process. The Steering Committee was co-chaired by the vice rector for faculty and the dean of studies and consisted of the members of the Education and Student Life Committee: Theresa Ferns ’84, P’19 (Vice Rector for School Life), Catherine Gellert ’89 (Trustee), Dahni-el Giles ’95 (Trustee), Michael Hirschfeld ’85, P’14, P’17 (Rector), Dorothy Hutcheson (Trustee), William Laverack ’75, P’14 (Trustee), Aaron Marshall ’97 (Dean of Students), Tim Pratt P’15, P’18, P’21 (Dean of College Advising and Director of Strategic Initiatives), Lawrence Smith (Dean of Teaching and Learning), Michael Spencer P’18 (Vice Rector for Faculty), Wendy Wilcox, P’17, P’19 (Trustee), and Robert Wright (Trustee). The Steering Committee received reports on the progress of the self-study in January 2017, April 2017, October 2017 and January 2018.

In the spring of 2017, the faculty worked on program reviews, resulting in narratives outlining the strengths and weaknesses of each program on campus. By May of 2017, all programs had submitted a narrative. All program reviews are available [here](#). In the spring of 2017, the faculty were surveyed to determine the composition and leadership of the standard committees. The end-of-year faculty meetings provided time for the standard committees to meet and discuss the work ahead. The School created a Canvas course so that all faculty could have access to the narratives as well as other relevant resources.

In late spring, the School sent out surveys to current faculty members, students, and parents as well as to alumni who had graduated one, two, three, four, five and ten years prior. Results were compiled during the summer and made available to all faculty during the later summer. Upon returning in the fall of 2017, the School provided designated faculty meeting time for the standard committees to meet; committees met at least once per month to complete work on their standard.

During this time, the co-chairs of the process communicated frequently with standard chairs, hosted multiple meetings to answer questions, problem-solve, and share strategies. By mid-December of 2017, all standard committee chairs had submitted their reports to the co-chairs. The co-chairs reviewed all reports and organized a
In January of 2018, Self-Study Part I was presented to the full faculty for feedback. The co-chairs were the primary writers of Self-Study Part II. Additional students and parents were invited to be involved in the writing of Self-Study Part II and were given opportunities for feedback during the review phase. This final edition was shared with the Rector, the Steering Committee, and the full faculty.

Strengths:

The School entered into the self-study process enthusiastically and eager to learn more about and to improve upon itself. Each faculty member was involved in the process. The chairs of the standard committees demonstrated notable leadership and organizational skills during the process. The overall community was engaged and eager to be involved in the accreditation process.

Weaknesses:

The primary weaknesses of the self-study process are similar to those from ten years ago. The community members at St. Paul's lead full lives and adding this process to existing workloads was not easy. The School worked hard to provide time built into the schedule for committee work, but not all work could be done during those times. Additionally, the community members have high expectations for themselves and one another; celebrating the School's strengths does not come naturally to such a modest and often self-critical group. The faculty almost expect perfection at times; while the School wants to constantly strive to be better, it is also important to note when it is meeting with success. All constituents look forward to hearing the feedback from the visiting committee in the spring of 2018.

Note: In the fall 2016, St. Paul's School began a board-led strategic planning process that articulated key initiatives. These initiatives (civic engagement inclusive community and access; and assessment) all fall under the long-standing practice of our integrated curriculum. These initiatives were shared with the faculty and strategic planning task forces were created around each of the key initiatives. The task forces worked through the 2016-2017 academic year, investigating the needs of the School around these areas and providing additional direction for these initiatives. The standard committees for the self-study kept these initiatives in mind as they evaluated how the School currently met the existing indicators as well as how the plans around the initiatives will impact the School.

Overview of School Findings

The standard committees thoughtfully reviewed each area according to the standard indicators. The committees determined that the school satisfactorily met all of the standards reviewed, though this designation varied between SM1 and SM2 as follows:

**SM1** - Standard Met: Evidences clear understanding, effective implementation and thorough planning for further improvement ~ Governance, Program, Faculty, Administration, Health and Safety, Communication, Infrastructure, and the Accreditation Process.

**SM2** - Standard Met: Evidences understanding, evolving implementation and planning for improvement ~ Mission, Enrollment, Experience of the Students, Resources to Support Program, Evaluation and Assessment.

The commitment, compassion, and quality of the faculty, the exceptional resources of the School, the strength of the academic and residential program, and the quality of the students contribute to a School that continues to re-examine, reaffirm, and embrace its foundational values and core principles grounded in the relational context for learning and realized in a fully residential Episcopal school committed to the highest ideals of scholarship. This commitment has found renewed expression through the recent strategic planning process and the articulation of the Integrated Curriculum. The standard committees affirmed the changes instituted since the last accreditation and the progress that has been made to intentionally reflect on the quality of the School programs. In the last ten years, the School has strengthened the diversity of the Board of Trustees, the governance structures of the School, the evaluation of faculty through an ongoing professional learning process, supervision of students, and
the commitment to health and safety. The quality of the physical plant and the addition of many new or renovated buildings dedicated to the academic and residential experience of the students speaks to the reality of the School's commitment to advance its mission. Blessed with significant resources, augmented by the recent capital campaign, the School is poised to continue and improve the quality of education and student support.

While there is much to commend in this review of the School, the standard committees also noted some concerns which appeared across a number of reports and resulted in SM2 ratings for five of the standards. The School is very aware of each of these concerns and, in some cases, this awareness has informed specific initiatives within the current strategic planning process (Inclusive Community and Access, Assessment, and Engaged Citizenship). Some of these are already underway. In addition, the School continues to examine all areas of the student experience as part of our Integrated Curriculum.

Commitment to diversity and inclusivity ~ The School has developed a plan for diversity hiring and focused professional development around equity and inclusion and has continued to expand its efforts in this area in the past few years with significant gains realized. However, the number of faculty of color does not yet reflect the diversity of the student body. The School should continue its efforts in the hiring process, retention, and support for faculty of color. Similarly, while the oversight of diversity initiatives has been strengthened through the collaborative efforts of faculty and administrators, students of color continue to feel the need for more support. The School should continue to move forward on the recommendations of the recent strategic task force on inclusive community, particularly in the areas of student support, advocacy, and leadership opportunities.

Financial aid and ongoing support for underrepresented students ~ The School recognizes that the rising costs of tuition, even at a modest rate, will continue to put a St. Paul's education out of reach for many highly qualified students. With this in mind, the School will need to augment its financial aid in order to meet growing demand and realize its goals of strengthening inclusive community. In addition, the School should continue its recent efforts to develop a program to support new students from underrepresented groups and first-generation boarding school students. Such a program should not only prepare students prior to the beginning of their first year, but should offer ongoing support to meet the needs of those students for whom the transition to St. Paul's might be most challenging.

Consistency of evaluation and communication of data ~ Several committees highlighted the importance of reviewing data regarding trends in student enrollment, the preparation of students for college, and the experience of underrepresented students. Communication and sharing of this data is inconsistent across departments. In some cases, while the School recognizes the importance of conducting this evaluation, and has made significant progress in utilizing a number of data collection instruments, there are still opportunities for data collection which would provide more substantive evaluation of school programs and inform initiatives moving forward. The School should consider ways to achieve more consistency in regards to the collection, evaluation, and communication of data across all departments of the School.

Transparency in decision-making and involvement of community ~ The communication of School decisions balances the need for appropriate discretion and confidentiality with the need to communicate as much information as possible to the appropriate constituencies within the School. This tension can often cause frustration on the part of those who seek greater transparency and awareness of the decision-making process. The formation of the Faculty Liaison Committee as a vehicle for voicing faculty concerns directly to the administration, the frequency of weekly faculty meetings and email updates, the opportunities for leadership and involvement on a number of committees and task forces, the “open-door” policy of the Rector and vice rector for faculty, more clarity and equity around faculty workload, and multiple opportunities for discussion around school issues have been helpful in addressing this tension. At the same time, faculty would like to be more involved in decisions regarding the daily life of the School. The School should consider ways to encourage more deep listening and further address this perennial tension around communication and decision-making with all members of the school community.

Renovation of Memorial Hall ~ The exceptional care of School facilities and the recent renovations/additions of buildings to support the academic and communal life within the School are commendable. These include the Lindsay Math and Science Center, the Friedman Community Center, the Penner Center for Innovative Teaching, the newly renovated Arts Building, and the upcoming renovations to create the Crumpacker Art Gallery. Many of these significant projects have resulted in the establishment of an academic quad. However, the quality of these
new structures places Memorial Hall in stark contrast. A number of standard committees commented on the need for renovations to Memorial Hall in support of the performing arts. The School should revisit the timeline for this project within the campus master plan and consider accelerating the start of this much needed renovation.

Legal/Regulatory Documentation

Non-discriminatory admissions and employment policies

St. Paul's School notes that "St. Paul's School admits qualified students of any race, color, disability, religious affiliation, national and ethnic origin, and sexual orientation to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at our school. We do not discriminate in violation of any law or statute in the administration of our educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and financial aid programs, and athletics or other school-administered programs." (SPS website - Admission)

Similarly, for hiring, the School's website regarding employment states "St. Paul's School is proud to be an equal opportunity employer and will not unlawfully discriminate in any manner against any applicant. We aggressively seek candidates who will promote the School's commitment to attracting and retaining a highly talented and diverse community." (SPS website - employment)

Related Files

- 2018-01-02-08:30_fm-inspection-letter.pdf
- 2018-01-02-10:47_health-inspection-food-services.pdf
Introduction

Thanks to School

The Visiting Committee would like to express thanks to St. Paul's School for welcoming a Visiting Committee that included three student members in addition to colleagues from peer schools. From the student-led tour of the campus on our first day, to the time they offered to the Visiting Committee members that were assigned to review the Student Experience standard, it was clear that the student body was pleased to be part of the task of hosting the Visiting Committee. Also notable was the openness and sincerity with which the Rector engaged with the chairs of the Visiting Committee throughout the visit and in doing so, provided clarity on what we were observing and helped us make meaning of data we collected. A particular thanks go out to the students and the Rector for ensuring the success of our visit.

Overview of Team Findings

The re-accreditation process comes at an important time in the life of St. Paul's School as it prepares for the transition to a new Rector. There is an opportunity to use the findings of the Visiting Committee to inform the search for the next Rector and as a planning tool to launch the next leader. It should be noted that the preparation of the self-study was not inclusive and that most of the faculty and staff with which we spoke said that they had not read the final product. Additionally, we struggled to secure meetings with members of the community and ultimately engaged fewer than 50% of the employees during our visit. While the Visiting Committee would have chosen to have spent more time with more members of the community, we felt confident that we were able to get an accurate read in all areas. We were surprised by the lack of attention paid to the process and our visit, but did not let this impede our commitment to providing accurate and meaningful feedback. This did, however, lead to a change in the rating from SM1 to SM2.

It should be noted that the recent legal issues and corresponding press were surfaced as possible reasons why the self-study process was not otherwise up to the standards one might expect from such a well resourced and high performing institution. The Rector was firm in insisting that the school should be expected to perform at the highest level despite the external pressures. He was adamant that the school was focused on keeping the promise of the mission statement for each and every student in its care each and every day, and that we evaluate them on that premise.

The Visiting Committee is pleased to report that a highlight of the visit was the student experience, which we found overall to be healthy and well supported by the adults charged with their care. As one of the few fully residential boarding schools in the country, St. Paul's School has a unique place in the boarding school arena. The students who served as members of the Visiting Committee were able to spend several days meeting with students and probing their experiences. Overwhelmingly, students reported feeling engaged and described nurturing relationships with the adults in the community. They reported feeling cared for by adults and shared that it was clear who to go to if they had a concern or needed help. In response to what we heard from the students themselves, we changed the rating for the Student Experience standard from SM2 to SM1. The Visiting Committee also concurred with the self-study rating of SM1 for the Residential Program.

In contrast to the evidence we found regarding the student experience, we downgraded the ratings from SM1 to SM2 for the following standards: Program, Faculty, Administration. We experienced conflicting evidence regarding the strength and efficacy of the work in each area. While we heard about some remarkable program initiatives, there was a lack of clarity on the part of students and faculty as to how they were being implemented and how they were influencing the academic experience. It was also evident both between and among the faculty and administration that there were very disparate opinions regarding the vision and goals for the program initiatives and the direction of the school.
Finally, despite evidence that St. Paul's School is one of the most resourced and well positioned schools in the country it rated itself SM2 on the Resources to Support the Program standard. Given the quantitative evidence (endowment, annual fund contributions, campus resources, etc.) to the contrary, the Visiting Committee changed the rating to SM1.

The change in the ratings for six or the 14 standards completed as part of the self-study process is remarkable in itself and deserves as much focus and discussion as the reasons that motivated the changes for each standard. It will be essential for the school to spend time creating alignment between the various leadership teams on campus with a clear focus that the work ahead is about what is best for the students and what it will take to forward the mission of the school.

There is an opportunity to use the ongoing requirements for continued accreditation including the two-year and five-year reports as a catalyst for in depth conversations regarding self-assessment and institutional goals.
Standard 1: Mission

Standard
There is congruence between the school’s stated mission and core values and its actual program, policies, planning, and decision-making at both the operational and governance levels.

Visiting Team’s Assessment

Standard Met (SM1, SM2): The students’ experience is supported.
Standard Unmet (SU1, SU2): The students’ experience is compromised.

SM2. Standard Met: Evidences understanding, evolving implementation and planning for improvement.

Narrative Summary

Brief narrative summary of the school's position with regard to this standard. Text copied from the school's Self-Study Report is in italics.

The school’s mission statement has been repeatedly motivated by the accreditation process, with the first version being adopted in 1998 at the urging of the Visiting Committee. It was updated again in 2005 following a NEASC visit and the current version was adopted by the board in 2007. There has not been a regular process by which the school reviews and updates the mission, other than during the accreditation process, and thus it is not intentionally used by the leadership of the school or as a governance tool.

The self-study notes: While survey data suggest students, faculty, and families are in general agreement that the school is working to fulfill its mission, it may be that a majority of those surveyed cannot actually recite the Mission Statement. This is likely due to the fact that the specific language of the mission rarely intentionally enters the reflective process. Often, groups can point back to elements of the mission statement which tie into their current work, but this is rarely done, especially as it pertains to student reflection.

Observations

The school prayer, which is well know by the community past and present, appears to be the guiding principle document for the school and while it is compelling, it speaks to the experience of the individual rather than stating the promise of the institution. It is an emotional call to action rather than a rubric or lens used to focus the governance of the school.

A mission statement should answer the question "who are you?" rather than state what you do. It answers the following questions: what is it about the school that differentiates it from all other schools? what is the purpose of a St. Paul's School education? what are the outcomes to be expected for a graduate of the school? A clear and concise mission statement articulates the promise made to each family and child and serves as the lens by which an institution make decisions regarding the school, everything from: choosing board members, to defining the academic program, to allocating resources. The budget is the mission statement in numbers. Schools that have alignment with respect to these areas and are disciplined with their decision making to ensure that it keeps the promise of the mission for each and every child are the most effective over time.
Given the unrest that currently exists between the adults on campus regarding the vision for the future of the school, it would be prudent for the school to consider reviewing and updating the current mission statement to be used as a tool for building consensus and establishing a unified direction. This change might ultimately allow for the school to move from a Rector-run to a Rector-led school and provide for a smooth transition in leadership that is mission driven rather than personality driven.

Conclusions and Explanation of Rating

The Visiting Committee agrees with the rating of SM2 as there is significant work to be done in order for the school to become a mission driven institution.

Commendations

The Visiting Committee commends the school for its strong and differentiated history, which should serve as the underpinnings of a robust mission driven school. This history includes its rich Episcopalian tradition and fully residential program, both which define many of the values, traditions and operations of the school.

Recommendation 1

The Visiting Committee recommends that the school embark on a process of reviewing the mission statement with an eye towards claiming the unique value proposition a St. Paul's School education provides.

Recommendation 2

The Visiting Committee recommends that the process of reviewing the mission statement be comprehensive and inclusive and be used as an opportunity to build community and a shared sense of responsibility for the future of the school and the students in its care.

Recommendation 3

The Visiting Committee recommends that once the mission statement is adopted by the board that there is a plan in place to ensure that it is known and understood by all members of the community and policies and procedures are considered to ensure that it becomes not just an aspirational statement but one that is used to inform operations as well.
Standard 2: Governance

Standard

The school has an appropriate system of governance that assures that the school remains true to its mission and that it has the necessary resources to support its present and prospective operations.

Visiting Team's Assessment

Standard Met (SM1, SM2): The students’ experience is supported.
Standard Unmet (SU1, SU2): The students’ experience is compromised.

SM1. Standard Met: Evidences clear understanding, effective implementation and thorough planning for further improvement.

Narrative Summary

Brief narrative summary of the school's position with regard to this standard. Text copied from the school's Self-Study Report is in italics.

St. Paul's School has made significant strides over the past decade in strengthening the governance of the institution, remaining true to its mission and ensuring that it possesses the necessary resources to support its present and prospective operations. The level of involvement of the Board of Trustees through their committee work, the degree of communication between the Board's leadership and the School's administration, and the comprehensive multi-year planning done by the School to both address present day needs and those needs of future students is impressive.

The leadership of the School, both on the Board and here at the School, takes their governance responsibilities seriously and has worked to continuously strengthen that in which they are charged to oversee. The leadership of the institution understands that this is a complex, challenging, and multi-layered undertaking that is ever evolving. Their priorities are the institution at large, here in the present and also in the future, and in our mind, their actions appear to successfully balance these obligations.

Observations

Members of the board clearly understand the division of responsibilities between the Rector and trustees as a result of a strong orientation program, clear leadership, and well-run meetings. Committees are effective and give board members an opportunity to play a significant role in the life of the school while taking on responsibility in areas of interest. Efforts are being made to assure that necessary skill sets are represented and that the board properly reflects the demographics of the student body. Although trustees and administrators expressed satisfaction with the current board committees, we noted that the last full review of the committee structure was in 2006 which included establishing an Education and Student Life Committee (see Recommendation 3 below).

The board holds three meetings a year, two on campus and one in New York. Most of the time is spent in plenary session with committees meeting separately (usually telephonically) in between full Board meetings. The winter New York meeting is a day shorter than the two on-campus ones and is normally devoted to finance so that tuition can be set and the budget for the following year discussed. There was some consideration of the timing
and duration of meetings, seeking to optimize frequency, attendance, and quality of attention.

The school has undertaken multi-year planning, including a Strategic Plan in 2012-2013, and is currently in the early stages of the next strategic planning process. This new Strategic Plan is being eagerly awaited as an opportunity for the new Rector to set the direction of the school as s/he begins their tenure. Encouragingly, administrators reported that lessons were learned from the last Strategic Plan and are already being addressed as designs progress for the new one. In particular, the hope is that this iteration will have a more thorough and complete implementation plan so that the strategic priorities can be implemented beyond relatively broad initiatives. The Rector has recently appointed a Director of Strategic Initiatives who will be charged with this work and who has already begun working in partnership with the Dean of Advancement on a full needs-assessment of the whole school.

Conclusions and Explanation of Rating

St. Paul's School has indeed done a lot of work over the last ten years to strengthen its board policies and procedures so that the board can function effectively and support the Rector. The success of this work has been shown over the last few years when the board has played a strong, supporting role to the Rector and his administrative team. The delineation of roles is clear so that the day-to-day running of the school is in the hands of the Rector and the administrative team.

Commendations

The Visiting Committee commends St. Paul's School for the resolute leadership of the Board of Trustees in times of crisis and their appropriate understanding of their role. We heard appreciation for this over and over throughout the school community.

Recommendation 1

The Visiting Committee recommends that St. Paul's School support the newly established Director of Strategic Initiatives position so that the Director can have responsibility for making sure that: 1) the upcoming Strategic Plan is comprehensive and incorporates the outcomes of the accreditation report and, 2) a full implementation plan is established immediately after the plan's creation.

Recommendation 2

The Visiting Committee recommends that St. Paul's School make sure that new initiatives and policies are not seen as "board-mandated" but rather "board-supported." While we saw no evidence that the board had forced any policy changes on the school, there was some perception that this was the case. It will be very important for the Rector and his team to make clear that while policies are vetted and approved by the board, they come from the school. More transparency in the way that policies are initially created before being presented to the board might be helpful in countering this perception.

Recommendation 3

The Visiting Committee recommends that St. Paul's School take advantage of the transition to a new Rector in order to revisit the committee structure and make sure that it still works for the school. Much has changed in the last twelve years and the school faces new challenges that might require some reorganization of committees or clarification of their charters.
Recommendation 4

The Visiting Committee recommends that St. Paul's School lead the work necessary to update the mission statement so that the language reflects the goals, aspirations and experience of the school community today.
Standard 3: Enrollment

Standard

The admissions process assures that those students who enroll are appropriate, given the school’s mission, and are likely to benefit from their experience at the school.

Visiting Team's Assessment

Standard Met (SM1, SM2): The students’ experience is supported.
Standard Unmet (SU1, SU2): The students’ experience is compromised.

SM2. Standard Met: Evidences understanding, evolving implementation and planning for improvement.

Narrative Summary

Brief narrative summary of the school's position with regard to this standard. Text copied from the school's Self-Study Report is in italics.

St. Paul's School sits in a very strong position with regard to admissions. The School seeks students who will find success in all aspects of life at SPS and live out the Mission of the School. Students must be capable of handling a rigorous academic program, participate in other School programs, and contribute positively to the SPS community and the greater world. In the 2016-2017 season, the Admission Office reviewed 1421 applications and enrolled 167 new students with a median GPA of 3.8. Incoming students came from different types of schools: 50% from American private schools, 30% from American public schools, 17% from international private schools, and 4% from international public schools. The student body reflects the diversity that is sought in the application process, with 20 countries and 38 states represented, 39% students of color (including African and African-American, Asian and Asian-American, Latino, Hispanic, Mexican-American, and Other), and 19% international students. In 2017, 206 students (39%) received financial aid, with the average award being $55,520. Though SPS is proud of it financial aid budget and in a very strong position compared to the average of all boarding schools, in a landscape where well over half of the School's domestic applicants apply for financial aid, aspiring to be need-blind would further the school's ability to select the very best-suited students to the School.

The Admission Office represents the School honestly and accurately in its recruiting materials and in conversations and interviews with incoming families. Clear communication of the application and financial aid application processes seek to make St. Paul's School accessible to families from a wide range of backgrounds. Offering 11.2 million dollars in financial aid annually, the School is able to attract and select many of the most qualified students who otherwise would not be able to attend the School. Well-established admission standards and criteria, as well as an evaluation rubric, assure consistency in the admission process. The Admission Office works consistently with other departments in the School to ensure the needs of incoming students are met, and to understand the circumstances in the relatively few cases that a student does not matriculate from SPS. Despite extremely low attrition, the Admission Office constantly seeks to improve its selection of students who are most likely to benefit from the experience at the school. By collecting a few data points during each student’s experience at SPS, the admission office can study to what extent entry-point admission data serves as a predictor for a student's performance at St. Paul's School. Overall, the admissions process is strong on the front end with the goal that students admitted to the School will thrive.
Observations

St. Paul's School seeks highly motivated students for its academically rigorous program and is especially interested in young people who can help the school achieve a balanced community that fosters academic, artistic, athletic, and social development. The mission of the school is reviewed informally with prospective families during the admissions process and is incorporated into conversations about the school rather than recited verbatim. The Admission Office strives to sustain a student body that is culturally, geographically, and socio-economically diverse, while also seeking to enroll students who will fully support all extra-curricular programs. One way that the school has addressed this challenge is to seek out students who bring multiple talents and passions to their experience. St. Paul's School is continually assessing its admission and retention strategies despite sitting in a very strong enrollment position due to historically high yield and low attrition.

Communication is clearly a high priority for the Admission Office, both with its external constituencies and also with other departments on campus. Ample time and resources are expended on reaching out to prospective applicants and their families through recruiting materials, social medial presence, and travel. Internally, the Admission Office has designated members who serve as liaisons with Program Directors. The interests and talents of applicants (athletics, music, dance, robotics, etc.) are identified and shared with relevant members of the faculty. Coaches and other key people then evaluate each applicant on a scale of 1-5, based on how well he or she might impact the program. The coach or program director then prioritizes the pool of candidates, which provides helpful information for the admission, and in some cases financial aid, process. Once matriculation decisions have been made, the Admission Office provides a “watch list” for students who may need additional academic, social, or health support to make a successful transition to St. Paul's School. The Admission Office also prepares a list of high-need financial aid students. These lists are shared only with key people whom the school deems necessary for the purpose of supporting students. The idea is to create a scaffold of support so that students new to school are not expected to bear the sole burden of seeking help. In terms of interests, talents and skills, the Admission Office intentionally lets new students define themselves to the school community and does not summarize for the general faculty past accomplishments of the incoming students.

With significant resources allocated to financial aid, the school is currently able to hold to its criteria in selecting the most highly qualified, best-suited students by offering generous tuition assistance for families who otherwise would not be able to afford it. While acknowledging that it has been historically well-resourced, the school also recognizes the challenge even moderately rising rates of tuition creates for many families. Currently acceptance percentage rates differ between full-pay and financial aid applicants and there is an acknowledgement of this discrepancy. To address the growing demand for financial assistance, there is the sense that the school will need to enlarge its pool of financial aid. Other strategies include targeting domestic full-pay families from new geographic regions such as Florida, Texas, and Colorado. In addition to providing access through tuition assistance, St. Paul's School aspires to strengthen the inclusive nature of its community through providing financial assistance to students for extra-curricular items and activities. One challenge is to determine what should be considered an essential part of a St. Paul's School education, and therefore supported through the financial aid budget, and what aspects of the student experience are considered supplementary and discretionary, such as spring athletic team trips.

As the school continues to prioritize diversity, there exists the need to raise money for financial aid as described above. Simultaneously, the school is working to develop programs to help the transition for students from underrepresented groups and first-generation boarding school students. In addition to the LINC curriculum, St. Paul's School is creating on-going support programs to meet the needs of students from underrepresented groups and first-generation boarding school students as they adjust to life at school. There is agreement that these efforts require both programmatic and financial commitment from St. Paul's School.

The Admission Office at St. Paul's has a commitment to reflection and improvement. A key tool to achieve that goal is the use of data, which can provide information on why students choose to leave St. Paul's before graduation or to compare predicted versus actual success of students in academic and other areas. Currently, there is no formal exit interview process for students. Assessments for current students tends to be anecdotal and through information gleaned from school-wide channels about individual accomplishments. There is no similar on-going systematic collection of data for St. Paul's alumni. Formalized definitions of success for current
graduating students and post-graduate students would be an important first step towards quantifying additional
data that could be used for evaluating admissions procedures. The Director of Institutional Research, a position
which is currently vacant, is charged with creating a granular view of St. Paul's School students based on
parameters that include diversity, academic background prior to enrollment, as well as cultural, geographic, and
socioeconomic parameters that can be compared with current students' academic success.

Finally, it is important to note that over the past four years, the Admission Office has worked hard to successfully
enroll the best-suited students who will thrive at St. Paul's School while encountering significant negative media
attention focused on the school. It is a testament to the dedication of the Admission Office that morale has not
faltered, and the men and women of the Admission Office have remained positive and committed to serving the
needs of the school.

Conclusions and Explanation of Rating

Overall, the admission process at St. Paul's School successfully assures that those students who enroll are
appropriate given the school's mission and are likely to benefit, and indeed thrive, from their experience at the
school. The Visiting Committee affirms the self-study committee's assessment of SM2 with the understanding
that the Admission Office's philosophy of allowing new students to define themselves limits the information that is
shared with teaching faculty, thereby technically not fulfilling one of the standard's indicators. It should be noted,
however, that information concerning the talents/strengths/skills/needs of newly enrolled students is shared with
selected administrators and teachers deemed necessary to ensure the students' successful transition to St.
Paul's. The Visiting Committee also agrees with the self-study committee's statement that two other indicators
are only partially met. There is a need for a systematic way of analyzing the reasons why students depart prior to
graduation. In addition, the school needs to identify a strategy to collect and centralize data so as to measure the
performance and success of current students and graduates.

Commendations

1. The Visiting Committee commends the school for its well-established admissions process which provides
consistency and has resulted in an ability to enroll students who are capable of handling a rigorous
academic program, participating in school programs, and contributing positively to the St. Paul's School
community and the greater world.
2. The Visiting Committee commends the school for its honest and accurate communication with all
constituencies and for its clear communication of the application and financial aid application processes.
3. The Visiting Committee commends the school for its generous financial aid program which allows the
Admission Office to attract and select many of the most qualified students who otherwise would not be able
to attend the school.
4. The Visiting Committee commends the school for its success in enrolling the best-suited, highly qualified
students while encountering significant negative media attention focused on the school.

Recommendation 1

The Visiting Committee endorses the school's recommendation to continue to prioritize diversity and increase the
amount of financial aid, both to make St. Paul's School accessible to the very best-suited students, regardless of
their ability to afford the school, and to strengthen experiential equity among students.

Recommendation 2

The Visiting Committee recommends that the school continue to develop programs to help the transition for
students from underrepresented groups and first-generation boarding school students, through the use of both
programmatic and financial resources.

**Recommendation 3**

The Visiting Committee endorses the school's recommendation to continue the work of centralizing current student performance data from the Admission Office and to consider formalizing definitions of success for current graduating St. Paul's School students and post-graduate students so that quantifying additional data can be used for evaluating admissions procedures.

**Recommendation 4**

The Visiting Committee endorses the school's recommendation that exit interviews be conducted with any student who leaves the school prior to graduation, regardless of the reasons for departure.

**Recommendation 5**

The Visiting Committee recommends that the school consider expanding the admissions process model into an enrollment management system model.
Standard 4: Program

Standard

The school provides a comprehensive program of intellectual, aesthetic, and physical activities that is appropriate to support the school’s mission and core values, and is consistent with the needs of the range of students admitted. Program planning is informed by relevant research regarding how students learn and the knowledge and capacities they will need to lead purposeful and constructive lives.

Visiting Team's Assessment

Standard Met (SM1, SM2): The students’ experience is supported.
Standard Unmet (SU1, SU2): The students’ experience is compromised.

SM2. Standard Met: Evidences understanding, evolving implementation and planning for improvement.

Narrative Summary

Brief narrative summary of the school's position with regard to this standard. Text copied from the school's Self-Study Report is in italics.

Relative to its size, the depth and breadth of the program at St. Paul's School (SPS) is a point of community pride. Though continuing to develop, the School's integrated curriculum provides the essential framework through which they design, refine, and expand their entire program. Indeed, SPS faculty ensure that the emotional, social, intellectual, and physical needs of their students are met throughout the School's program. Using the scope and sequence grid, all faculty seek to design opportunities—from academic courses to the LINC program—in which students can and are encouraged to grow as developmentally appropriate.

Observations

The Visiting Committee finds that St. Paul's School is rightfully very proud of its wide-ranging program. Adults are enthusiastic about their work and believe in what the school is trying to accomplish. There is robust programming both in and outside the classroom. Through the integrated curriculum and the LINC programs, St. Paul's School faculty ensure that the emotional, social, intellectual, and physical needs of their students are met across the school's programs. These two programs are the current focus of time and energy of the faculty. There is widespread endorsement of the LINC curriculum from both adults and students, though there is some concern that the time spent on LINC diminishes time for academic pursuits. The integrated curriculum is clearly a work in progress, with admirable goals and a range of understanding of its goals among adults and students.

The structure of the academic curriculum is sound, and departments meet frequently to share goals and progress of courses. Transitions through the program are intentional and clear. A well-established, clear, traditional curriculum exists in concert with questions about future plans, priorities, and innovation.

A variety of cultural experiences occur through international travel, the chapel program, community service, clubs, and in the language program. Students are glad the LINC curriculum creates space for conversations around diversity and life experiences. It is somewhat less clear how incoming students from non-traditional backgrounds are supported in their transition to a rigorous academic program and boarding environment, and
where they see course content that reflects their backgrounds.

Conclusions and Explanation of Rating

St. Paul's School offers a well-resourced and expansive program. Students benefit from a variety of experiences within this fully residential community. Various dimensions of student development are well-supported by the school's offerings. The Visiting Committee chose an SM2 rating rather than the school's own SM1 for two reasons. First, we are concerned that St. Paul's School is trying to accomplish several new initiatives simultaneously; we support prioritization and clarification of program goals. We also hope that the energy and creativity that are going into the LINC program can be applied to the entire academic curriculum, and that focus can be given to innovation, diversity, and inclusiveness in the academic program. Because the report contained comparatively little information about the academic program, the committee gathered data on its own to support the rating.

Commendations

1. Adults enthusiastically endorse a St. Paul's School education and demonstrate commitment to supporting students.
2. The LINC program is already serving students well, even as it comes into focus.
3. Programming, especially in academic departments, is supported by adult meeting time to allow teams to understand each other's work.

Recommendation 1

Faculty members and administrators were open about their desire for help prioritizing the many goals and initiatives St. Paul's School has undertaken. The Visiting Committee recommends focusing on identifying priorities and clearly delineating the responsible parties. We support the ambitious and valuable programs that are in motion, but wonder if they can all be done at once.

Recommendation 2

The Visiting Committee recommends giving careful attention to nurturing an environment in which both students and adults will be retained. Initiatives that support underrepresented groups can benefit the entire community. Within the programming of the school, this may mean ensuring that the curriculum for incoming students is both reflective of the range of students who attend St. Paul's School and also supports skill development that results in equitable achievement across the community. This equity can be just as applicable in classrooms, studios, athletic fields and dormitories.

Recommendation 3

The Visiting Committee observes that appetite for curricular innovation at St. Paul's School co-exists with steadfast loyalty to the existing academic program. At a tradition-rich school like St. Paul's, it is tempting to change only by adding new programs, since the loss of long-standing programs is difficult and even controversial. However, the Visiting Committee recommends that end goals be identified for the total curriculum and that only programs that serve those goals continue to be developed and supported.
Recommendation 4

The "integrated curriculum" is mentioned over thirty times in the Self-Study, yet few members of the St. Paul's School community can define exactly what it is. Both long-tenured and newly-hired faculty members expressed a desire to center curricular initiatives in their classrooms but are not sure how to proceed. The Visiting Committee recommends that if the integrated curriculum is to continue to be a top priority, the school work to create a shared understanding of what it is and how to incorporate it into the classroom. We feel that there is common ground to be found with scholars newer to the community. As one person said to us, "the integrated curriculum needs to start in the classroom, because this is a school."

Recommendation 5

Before moving ahead with additional programming in the afternoon, the Visiting Committee recommends broad consideration and prioritization of the goals of athletics, arts and service. Several adults that the committee interviewed felt that a broader-based discussion would be helpful. There was concern that recent changes in athletic conference and community service offerings were happening without everyone on the same page about student interests, requirements, and the time that students have to devote to the range of activities that St. Paul's School offers.
Standard 5: Experience of the Students

Standard

The school actively considers individual students and has developed plans, policies, programs, and pedagogy to nurture, support, and encourage all students to reach their potential and to participate in the life of the school.

Visiting Team's Assessment

Standard Met (SM1, SM2): The students' experience is supported.
Standard Unmet (SU1, SU2): The students' experience is compromised.

SM1. Standard Met: Evidences clear understanding, effective implementation and thorough planning for further improvement.

Narrative Summary

Brief narrative summary of the school's position with regard to this standard. Text copied from the school's Self-Study Report is in italics.

St. Paul's School has developed robust structures that nurture, support, and encourage its students to reach their potential and enable them to participate fully in the life of the School. Since the School's last self-study in 2007, St. Paul's has responded to recommendations calling for a more centralized system to discuss students of concern and to support students with diverse learning needs. Today, the School excels at meeting the needs of so many students because of the strength of the house-based advising system, which enables advisers to build strong and meaningful relationships with advisees; the Student Support Team that functions at-large, collecting information about any struggling students and connecting them to a variety of support structures; and, because of a strong commitment to continuous education of the faculty, as seen through tremendous support for ongoing professional development. St. Paul's School has taken care to carve adequate time out of the daily schedule for these support teams, as well as departments and advising teams, to meet. Moving forward, additional time in the schedule for more ad hoc meeting times would be helpful.

The School's 2007 report also recommended that more attention be given to “multiculturalism and diversity at SPS in terms of people and program.” St. Paul's has made significant gains in this area, as evidenced by a focus on diversity and inclusivity through the Living in Community program and recent strategic initiatives addressing Inclusive Community and Access. There is still, however, more work to be done in this area. St. Paul's students would benefit from increased racial and socioeconomic diversity of both the faculty and student body, and support for the transition and retention of these underrepresented groups.

While there is room to continue considering how to best serve all of the children in the School's care, especially those from underrepresented groups, St. Paul's School has already established many solid resources to support its students. With this in mind, the Committee believes the School meets Standard 5.

Observations

St. Paul's School fosters a friendly environment that joins students from diverse backgrounds into a welcoming
community. Supported by a fully residential campus that utilizes vertical housing and house-based faculty advisers, students develop a strong connection to the entire community regardless of grade or age.

St. Paul's School identified diversity, equity, and inclusion as opportunities for improvement in the Self-Study of Standard 5. In the context of social environment, whether in the dorms, on teams, or in other social spaces, students with whom the Visiting Committee spoke feel that the school is a well-integrated and supportive community. Cultural events are well attended, LINC groups and SPS Voices showcase different perspectives, and various clubs and student organizations provide “safe spaces” for students of different backgrounds. However, some structural and academic factors do contribute to some feelings of lack of inclusivity. Some international students (such as those from Japan or China) look to teachers of Japanese and Chinese classes, respectively, for support of and connection to their culture. There is not a clear alternative for support or a safety net for these students, the significance of which was underscored for us by the recent decision to eliminate the Japanese program (which many students do not appear to be familiar with). A study by the Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) group on campus also noted that students from racial, gender, socio-economic, and political minorities answer disproportionately that their identity negatively impacts their experience. Standard 5 also indicates that 17% of students do not feel that “the school supports an inclusive community.” There is also a concern among students that students of color or those of lower socioeconomic status are unfairly treated harshly in the discipline process; we also heard opposite complaints that students of color “get off easily” in the process. Setting aside the issue of whether any of these opposing claims are valid, it is clear that this is an area in which perception matters and in which identity markers are impacting students' experience at school. Some students of color also spoke about the added pressure of being a “spokesperson” for their race, for instance when teachers or peers expect them to make a decision on use of the “n” word as the only black student in a class.

St. Paul's School creates an environment in which student voice is heard and acknowledged. Committees and task forces are assembled to address issues that arise within the student body. Generally, these groups are intentionally composed of members from different forms and backgrounds. Students report that groups like Saturday Night Life accurately gauge student opinion and choose activities that are appropriate for those with a diverse array of interests. Most students we spoke to feel as though when there is a personal or campus-wide issue they are dealing with, they have someone to whom they can express grievances or seek support. However, most also said that although the opportunity is there they do not talk directly to administration about issues that arise. Rather they go to prefects, dorm reps, heads of houses or advisers.

St. Paul's School has a unique advising program that is intertwined with the house system. In the words of the Self-Study, the strength of the house-based advising system is that it “enables advisers to build strong and meaningful relationships with advisees.” Both students and faculty share a positive regard for the connectedness this program fosters; specifically mentioned as factors were living in close proximity to each other and participating in frequent advisory dinners. Both students and faculty also mentioned the advisory setting as places where students are “challenged … morally” in the words of the mission statement. However, aside from advisory dinners the advising program lacks structured time for weekly individual or group adviser-advisee meeting. Advisers expressed concerns about prioritizing their advisees’ needs over the pressures of academic, athletic, and residential responsibilities. St. Paul's School says repeatedly (in the Self-Study and reportedly to faculty) that advising is the number one priority of faculty members, but time is not allocated in the schedule to make this a reality. In addition, many students expressed that their adviser is not their “number one person” on campus or that it is normal and expected to switch advisers multiple times in their St. Paul's career. Interestingly, these observations were not shared as a critique; many students mentioned that they feel well-supported by many adults on campus and that they do not feel a need for one adviser to be their “go-to” support.

St. Paul's School offers time for reflection both socially and academically as a community. The LINC programs offers a platform for students to engage in thoughtful conversations and reflections on the impact of social identifiers on community engagement and structures. Students are also asked at the end of each term to complete a reflection on the support they receive from the different adults in their life: teachers, coaches, advisers, and their head of house. Despite the extensive amount of student evaluation of faculty, there is no concrete platform for students to reflect on their own moral and intellectual growth besides talking with their advisers. One written assessment of student growth is the Inside Comments teachers write at the end of each term; these are addressed to the student and accessible by the parents. Since parents have access to these comments, some adults are concerned that teachers are not as directive with constructive criticism as they might
be. We also hear that teachers tend to write discipline-specific, skill-based, or content-based comments rather than addressing the five Social Emotional Competencies (SEC’s) that are stressed as hallmarks of the Integrated Curriculum. Ironically, other adults report that teacher comments have shifted from being discipline- and content-specific to being very SEC-heavy.

St. Paul's School works hard to identify and support the individual academic needs of students. Student Teacher Assistance Teams and the Student Support Team are two ways this manifests. Other ways that students are supported include small class sizes in the humanities, accessibility of peer tutors and the writing center, a culture of making extra help accessible, librarians who are available for individual consultations with students, and an affordable online summer writing class. However, despite the development of the school's Transitions program, students from underrepresented backgrounds “continue to be identified as being in need of greater assistance acculturating to the school's rigorous academic environment.”

A group of students was chosen to read and comment on the Self-Study report for Standard 5 prior to our visit, and some of these students commented that the process would benefit from more interrogation of their stress and well-being at school. With this feedback in mind, we did inquire about these topics. We found that St. Paul's School provides students with numerous systems to support students both socially and academically. In addition to the advising system and the faculty members in a student's dorm, students utilize the Clark House Health Center as a resource for maintaining and improving their emotional well-being. Staffed with three counselors, Clark House offers 24/7 support, which students use comfortably. Students highlighted the trust they are able to form with the counselors and the value of the support they receive from them. Additionally, students value the ways staff members in Clark House advocate for their needs in all aspects of life at school. If a student struggles with a mental illness or an emotionally exhausting situation, the counselor communicates with other faculty members to accommodate the student's needs. Likewise, students appreciate the “Sleep Dep” system which allows them to recharge when needed. It is also worth noting that with the recent schedule change regarding the later start time of chapel and classes, students find themselves relying less on Sleep Dep, indicating that this change is helpful for relieving stress and maintaining a healthy lifestyle at St. Paul's School.

The LINC curriculum provides students, especially in the 3rd and 4th form years, with an additional resource to improve their overall well-being. The flexible curriculum allows students to reflect and discuss topics around identity, socio-emotional skills, and current events. When an emotionally consuming event arises on campus or in the world, LINC is flexible enough to provide a platform for students to debrief; students identified the ability to utilize a block for discussion and reflection of “hot topics” as a method to relieve stress.

Peer-to-peer, mental wellness is discussed in some LINC sessions and by the Mental Illness Awareness club. While these programs encourage students to support one another and facilitate meaningful conversations, their effects are reported to be short-lived. Even though students report receiving adequate mental health support from adults, there appears to be a lack of understanding of mental health issues within the student body. It was suggested that more discussion of mental health is needed on campus in order to help struggling students feel more supported by their peers.

Conclusions and Explanation of Rating

While there is always room for improvement in any school or program, St. Paul's School has many strengths on which to build. The Visiting Committee observed a deliberate and caring community that keeps the mission statement's promise to challenge ... students intellectually and morally. We consistently observed students who feel known and supported by a variety of adults, feel secure in and loyal to their houses, participate in and appreciate the work of societies and task forces, and achieve balance between hard work and healthy downtime. Areas in which we have recommendations are also areas in which St. Paul's School has already identified opportunities. The student experience is strong, positive, and vibrant. Therefore, the Visiting Committee chose to raise the school's SM2 rating to SM1 to reflect clear understanding and effective implementation of policies and practices that impact student experience.
Commendations

1. Inclusive Community

St. Paul's clearly has a genuine desire to have a community that is inclusive... The Visiting Committee observed students eating together at meals in heterogenous racial groups. This stood out, as at many schools the dining hall is a place where racial groupings are apparent. We observed many genuine, warm interactions between students across gender and racial lines during our time in common spaces. Students with various identities (not just those from dominant groups) affirmed in conversation that they have close connections with other students from a variety of backgrounds. We heard rave reviews about a recent Chinese New Year celebration that included over 300 students, and the student body was notably engaged and interested during the chapel service hosted by the Korean Society. We noted that cell phones are not a constant presence in students' hands; we did not observe students on their phones during passing times, before or during chapel, or when walking around campus, and students were quick to greet us and one another warmly around campus. We commend St. Paul's School for creating an environment that is inclusive, warm, and welcoming for students.

2. Engaged Community

St. Paul's ... [is] willing to engage in discussion and action to support all members of the community. The Visiting Committee noted with admiration the survey that was sent out to the student body to plan for the upcoming LINC Day; the survey makes it clear that St. Paul's School is interested in gathering student opinions around a wide variety of issues including gender, religion, and political diversity and, beyond gathering opinion, is willing to engage in conversations around challenging topics including identity markers. Students we spoke to affirmed that LINC is routinely a space for discussions on topics such as socio-economic status. Students expressed a sincere appreciation for the opportunity at St. Paul's School to engage in positive, respectful conversations together, and co-host important events. The Democratic and Republican clubs engage in challenging discussions and for seeking out the voices of all members of the student body.

3. Student Support

Today, the School excels at meeting the needs of so many students because of ... the Student Support Team that functions at-large, collecting information about any struggling students and connecting them to a variety of support structures... The Visiting Committee noted the number of support structures that are in place for and utilized by students. The Clark House is open and staffed 24/7, there are peer tutors available and visibly advertised, a culture exists of seeking extra help from faculty during Flex periods or in the evenings, and the Student Support Team effectively connects students with resources. We commend St. Paul's School for putting so many structures in place to identify and meet students' needs.

4. House System

Today, the School excels at meeting the needs of so many students because of the strength of the house-based advising system... [t]he house-based advising system provides a foundation for connections between students and faculty... The Visiting Committee was impressed with the residential life of the school. The 100% residential nature of St. Paul's School and the strategy of vertical housing were mentioned universally as positive aspects of student life. Students appreciate the opportunity to bond across grade levels, build healthy connections with older and younger students, and build loyalty to their house. They appreciate having multiple adults in their house beyond their own adviser with whom they can build respectful, warm, healthy connections. Some students mentioned their houses as "communities within a community" or spoke of the house system as helping a large school feel smaller. The frustration voiced by some prefects about the change to the "right of return" policy for those chosen for this leadership role speaks to the strong allegiance students feel for their houses. The 100% residential nature of the school eliminates any boarder/day student points of tension experienced in other communities. We commend St. Paul's School for building a strong residential program for the benefit of its students.

Recommendation 1

The Visiting Committee recommends that St. Paul's School continue to focus attention on issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion, including students' desire to see more diversity in the faculty and administration, continued work on the Transitions program, and more explicit support for international students. A related recommendation
is to examine the investment of time in the existing YPAR program, which can be a vehicle to surface student voice -- backed by rigorous research -- around issues of equity.

**Recommendation 2**

The Visiting Committee recommends that St. Paul's School build on their strengths in the area of wellness and student support by increasing attention on the ways in which students themselves think about and talk about mental health and wellness.

**Recommendation 3**

The Visiting Committee recommends that St. Paul's School align communication with practice around the advising system. Students generally feel well-supported by a multiplicity of adults on campus; we recommend that the school consider shining a light on this as a major benefit of the house system rather than continuing to repeat that a faculty member's top priority is his or her individual advisees.
Standard 6: Resources to Support the Program

Standard

Given the school’s mission, there are adequate resources (space, equipment, technology, materials, and community) to support the school’s program.

Visiting Team's Assessment

Standard Met (SM1, SM2): The students’ experience is supported.
Standard Unmet (SU1, SU2): The students’ experience is compromised.

SM1. Standard Met: Evidences clear understanding, effective implementation and thorough planning for further improvement.

Narrative Summary

Brief narrative summary of the school's position with regard to this standard. Text copied from the school's Self-Study Report is in italics.

St. Paul's School is incredibly fortunate to have abundant financial and physical resources to support the school’s mission and programs. Instructional facilities are far more than adequate in most disciplines.

Careful planning ensures the school makes the most of its resources and facilities in support of the mission. The one exception is that the Performing Arts programs are not adequately supported by Memorial Hall, the Dance Building, and Oates Hall.

In alignment with the mission of the school to increase diversity and serve the greater good, the Financial Aid Program is designed to foster student diversity from racial, socioeconomic, and geographic angles...St. Paul's is "need aware," which makes it possible for qualified students to attend SPS no matter their socioeconomic background, thus aligning with the school’s mission.

St. Paul's service to the community is worthy of special note. As detailed in the indicators, the school has a large, positive impact on the greater Concord community.

Observations

In the Self-Study, the school recognizes its excellent position in most areas involving the physical, financial, and organizational resources dedicated to supporting program. Further, school resources are appropriately designated to support the articulated priorities of the mission. There is no question that the school is unusually fortunate, and the school realizes that it has resources many other schools might not possess. Beyond the actual structures there was a clear sense that the resources of the school are well-managed, well-supported, and well-maintained and the Visiting Committee unequivocally supports these positive sentiments.

There were a limited number of areas in which the school wished for improved resources, notably performing arts, about which one indicator noted: the Performing Arts programs are not adequately supported by Memorial Hall, the Dance Building, and Oates Hall. While program representatives confirmed some of these misgivings on
the visit, particularly regarding music, deficiencies were strictly relative and limited. Dance and theater are capable of functioning smoothly within their respective spaces. There may be grander visions that could be supported and which may, in fact, exist at other schools but it is important to note that the performing arts facilities as a whole lag mainly in comparison to other facilities on campus, NOT in comparison to facilities at the vast majority of schools. Further, on net, the student experience does not appear to be compromised in any way by facilities resources -- indeed, it is dramatically elevated.

Memorial Hall, by all reports, is an obvious candidate for improvement and renovation but successive master plans have designated Memorial Hall as a medium-term need whose time has not quite yet arrived. It will be a costly project -- and the last in a long line of significant investments -- and so its treatment needs to be understood in the context of other important demands on large-scale resources, including financial aid, compensation, and professional development.

Two other areas from the Self-Study are worth highlighting and further notes can be seen in our Commendations and Recommendations. While there is an "institutional technology plan" there is not an academic technology plan. Nevertheless, the school has strong resources both in personnel and financially to support whatever directions it wishes to establish with regards to technology. The school is in the midst of crafting a more clearly articulated academic technology plan to be finalized moving from this academic year to next, and it is in transition with the position of Academic Technology Coordinator. Both of these movements should be viewed more as opportunities than threats, and to the degree that technology can be further integrated and developed in the academic realm, program and curriculum will only benefit. Again, these are not threats to student experiences as much as they are unrealized (as of yet) opportunities.

Lastly, some interesting commentary and considerations arose around the use of the library. Currently the library is an impressive space that houses a variety of functions from the Center for Innovation in Teaching to the primary office for academic support to the Academic Technology Coordinator's office to, in future, the Director of Institutional Research, all along with the traditional (but always evolving) study and work space of the library at large. While that traditional space has been somewhat segmented and encroached upon by these other functions, there are excellent opportunities to align some of these functions and programs around a broader vision for academics and learning that could be housed and/or supported through integrated offices and functions in the library. There is a great deal of flexible space within the library and its central location and impressive stature make it a ripe location and architecture to explore in terms of its best and most creative uses.

Conclusions and Explanation of Rating

Primarily because Memorial Hall, Oates Hall, and other performing arts facilities are virtually the ONLY facilities that are not situated and maintained at a superior level, the Visiting Committee decided to raise the rating on this standard from SM2 to SM1. In addition it is clear that student, faculty, and community experience are very much enhanced and improved by the prudent ways the school deploys and sustains resources -- a practice reflecting a high standard. In addition, any reservations about the way resources are organized (library, technology, etc.) can be approached as opportunities ready to be had. Once strategies and priorities are set, the school has a demonstrated ability to use resources wisely to turn ideas and plans into action and reality. As one Visiting Committee member noted, "If St. Paul's cannot receive the highest rating rising to this standard, it is absolutely impossible for any school to approach that standard."

Commendations

1. The school's physical plant is a model of excellence in design, planning, and maintenance. These unparalleled resources -- as well-funded as they are -- manage to be positioned primarily for educational use, not for institutional glorification.

2. The management and stewardship of the school's resources are carefully considered and well-executed.

3. Less tangible resources of human capital and system infrastructure are also well-supported by the financial
4. If the institution can be improved through prudent investment of funds, the school stands ready to do so, top-to-bottom.

**Recommendation 1**

The Visiting Committee recommends that St. Paul's School relax the focus on Memorial Hall as a dominant symbol of weakness in the school's physical plant (and by extension, performing arts program). Rather than brooding on the problem, clearly articulate and publicize the relative level of priority, strategic approach, and thus provisional timing to the solution.

**Recommendation 2**

The Visiting Committee recommends that St. Paul's School consider ways in which the library could be more fully deployed as an integrated center for learning that serves student motivation and enrichment.

**Recommendation 3**

The Visiting Committee recommends that St. Paul's School assure that academic technology integration is fully considered and integrated into the excellent institutional technology systems that exist; keep a close eye on the effectiveness of the transition from a coordinator to a committee as technology is both democratized and optimized in the curriculum.
Standard 8: Residential Program and/or Homestay Program

Standard

The Residential Program and/or Homestay Program provide for an intentional curriculum, appropriate facilities, engaging activities, and adequate supervision to meet the needs of each student.

Visiting Team’s Assessment

Standard Met (SM1, SM2): The students’ experience is supported.
Standard Unmet (SU1, SU2): The students’ experience is compromised.

SM1. Standard Met: Evidences clear understanding, effective implementation and thorough planning for further improvement.

Narrative Summary

Brief narrative summary of the school’s position with regard to this standard. Text copied from the school’s Self-Study Report is in italics.

The physical plant is a significant strength of the School. The dorms are of high quality and are built to both give students privacy and to promote bonds and a sense of community. Along these lines, the size of the dorms (20-40 students) and the 100% residential environment also helps encourage comfort away from home, friendships, and community.

Additionally, advisers are generally deeply committed to this aspect of their work at the School, and the School sees the role of the adviser as a priority. Advisers are equipped with training, only have 4-7 advisees, and have regular contact time with these advisees at dinners, at house meetings, and informally in the house.

Finally, the Residential Program is most obvious in the Living in Community (LinC) curriculum, which is based on knowledge of adolescent development and aimed at teaching students five core Social-Emotional Competencies. This program--along with the Integrated Curriculum--is at the heart of the School’s residential life curriculum, and is intentionally planned and thoughtfully executed in classes and in the houses. The group felt that this programming embodies the mission of the school, which strives "to model and teach a respect for self and others; for one's spiritual, physical, and emotional well-being; for the natural environment; and for service to a greater good."

Observations

Through a house-based advisory system, vertical housing, in-house meetings, weekend activities, and a fully residential community, students and faculty overwhelmingly agree that the structures that make up the residential program at St. Paul's School are robust, safe, and growth-oriented. The new Integrated Curriculum, Living in Community (LinC) program, and the focus on development of five core Social Emotional Competencies combine to create the backbone of the residential program at St. Paul's School. These components generate a shared language around assessing and supporting students in their comprehensive lives at the school. The Visiting
Committee affirms that this begins -- and lives very well -- in the residential program.

With an average of 30 students and roughly 6 advisers per house, St. Paul's residential program is highly individualized. Adviser groups are comprised of 4-7 students, which ensures numerous touch points for faculty to support their advisees. The advising curriculum is outlined in the Advising Handbook and advisers gather regularly, both formally and informally, to discuss students of concern. The feedback we received from speaking with students, advisers, parents, and other constituents was overwhelmingly positive in regards to vertical housing. Students feel supported and spoke enthusiastically about having 'big brothers' and 'big sisters' in the dorm to serve as role models. Likewise, students who switch houses or advisers during their time at St. Paul's School reflected that this change is almost always positive.

Students have substantial freedom during the evening hours to visit each other in their dorms and, while they have check-in times, there is no formal study hall for all students. While there is a specific 'touch base' program for third formers to help them assimilate to life at boarding school, some faculty expressed a need to put more structures into place to encourage healthy study habits.

The Integrated Curriculum, which is in the earliest stages of implementation, focuses on intellectual growth and the development of five core Social Emotional Competencies (Self-Management, Self-Awareness, Social Awareness, Relationship Skills, and Positive Decision Making). The foundation for the Integrated Curriculum -- which investigates how to foster holistic student development -- naturally exists in the residential program. Even though the faculty had difficulty articulating the logistical manifestations of the curriculum school-wide (in academics and athletics, for example), they nearly universally agreed that the philosophical pillars of the curriculum create a constructive language and framework in residential life. With a focus on the actual proficiencies that a student is developing, advisers identify and assess students' skills, rather than their character; doing so takes judgement out of conversations and concentrates on growth of specific competencies over time.

Beginning in 2013-2014, St. Paul's School began implementation of a Living in Community (LINC) curriculum. According to the program description, LINC is a 'comprehensive social emotional residential life curriculum' that is built upon the core values and foundational documents of the school. It operates as a part of the Integrated Curriculum, and recognizes that 'all spaces and places are classrooms and that the potential for growth and development is present in every student experience.' LINC is integrated into a broad array of policies, and is woven into the culture and practices of the residential program. Faculty, prefects, and LINC Leaders collaboratively execute the curriculum in both formal (required classes, SPS Voices, LINC Days, Chapel Council, in-house meetings, etc.) and informal ways (ongoing monitoring of students by advisers). Counselors, Deans, and the Vice Rector for School Life develop lesson plans for each seminar, and they also periodically train other faculty through Residential Life Seminars, faculty meetings, and in-house meetings and debriefs. As the program develops, the Visiting Committee agrees that buy-in from various constituents will continue to increase. One of the biggest areas for growth in the LINC program is determining a system of assessment. While there exists anecdotal evidence that the curriculum is working, it has not yet been quantitatively measured.

One question that arose in the Standard (Indicator 8e) was around awareness of financial resources for students in need. While financial funding is available to students for some programming, some faculty and students felt that they do not know which students could benefit from financial supports or which opportunities were open to funding. As indicated in their own recommendations, St. Paul's School should educate faculty and students about protocol for accessing financial resources, which opportunities have funding, and identify students who have high need. This may help high-need students to feel more settled and supported.

Finally, as a result of a recent evaluation of the strategic plan, the school created the Transitions Task Force to address the topic of equity and inclusion on campus. In consultation with other boarding schools, St. Paul's School is creating a vision for a summer program for students from underrepresented populations, which it hopes to institute beginning in summer 2019. This program will have ongoing supports throughout the school year to ensure that students from underrepresented backgrounds have a holistically positive experience at St. Paul's School. We also encourage the school to continue to be intentional about establishing affinity match-ups for students within houses.
Conclusions and Explanation of Rating

St. Paul's School evidences clear understanding, effective implementation, and thorough planning for further improvement in the area of residential life, and thus the Visiting Committee affirms the school's assessment of SM1. The Visiting Committee is making a few important recommendations for further reflection and implementation of specific programs, and we feel that the school is currently engaged in conversations related to many of these suggestions.

Commendations

1. The Visiting Committee views the fully residential program as one of the strongest assets of the school. Students and faculty overwhelmingly praise the vertical housing and in-house advising structures for enhancing their experience, relationships, and growth.
2. The Visiting Committee applauds St. Paul's School for their commitment to educating and evaluating the whole student. The Integrated Curriculum and LINC program stem from the notion that everything (athletics, arts, dorms, chapel, and academics) can be a classroom, and that education should be both content-based and skills-driven.
3. Likewise, the focus on the development of the five core Social Emotional Competencies is innovative and has proven positive thus far.

Recommendation 1

While the Integrated Curriculum, SECs, and LINC are assimilating well into the residential experience, the Visiting Committee recommends that St. Paul's School continue to pursue ways to incorporate those programs into other aspects of the school. This may include increased faculty training as well as a system of quantitatively assessing these programs.

Recommendation 2

The Visiting Committee endorses the school's recommendation to continue to educate faculty and students about protocols for accessing available financial resources for students who have high need, and clarifying which opportunities or programs have funds available.

Recommendation 3

Based on some feedback from students who stated that there can sometimes be a lack of diversity in dorms, the Visiting Committee recommends that the Heads of House team should continue to review the housing process with diversity, inclusiveness, and affinity in mind, and that the school continue to pursue ideas around gender-inclusive housing.

Recommendation 4

The Visiting Committee affirms the school's own recommendation to investigate supports for international students and those from underrepresented populations. They should continue the work of the Transitions Task Force to develop a summer and ongoing program to support such students.
Standard 9: Faculty

Standard

There is a sufficient number of appropriately qualified faculty to carry out the mission of the school and the school follows a comprehensive and defined program of professional development that supports continued enhancement of teachers' skills.

Visiting Team's Assessment

Standard Met (SM1, SM2): The students’ experience is supported.
Standard Unmet (SU1, SU2): The students’ experience is compromised.

SM2. Standard Met: Evidences understanding, evolving implementation and planning for improvement.

Narrative Summary

Brief narrative summary of the school's position with regard to this standard. Text copied from the school's Self-Study Report is in italics.

St. Paul's School meets Standard 9 with a mark of SM1 by demonstrating a clear understanding, effective implementation, and thorough planning for further improvement in all areas of faculty work. There are a sufficient number of appropriately qualified faculty to carry out the mission of the School, and the School follows a comprehensive and defined program of professional development that supports the continued enhancement of faculty skills. With ample financial resources, the School supports and requires on-going faculty growth in all areas of work, including teaching, advising, coaching. The School continues to strengthen its efforts to recruit and retain a more diverse faculty and to offer faculty discussions and on-going training on equity and diversity throughout the year. The faculty feel they are treated with respect and believe that the School sets clear expectations for their professional behavior. They also feel well supported with respect to compensation, workloads, and working conditions. While the School has worked hard to improve equity in faculty workloads in the last five years, there remain some faculty who perceive a lack of transparency in workload and compensation decisions. The School would benefit by making all such faculty assignments and decisions clearer to all. The School has a well-defined program for the evaluation and supervision of faculty; however, the current Ongoing Professional Learning program should be further refined so that the experience becomes more meaningful and efficient for both the faculty who are under review as well as for the administrators who are charged with the evaluation responsibilities. While faculty do not always feel fully prepared or trained to take on all of the tasks to which they are assigned (coaching and advising, for example) in a demanding boarding school environment, the faculty are well qualified, trained and experienced in the primary areas to which they are assigned (teaching, college advising, student admissions, for example).

Observations

The Visiting Committee is impressed by the comprehensive manner in which St. Paul's School seeks to engage, support, and develop its faculty. A close look at the processes of supporting faculty shows that long-standing practices of fully financing professional development opportunities and faculty needs continues to be strongly foundational in supporting the mission of the school. Recently implemented programs, such as the Ongoing Professional Learning program and the effort to balance workload and compensation (Workload Dashboard) are
important and laudable achievements, but they need to be supported and refined so that they are effective in promoting faculty growth.

Many faculty members question the effectiveness of some aspects of the Ongoing Professional Learning evaluation process; with the number of faculty that are evaluated each term, observations by administrators are seen as too brief (often only 10 minutes) and limited in feedback to be helpful. Observations done by department heads are seen as more useful because an entire class period is observed. Additionally, several faculty would like to have more immediate feedback soon after observations occur rather than waiting for the entire OPL process to be completed. There is some lack of clarity about who should observe department heads when they go through the process. Many faculty members and students question the effectiveness and the value of student evaluations; students find writing a number of evaluations at one time cumbersome and faculty find them less than helpful in providing meaningful feedback. Faculty also express confusion about what is expected in the written self reflection that is to be completed the term before the OPL process. Faculty are supposed to reflect on their teaching practices in relation to the Integrated Curriculum, social and emotional competencies, and learning from the Faculty Seminar. While the latter two are understandable by most, nearly all teachers do not understand the shared meaning around the term "Integrated Curriculum." It is unclear to the Visiting Committee how reflections on this term have been an effective part of the OPL process since its inception if it is a concept that has not fully been embraced by the entire school community. Finally, some faculty expressed an interest in having the administration consider ways to allow for differentiation of evaluation/assessment of faculty that is tied to both subject matter and teaching experience. Overwhelmingly, the faculty find the day-long visiting faculty observation and the subsequent visit to another school the most beneficial parts of the process. Hosting a subject-matter colleague from another school, having that person observe their teaching and receiving both immediate and written suggestions for their professional growth, coupled with the opportunity to observe their colleague at another school, is rated highly by the faculty. Evaluation and suggestions from the visiting faculty are seen as extremely helpful because they are more comprehensive and closely directed to their specific subject than what they receive in-house. It is clear that there is inherent value in the OPL process and the Visiting Committee hopes that the school continues to refine and adapt it to meet the needs of the faculty.

The effort to make the responsibilities of faculty across the entire school more transparent is highly commendable. The Workload Dashboard is a monumental undertaking to equitably assign workload of faculty and while the faculty may want more transparency in this process, faculty members have the opportunity to meet with the Vice Rector for Faculty to discuss their workload. There is also a common thread of concern from the faculty desiring more of a role in driving decision making at the school in terms of major curricular programs and practices. In addition, there is a desire for more open communication between the administration and the faculty on the decision making process and the reasons for new school-wide directions. Faculty have a general feeling of being told what to do, rather than being embraced as full partners in defining the curriculum.

Efforts to increase the racial diversity of the faculty this past year are strong and commendable. The Vice Rector for Faculty has put into place several guidelines and procedures to support the creation of a more diverse faculty, such as the use of a consultant metric to determine both candidate strengths and the needs of the hiring department, having more administrative presence in hiring committees, and making a strong commitment to prioritize a diversity hire before other hires.

The orientation and mentoring process for new faculty is also intentionally supportive of both their need to understand the workings of the school and their growth as a first-year teacher. The program is clear, organized, and includes a variety of St. Paul's School voices and access to programatic information.

Conclusions and Explanation of Rating

While the St. Paul's School administration has done an impressive job creating a variety of new programs to support the faculty, the Visiting Committee chose to revise this standard from SM1 to SM2 in order to encourage both the faculty and the administration to work more cohesively in determining the future curricular path of the school. The Visiting Committee has several recommendations for improving programs, policies, and practices that center on faculty professional development and the creation of a school-wide shared understanding of teaching and learning.
Commendations

1. The Visiting Committee commends the school on its comprehensive onboarding and mentoring processes for new faculty that includes participation by a cross-section of the faculty and staff.

2. The Visiting Committee commends the school on its strong efforts to identify policies and practices around hiring a more diverse faculty.

3. The Visiting Committee commends the school on the development and implementation of a new faculty professional growth and evaluation program.

4. The Visiting Committee commends the school on the development of a standardized process to equalize faculty workload.

Recommendation 1

The Visiting Committee recommends the school would benefit from strengthening both communication and shared curricular design work between the administration and the faculty that goes beyond the good, yet reactive, work of the Faculty Liaison Committee and department chairs to create more proactive curricular development and reform.

Recommendation 2

The Visiting Committee recommends that the school include faculty in evaluating and adjusting the Ongoing Professional Learning program to focus more on differentiated professional growth, effective observation and feedback, and clear expectations for the process. Once the school has explored and institutionalized the importance of an Integrated Curriculum, the role that this will play in faculty professional development and evaluation should be clearly defined to directly meet the growth needs of the faculty.

Recommendation 3

The Visiting Committee recommends that the entire school community embrace and support the hiring and retention of diverse faculty, staff, and administrators. Additionally, reviewing the program and curriculum to be more reflective of the student body will help to create an atmosphere in which diversity in the school community is embraced and even celebrated.
Standard 10: Administration

Standard

The administration provides leadership and maintains a structure to facilitate the effective functioning of the school, including the participation of faculty in decision-making.

Visiting Team's Assessment

Standard Met (SM1, SM2): The students’ experience is supported.
Standard Unmet (SU1, SU2): The students’ experience is compromised.

SM2. Standard Met: Evidences understanding, evolving implementation and planning for improvement.

Narrative Summary

Brief narrative summary of the school's position with regard to this standard. Text copied from the school's Self-Study Report is in italics.

St. Paul's School has a system in place to gather information and feedback, make decisions, and disseminate information about these decisions. Committees made of representatives from the faculty, students, and administration gather information and data on a specific topic to provide a recommendation to the Rector. The Rector then uses this recommendation in the decision-making process. Decisions are communicated in a variety of ways. Most are communicated during faculty meetings, department meetings, or adviser meetings. The school has a structure for each of the different areas that provides for communication and organization. Department heads, Heads of House, and the Athletic Director communicate regarding academics, residential life and athletics. All of these components facilitate the effective functioning of the school.

Significant work has been completed since our last evaluation in many of the suggested indicators below. Faculty have more opportunities to be part of the decision making process through committee work in a variety of topics. While faculty have these opportunities to participate in the decision making process through committee work, many still feel that there could be more transparency regarding how decisions are made and others would like a more direct connection to the decision making process.

Observations

As shown by the 86% of faculty who strongly agree or agree that the school's policies are administered fairly and reflect the values of the school, the Visiting Committee found that the school has a strong set of administrators who are charged with carrying out both day-to-day operations and longer-term responsibilities. The school has the resources to have a robust team of leaders covering every aspect of the school's operation. We noted, though, that the sheer number of people involved does sometimes make taking action more challenging while also making it unclear who "owns" both the decisions and outcomes related to key priorities. A more streamlined structure would allow action to be taken more quickly, efficiently, and perhaps even transparently (as decisions would be clearly linked to particular positions and offices).

There are many opportunities for faculty voices to be heard including the Faculty Liaison Committee, the department heads, and various ad-hoc committees and task forces. There is a Staff Liaison Committee but it
does not seem to be as heavily used as the Faculty Liaison Committee, which meets every week and includes the Rector in alternating weeks. Faculty bring a wide range of topics to the Faculty Liaison Committee, who will then decide whether to share the concern with the Rector and the Vice-Rector for Faculty or refer the faculty member elsewhere. While the Faculty Liaison Committee plays an important role in representing faculty views and concerns, we observed that the FLC hopes that they can empower more faculty members to be comfortable going directly to administrators themselves. The department head group meets each week and is empowered to make decisions impacting the academic program only; other decisions are relayed upwards through administration.

Despite the large number of committees (and we did hear of a certain amount of "committee fatigue" felt by faculty members given their large number of other duties), we did observe a great deal of concern about decisions appearing to come from above without full consultation with the community. We heard the term "Rector-run school" used on a number of occasions but we also recognized the committed work that the Rector has been making to change to a "Rector-led school" instead. While some faculty did express concerns about top-down decision making, many more recognized that most initiatives come from a committee or task force that is co-chaired by a senior administrator and a faculty member, who is often a department head or equivalent. The implementation of these initiatives are normally championed by an administrator and some did share concerns that those administrators did not return to consult with faculty enough.

In particular, many questioned the effectiveness of the faculty-wide surveys to evaluate administrators, identifying two concerns in particular: that the surveys all arrived at once, which made filling them out onerous, and there was not enough evidence that anyone was paying attention to the comments. This may be in part due to the fact that all feedback is anonymous and it is unclear where the problems lie. These two faculty perceptions are most likely responsible for suppressed participation in the surveys and perhaps also for a sense of disenfranchisement among faculty. Faculty also expressed concerns that hiring committees are formed but the final decision may not follow committee recommendations. Lastly, the place where there seemed to be particular confusion around "ownership" of various initiatives involved the Dean of Studies, Dean of Teaching and Learning, and Vice Rector for Faculty positions, which give the impression that academic responsibility is spread across a number of roles.

Administrative function beyond faculty and academic life seems to operate in very healthy ways, from admissions to advancement, to finance and operations. Indeed, these operations are particularly well-staffed. It is worth drawing attention to an impending transition in the Vice Rector for Operations and Finance role, a position that has had particularly strong and sustained leadership. Interestingly, however, the Self-Study shed very little light on any administrative function beyond academic life and did not show a strong appreciation for the managerial expertise needed to run a complex institution.

Conclusions and Explanation of Rating

The strength of the administration both collectively and individually as well as the wide range of opportunities for faculty input provides an effective structure to facilitate the functioning of the school. However, the Visiting Committee made several observations that resulted in a number of material recommendations and warrant changing the school's self-assessment from SM1 to SM2.

Commendations

The Visiting Committee particularly commends the dedication and professionalism of the administration of the school at all levels. Despite the many challenges that the school has faced over the last few years, everyone has remained committed to supporting students and moving initiatives forward. In fact, the Visiting Committee was impressed by the way that existing initiatives have evolved and new ones created in light of the school's commitment to creating a safe and supportive environment for students.
Recommendation 1

The Visiting Committee recommends that St. Paul's School continue the excellent work that the Rector has done to change the culture from a "Rector-run" to "Rector-led" school. The work that has been done to flatten the leadership so that administrators at all levels are empowered to lead initiatives should be continued.

Recommendation 2

The Visiting Committee recommends that St. Paul's School find ways to issue the evaluation surveys for administrators at convenient times for faculty. The school should consider a staggered evaluation program whereby a few people are evaluated each year over a three-year cycle. This would provide enough time for faculty and staff to provide thorough evaluations, for feedback to be given to administrators, and for results to be reported back to the faculty as a whole. The use of an anonymous tool should be evaluated to consider if the resulting feedback is useful. In the end, the faculty need evidence that their feedback is heard and used.

Recommendation 3

The Visiting Committee recommends that St. Paul's School find more effective ways to communicate with faculty and staff on the reasoning and progress behind initiatives or changes to school policy. While the committee is comfortable that the administration listens to faculty input and considers all options thoughtfully, we recognize that there is often a communication gap between the receipt of that information and a final decision being made. We urge the school administration at all levels to prioritize communication updates as they move through a decision making process.

Recommendation 4

The Visiting Committee recommends that St. Paul's School continue with plans to appoint a new Institutional Researcher. This appointment provides an opportunity to use data to help examine assumptions, evaluate results, and inform decision making. This position needs to be empowered to analyze all data and must avoid being seen as only researching data that may support an official position.

Recommendation 5

The Visiting Committee observed that a lack of team cohesion and leadership interfered with the smooth running of the administrative team at times. We recommend that the school combat this tendency by improving collective deliberation and decision-making so that the whole team is fully invested in initiatives and projects.
Standard 11: Evaluation and Assessment

Standard

The school engages in forms of programmatic assessment consistent with fulfilling its mission and core values. This data is used to inform decision-making and planning.

Visiting Team's Assessment

Standard Met (SM1, SM2): The students’ experience is supported.
Standard Unmet (SU1, SU2): The students’ experience is compromised.

SM2. Standard Met: Evidences understanding, evolving implementation and planning for improvement.

Narrative Summary

Brief narrative summary of the school's position with regard to this standard. Text copied from the school's Self-Study Report is in italics.

Faculty and staff at St. Paul's invest considerable time, energy, and resources to assess program and personnel, with particular emphasis on the connections between programmatic assessment and the School's efforts to fulfill its mission and to reflect its core values. While the School is continuing to improve upon both the structures and methods it uses in assessing various elements of its program, [the School's] recent, current, and planned work all show commitment to rigorous, thoughtful evaluation and assessment that inform the planning and the execution of [the School's] work with and for the students of St. Paul's School.

Observations

The school has several mechanisms in place for evaluation and review of its programs and employees. The Visiting Committee's observations affirm the descriptions relating to Standard 11 of the Self-Study. In particular, [the] school conducts annual program review and revision based on assessment of student performance... along several metrics—academic departments do this to assess the strengths and weaknesses of their course offerings, the Dean of Students’ Office does this to assess residential life and community culture, and the Student Review Committee does this for those students about whom adults in the community raise concerns. The academic department review processes, hiring protocol review, and recent evaluations of the LINC program involve both methodologies developed with consultants and engagement with teachers from other schools.

Each department of the school undergoes a thorough departmental review process on a scheduled regular basis. As part of this review process, departments invite visiting committees of educators to spend time with the department to look closely and critically at various aspects of school life. Each department that has had review has benefited clearly from the critical, external perspectives, and each department has worked to respond thoughtfully to the questions, concerns, and opportunities that the visiting committees have raised.

The school currently does not survey current students during their time at St. Paul's to assess whether its programs fulfill the mission of the school, however [the school is] currently developing mechanisms to do [a] review of student experience more holistically. [The] College Advising Office does survey 6th formers, but this is not really an exit interview of their overall experience at SPS. The College Advising Office also surveys recent graduates, but again, this effort is more to collect data relevant to the college process and the experience of our alumni at college to help inform the work of the College Advisers than it is to engage in examination of the
School's program as a whole. The Alumni Office also reaches out to alumni every two years with surveys constructed by the Dean of Teaching and Learning, which has helped assess the program. For example, prior to the establishment of the LINC program, the School learned of alumni dissatisfaction with the prior residential life program. [The school is] already working on a program to measure and assess [its] students' social, emotional, cognitive and intellectual growth as well as their academic progress and learning.

Most people in leadership positions undergo periodic self-evaluation of their performance. The Rector completes a yearly self-evaluation, which is shared with the board, and [a]ll members of the administrative team receive annual feedback from the faculty and/or staff who report directly to them, and/or the full faculty if appropriate. After reviewing this feedback, they write reflections on it and on their own perceptions of their work, after which they have conversations with the Rector or Vice Rector to whom they report. Heads of Houses reflect upon their performance in that role in meetings with the Dean of Students and the Vice Rector for Faculty; however, it does not appear that department chairs undergo a similar process of self-evaluation. Additionally, there is an annual self-evaluation process for the board, where each member is provided with the opportunity to provide significant feedback, which is then shared with the Committee on Trustees and Governance. [The school has] clear supervision structures, clear criteria for work, and clear guidelines for review. The Visiting Committee's conversations with faculty as well as [f]aculty surveys show some confusion and disagreement over the clarity and process of OPL in recent years.

Departing faculty members have the option to participate in exit interviews conducted by the Director of Human Resources. Responses to exit interviews are anonymized and have identifying information removed, then compiled into reports annually that are given to the Vice Rector for Faculty and the Vice Rector for Operations and Finance.

The school's Employment website, Faculty Handbook, and Student Handbook (Living in Community) all contain explicit statements of the school's commitment to fostering diversity and an inclusive community. The school is developing an inclusivity statement for website publication. The assessment of diversity goals remains an ongoing process. As a part of a strategic planning process, the Inclusive Community Taskforce (2016-2017) evaluated issues regarding diversity, inclusion and equity. The recommendations were accepted by the Board. As an example of subsequent application, there is now an Inclusive Community Committee. This current academic year, the school underwent a climate assessment with an outside consultant to see what has improved/changed in regards to equity over the past 10 years. The school is committed to continued improvement in order to achieve its diversity and equity goals.

Conclusions and Explanation of Rating

Given the absence of an existing holistic longitudinal study, and a lack of collective clarity around the OPL process and evaluation of department heads, the Visiting Committee affirms the school's assessment of an SM2 rating for Standard 11.

Commendations

1. The Visiting Committee commends the school for the significant time and effort invested into continually assessing and improving its student life programs.
2. The Visiting Committee commends the school for its commitment to diversity and inclusion, and the deliberate work to assess those areas of school life to help inform future improvement and changes.
3. The Visiting Committee commends the school for its investment and efforts to ensure the academic programs align with the mission of the school though its thorough and informative departmental review process.
4. The Visiting Committee commends the school for its robust process for yearly review of individuals in leadership which includes community members' feedback and self-reflection.
5. The Visiting Committee commends the school for its efforts to encourage the continued growth and development of all faculty members, regardless of years of experience or years of service to the school.
through various professional development opportunities.

Recommendation 1

The Visiting Committee recommends that St. Paul's School establish a more formalized longitudinal study for holistic evaluation of students' growth and development of Social Emotional Competencies and of the Integrated Curriculum.

Recommendation 2

The Visiting Committee affirms the school's desire to critique its use of the OPL model. In conjunction with this work, we recommend that the school also establish a regular and clearly articulated process for assessment and self-evaluation of department heads.

Recommendation 3

The Visiting Committee recommends that St. Paul's School consider establishing metrics for student success, which can then be utilized by the Admissions Office to assess and inform its processes.

Recommendation 4

The Visiting Committee recommends that St. Paul's School ensure it utilizes its commitment to institutional research to process and analyze data gathered from the Shared Responsibilities surveys in greater depth to assess and inform future changes to the program.

Recommendation 5

The Visiting Committee affirms the school's desire to gather and analyze information from alumni on their experiences at school and the impact of these on their lives.
Standard 12: Health and Safety

Standard

The school is a safe place that supports the physical, emotional and cognitive health and development of all students, faculty and staff.

Visiting Team's Assessment

Standard Met (SM1, SM2): The students’ experience is supported.
Standard Unmet (SU1, SU2): The students' experience is compromised.

SM1. Standard Met: Evidences clear understanding, effective implementation and thorough planning for further improvement.

Narrative Summary

Brief narrative summary of the school's position with regard to this standard. Text copied from the school's Self-Study Report is in italics.

The School is one of only a handful of schools that is fully residential for both students and faculty. The adults in the community strive to foster healthy relationships with all students through the advising system, in the houses, in the classrooms, on the playing fields, in clubs, at chapel, at meals, and during various special events.

The School has a strong infrastructure dedicated to the goal of maintaining a safe and healthy environment for students, faculty and staff. This is exemplified by the first-class life safety systems that exist across campus as well as through the School's commitment to qualified personnel, training, and the existence of clear standards in this area.

STRENGTHS

1. The School's health center, Clark House, is a well-integrated part of campus helping to serve both the emotional and physical needs of our students. Clark House is an integral part of our campus that serves our students to the fullest extent.
2. The School started its Living in Community (LinC) program in 2013 and to fully engage the community in meaningful discussions about our work as a School while keeping the “Three Es” at the forefront of what we do: engage, empathize and educate.
3. In an effort to reduce stress and encourage students to self-reflect, the School has increased its meditation offerings beyond voluntarily evening meditation. The School now offers an interdisciplinary course about reflection and meditation in addition to the the regular meditation sessions offered in Clark House and Ohrstrom Library. These regular meditation sessions are held to help support the students and adults manage the stressors of daily life.
4. The School has notably strong life safety systems including fire protection and physical building security.
5. The School's food services department provides a healthy, well-balanced meal plan on a daily basis.
6. The School's Crisis Response planning team and their ongoing commitment to continually practice and improve procedures.
7. The School's Athletic Training services offer exceptional care for our student athletes and the School is fortunate to have a strong relationship with the doctors at Concord Orthopaedics who run a bi-weekly clinic for SPS injured students.

Observations

The Visiting Committee agrees that St. Paul's School is a safe place that supports the physical, emotional, and cognitive health and development of all student and staff.

The Visiting Committee found that vertical housing and the presence of multiple advisers in the dormitories helps to develop relationships (student-to-student and student-to-faculty) that are based on trust and mutual respect. We did note that it is stated in the Self-Study that additional data from the students is needed to more formally support this, and the school has agreed that this will be done.

The safety of the students is a high priority for the school. In the past three years, locks were installed on all exterior doors on campus and members of the St. Paul's School community have key card access. This past year, locks were installed on all of the student rooms in dormitories. The only people with access to the room are the resident(s) of that room, the adults in the dorm, safety officers, the dean of students office, the vice rectors, and the rector.

The school has made great strides in improving its supervision of and accountability for students since the 2007 NEASC visit. The school's use of the REACH program has enabled adults to better track students when they are off campus and has lightened up the evening check-in process. Students must sign out using the REACH program on their phones any time they leave campus. Students report that they do use the program, because there are penalties if they fail to do so. During the evening, the adult on duty in each dormitory accesses a list of dorm residents using the REACH program. When a student checks in for the night, the adult notes this in the REACH program. If, after check-in, anyone is not marked as present, the dean on duty will give the adult on duty in the dorm a call to see if the student is actually there or begin to look elsewhere for the student. There is still concern about timely reporting when a student misses chapel or class as well as accountability of students not involved in athletics during the afternoon. It is possible that it will not be noticed that a student is missing until they are supposed to check in at the end of the day. The school has a system of checking in with younger students in the evening at the beginning of study hours (at 7:30) and before their check-in at 9:00.

In the evening, the adult on duty in each dormitory must be an active and visible presence in the dormitory. The Head of House receives a reduction in time (classroom, athletics, or advisees) and, in return, they are expected to spend an additional ten hours a week in their dormitories, interacting with students and being an active and visible presence.

The emotional and physical health and well-being of the students is a primary concern to the school and Clark House (the health center), right in the middle of campus, gets many visitors. The medical director calculated that over 25,000 student visits were made to Clark House last year. There is a need for an increase in staffing, and efforts have been made to fill two positions, but the question was raised about adding an additional counselor due to the influx of students seeking help.

The legal requirements of mandatory reporting, appropriate physical boundaries and healthy relationships, as well as guidelines for background checks and references, are carefully spelled out in the Faculty Handbook. The Self Study reiterates the importance of reminding all faculty and staff of these guidelines to ensure the health and well-being of all constituents.

The food service provides a variety of choices for the community but the members of the Visiting Committee found that food offerings were not labeled in terms of allergens (for example, nuts, shellfish, gluten, etc.), making it a challenge for an individual with many food allergies to select foods that will be safe for them to eat.

The Visiting Committee was impressed with the amount of time and attention that goes into keeping the students safe at St. Paul's School. The Emergency Management Team practices and reviews emergency procedures, both with live drills involving the entire community and also with table-top exercises for the team, where the team
can work through various possible situations together. The team leader keeps up to date on best practices for responding during an emergency as well as training the community on what these best practices are.

**Conclusions and Explanation of Rating**

The Visiting Committee agrees that St. Paul's School is a safe place that supports the physical, emotional, and cognitive health and development of all student and staff. Thus we support the school's self-assessment of SM1 with the understanding that data will be collected for Indicator 12b.

**Commendations**

1. The Visiting Team commends the school on the improvements in accountability since the last NEASC evaluation.

2. The Visiting Team commends Clark House (the health center) for being a welcoming place for students and for being able to deal with the various issues faced by adolescents.

3. The Visiting Team commends the school for supporting a proactive campus safety program.

**Recommendation 1**

The Visiting Committee recommends that St. Paul's School conduct a student survey to gather information for Indicator 12b: *Students affirm they are supported in the development of relationships (student to student and student to faculty) based on trust and mutual respect.*

**Recommendation 2**

The Visiting Committee recommends that St. Paul's School continue to improve accountability for student whereabouts during the academic day.

**Recommendation 3**

The Visiting Committee recommends that the food service label foods that contain allergens (nuts, seafood, gluten, etc.) in order to avoid an accidental and preventable allergic reaction.
Standard 13: Communication

Standard

The school maintains effective systems of external and internal communication and record keeping that inform all constituents and facilitate participation where appropriate.

Visiting Team's Assessment

Standard Met (SM1, SM2): The students’ experience is supported.
Standard Unmet (SU1, SU2): The students’ experience is compromised.

SM1. Standard Met: Evidences clear understanding, effective implementation and thorough planning for further improvement.

Narrative Summary

Brief narrative summary of the school's position with regard to this standard. Text copied from the school's Self-Study Report is in italics.

St. Paul's School meets the standard for effective systems of external and internal communication. Excellence in these areas is the result of a School-wide commitment to best practices and steady attention and is fueled by the substantial resources of the School. A commitment to effective and open communication begins at the top; the Rector of St. Paul's School promotes an open door policy that sets the tone for the entire community. The School makes savvy use of a number of platforms; a dedicated intranet, a content-rich website, regular newsletters and email, all backed by an Information Technology department staffed with professionals ready to address any challenge. The importance of human connection has not been lost in all of this; every program and department has regularly scheduled meetings that enable the face-to-face communication of information and solicitation of feedback.

The School's demonstrated excellence in the areas of record keeping and systems management is equally impressive. Important systems and files of all kinds are maintained in secure, fire-protected and climate controlled environments. Key members of the Executive Risk Management, Information Technology, Human Resources and Health Center teams review current protocols on a continuous basis to ensure adherence to best practices. The significant resources of the School ensure prompt adoption of new standards and enable ongoing training and equipment and system upgrades. St. Paul's School has long recognized the importance of maintaining complete and accurate records. In 2011 the School established a Data Protection Committee that is co-chaired by the director of information technology and the director of risk management. The responsibilities of this committee include oversight of the School's Written Information Security Plan (WISP) as well as ensuring all employees are sufficiently trained to understand the definition of personally identifiable information (PII) as well as their duty to maintain the security of PII.

The student handbook is revised, printed and distributed annually to all students and faculty. The handbook is also available online and is accessible via the school's intranet (millville.sps.edu), main website (sps.edu) and the password-protected parent portal (sps.myschoolapp.com). Prior to the start of every school year all students must affirm that they have read, understand and will abide by the School's expectations as laid out in the student handbook.

The Rector of St. Paul's School has an open door policy that helps to set the tone for communication throughout the School. Standing department meetings, faculty meetings, house meetings and adviser meetings are are a
weekly occurrence and their importance is reflected in the fact that all are printed in the School's academic planner. The School maintains two liaison committees, (one for staff and one for faculty) that support anonymous input on a wide range of School issues and policies. Department heads, the administrative team, Heads of House, Student Support Team and a variety of other reporting and committee structures exist in no small part in order to enable members of the community to voice concerns about academic decisions, school wide policies, budgets, staffing, scheduling and student issues, to name just a few of the topics that arise in a fully residential community. The School's Human Resources Department (HR) also has an open door policy in which any person (faculty and staff) can meet directly with the director of HR to voice concerns or share ideas about employment benefits, policies and practices. Exiting employees are offered an opportunity for an exit interview, so as to collect data on retention and potential improvements to School life.

The School's adviser system assures every parent has an accessible and immediate faculty point of contact. The faculty handbook includes an advising calendar which serves as a helpful framework for maintaining regular contact between the adviser, the parent and the advisee. In addition to more casual reporting by student Advisers, the School provides information about student's academic progress at nine points during each academic year. When students face academic, social and/or behavioral challenges a STAT (Student Teacher Assistance Team) meeting may be scheduled with parents. The goal of the STAT is to share information, identify issues and strategize solutions. There are several other open points of contact for parents including, House Heads, Coaches, the Dean of Students' office, the Alumni and Development office, the director of student support, the dean of studies, the medical director, the vice rector for school life and the rector. Contact information for all faculty, administrators and staff is published on the School's website (sps.edu/aboutsps/faculty). The School also encourages parents to share information anonymously via annual surveys.

St. Paul's School recognizes that a robust social media footprint is essential to keeping current and prospective families connected and engaged.

Observations

Upon arriving at St. Paul's School, the Visiting Committee encountered a myriad of successful ways that the school informs and creates dialogue among its community members. Through in-person meetings, both individually and in group form; in print materials, for both external and internal use; on whiteboards hung in key locations within dorms; or in digital mediums, via its own intranet or through social media platforms, St. Paul's School excels at capturing its work in both breadth and depth. The complex and interconnected nature of the school's fully residential program demand that communication take these many forms. Yet, at its heart, the school continues to rely on in-person conversation, through structures such as four all-school meetings per week, weekly dorm meetings, and daily faculty resident and adviser conversations with students. The committee also appreciates the school's vast array of committees and student-run organizations that foster dialogue and disseminate information within the community. Through a number of conversations, the committee heard that many members of the community rely on in-person communication to deliver their most important announcements and information, a method that affirms the school's sense of community yet also speaks to the shortcomings of email. At the same time, such in-person communication is challenging for some community members due to many commitments; the complexity of the school's program does limit the length and frequency of this in-person communication, particularly between students and their advisors.

The committee had access to the vast array of print materials that St. Paul's School creates to support its admissions efforts, its residential and academic program, its faculty support, and its development and alumni communications work. In some cases, as with the Faculty Handbook, the ST. Paul's School Handbook, and the school's course catalog, print documents and their supporting digital copies serve as a definitive resource. In other cases, as with the "Your Guide to St. Paul's School Handbook," print documents serve to publicize school experiences and programming.

St. Paul's School utilizes a number of technologies to support internal communications, including Millville, Google Suites, Canvas, and REACH, with Millville itself serving as a central access point for these different applications. In particular, St. Paul's School's use of REACH to facilitate communication between students, faculty, administrators, and parents regarding permissions stood out as a successful method for allowing different groups
of people to have access to the same information. Moreover, the work of maintaining and updating these technology communications platforms is managed by a number of different individuals who possess the appropriate content expertise. Through conversations with a number of members of the community, the Visiting Committee learned that while email continues to serve along with in-person conversations as one of the chief means of disseminating information, many faculty members and administrators felt that email was not the most reliable means of communicating with the school's students.

The Committee found that a variety of departments in the school blended use of both print media and digital media to capture the St. Paul's School experience. The strong bond between the Admissions Office and the Communications Office was apparent to the committee. The school's website serves as its primary outward-facing resource. St. Paul's School publishes school-generated content on Twitter and Facebook. Beyond the work by the admissions and communications offices, coaches and the larger athletic department manage Twitter feeds and occasionally live-stream contests.

Conclusions and Explanation of Rating

The Visiting Committee supports St. Paul's School's assessment of its communications as SM1. The school successfully fulfills each indicator on the indicator checklist, including the school's additional indicator (13k). Even in Monday's opening chapel program, students interested in pursuing advanced study were offered the ability to email or meet with the Dean of Studies to express their interest. Such an option allows students to obtain and convey information in the mode that best serves them, and it speaks to the challenges of managing information through both in-person and digital communications. One of the challenges yet also strengths of St. Paul's School's communications program is its effort to maintain person-to-person interactions while still translating these interactions into a digital space, chiefly through Millville, the school's website, print publications, and digital media presence. The school excels at achieving a balanced approach within this area. While the faculty survey within the Self Study referenced internal communications as a challenge for the school, the Visiting Committee found that such challenges have little to do with actual communications and arise instead from both varying degrees of transparency in the school's decision-making processes and the size and organization of the campus.

Commendations

The Visiting Committee agrees with the strengths of the school's communications program as outlined in its Self Study Report. In particular, the committee recognized St. Paul's School's dedication to its small group advising program, rooted in personal-to-person communication; its use of its chapel program to disseminate information and inform the community; its utilization of a number of information / content management systems; and its adoption of best practices in digital media to capture and promote St. Paul's School. Many members of the school's community affirmed the importance of the additional indicator (13k) regarding St. Paul's School's vibrant and complex social media presence; the cross development of resources between admissions and communications spoke to this success. At the heart of this standard, St. Paul's School's focus on living in community is mirrored by the school's commitment to in-person communication.

Recommendation 1

The Visiting Committee supports St. Paul's School's recommendation that the school explore ways to reduce duplication and redundancy with email communications, particularly considering the multiple communications platforms the school uses. As the Self Study recommends, adopting a group to study volume of email and how best to utilize the school's existing communications channels would well serve the entire school community and lessen the burden placed on faculty and administrators to duplicate information. As referenced above, a number of members of the community question if email serves as an effective way to communicate with the student body; such conversations are already on-going.
Recommendation 2

As an extension of the first recommendation, the Visiting Committee recommends that the research group discussed above also explore ways to strengthen the connections among different communications content developers at St. Paul's School. This work has as a model the clear relationship between the Communications Office and the Admission Office. Similarly, exploring ways that content from the school's academic experience can be mined to communicate to more constituencies would benefit the entire St. Paul's community's sense of self.

Recommendation 3

The Visiting Committee recommends that St. Paul's School consider how it utilizes technology platforms and digital media for internal communications. While the Self Study notes that 93% of parents believe the school communicates effectively, this number for students was 80%. For faculty, only 65% strongly agreed or agreed that the school maintains internal communications in an effective manner. In the simplest sense, St. Paul's School works hard to tell its story to the school community outside of Concord through digital platforms and social media; utilizing these mediums with equal aplomb when telling its story within its intimate community would further strengthen that community. Developing a central plan for how digital media is created and managed within the St. Paul's School community would potentially benefit all those who both create and consume such media.
Standard 14: Infrastructure

Standard

There are adequate resources (personnel, finances, facilities, equipment, and materials) to provide for the overall institutional needs of the school.

Visiting Team's Assessment

Standard Met (SM1, SM2): The students’ experience is supported.
Standard Unmet (SU1, SU2): The students’ experience is compromised.

SM1. Standard Met: Evidences clear understanding, effective implementation and thorough planning for further improvement.

Narrative Summary

Brief narrative summary of the school's position with regard to this standard. Text copied from the school's Self-Study Report is in italics.

St. Paul's more than satisfies all the indicators for Standard 14. Foremost, it is fortunate to have a large endowment ($602 million as of 6/30/2017), with an annual return of 12.8% in FY17. With an annual spending rate ranging between 4.1% and 4.9% over the last 10 years, the endowment has contributed significantly to offsetting annual operating expenses.

Complementing this sound management of the endowment, the School's finances are well managed. They are overseen by the Board of Trustees, particularly its Finance Committee, with day-to-day management provided by the School's vice rector for operations and finance and a professional staff in the Business Office. In addition, there is a detailed budget process each year, with final approval by the Trustees. The Business Office follows established financial controls and the School's finances were audited annually by a global accounting firm during the period 2007-2017. Each time, the auditors unqualifiedly certified the School's financial reporting as accurate and, significantly, no management letters were issued in the years 2007 to 2017. Similarly, the School's broad insurance program is reviewed and approved by Board of Trustees on an annual basis and there is a dedicated risk manager within the Business Office. The audit and the insurance program are overseen by the Board of Trustees by its Audit and Risk Committee.

The School's buildings and ground are well maintained by Facilities, with oversight by the Board's Grounds and Buildings Committee. With its favorable Facilities Condition Index (FCI) of 4.8%, St. Paul's is among the leaders of its peer institutions in staying up-to-date on the maintenance and repair of its facilities. Since the last NEASC evaluation, the School has expended in excess of $75M on substantial renovations of existing buildings along with its new state-of-the-art Math & Science Center. Of that amount, roughly $60M has been spent directly on educational facilities.

The only identified facilities shortcoming was the need for an updated performing arts venue. It should also be noted that the Oates Performing Arts Center (which is comprised of two buildings - one for music and one for dance) are 40 years old, and while still serviceable and meeting the needs of the music and dance programs, are beginning to show their age. The School has been guided by a comprehensive and visionary Master Plan for its
St. Paul's has a vibrant and successful Advancement program, which has achieved impressive donation levels in both the annual fund and a recent comprehensive campaign. As a result of staffing changes in the Advancement office, a seasoned fundraising leader with experience in campaign leadership was hired. Adding front-line fundraisers and consolidating shared operational functions increased the total headcount from 18 to 21, while also providing deeper bench strength. Advancement activities are overseen by the Development Committee of the Board of Trustees.

The School has an institutional technology plan that delivers the IT needed by each department -- whether academic, administrative or otherwise -- and also successfully manages cost through a detailed budget process. Equipment is replaced on a rotating basis. IT has enhanced security throughout the network and through better user requirements and training. Over the last decade, St. Paul's has made significant investments in its IT, on both system and individual user levels.

Observations

While it is easy to recognize that St. Paul's School is operating from a position of strength in this area in particular, the school nonetheless sets a high standard for the oversight, professionalism, and management expertise shown in all of the areas covered under this standard. While much credit goes to the Vice Rector for Operations and Finance, there are excellent systems of control from the board level to the office level in all areas. Furthermore, the sense in which all of the functions of this standard are integrated into one area of administration is commendable. There is a standard of quality and care that pervades all of these areas, and the ease with which the Visiting Committee was able to access information and the manner in which the information was presented both speak to the standards of clarity and meticulous accounting that have become habits at the administrative and board levels over the years. It should be noted that legal compliance and response has become a major part of this area of administration as well, and the school has handled that significant responsibility both well and in addition to other responsibilities.

The investment management function for the endowment falls largely to the board and they are able to draw on their engagement and expertise to manage the endowment both responsibly and for strong positive return. The budget is also effectively overseen by the board, and the strong ratings and responses the school has received from auditors demonstrate a high degree of compliance and fiscal responsibility. While budgets are carefully managed, there is certainly a sense (echoed in Standard 6) that the school has ready and generous access to funds it needs to improve its program and institutional strength.

As in the Self Study of Standard 6, attention was drawn to Memorial Hall as a leading Buildings and Grounds issue, though the Self Study report on Standard 14 is more measured in its critique of the existing performing arts facilities. Though the report asserts that Memorial Hall is not clearly addressed in the Campus Master Plan, discussions with school personnel indicate that there are plans in play, but that other funding priorities and the large scale of such a capital project are barriers to immediate action. Otherwise, the capacity of the school to use its resources to improve the physical plant of the school is very impressive. The report states that "some of the components" of the master plan have been executed. A more accurate statement would be that "many" if not "most" components have been addressed. The school is in a position to recognize the significant progress it has made very deliberately and effectively over the years in its building while addressing more specifically what its approach to Memorial Hall will be.

Fundraising has obviously been a strength in all dimensions, and it is particularly notable that alumni participation (and parent participation) have remained strong despite the recent stresses on the school's image and message. While some of this continued strength is owed to deep institutional identification and identity, much is also due to the simple effectiveness of advancement operations. A large staff has seen turnover and transition in recent years and the school should take care to manage change and growth in advancement carefully, particularly given the transition in headship and in the Vice Rector for Finance and Operations leadership roles. The bottom line is strong and the reservoir of connection and affection is deep; nevertheless, sound management and refined
sense of purpose and engagement will remain crucial to the school's fiscal well-being.

Lastly, the administration and leadership of technology drew a great deal of praise during the visit. Not only are resources available, they are smartly deployed. Equal attention is given to compliance and security as to advancing continual improvement of technological systems and training. Far from an area of complaint or concern, technological infrastructure and deployment was seen as an area of distinct strength.

Conclusions and Explanation of Rating

The report notes that the school should "stay the course," but even more so the school should recognize and memorialize the systems that are now in place that assure such smooth and successful running of these critical functions of the school. The main area of vulnerability seems to be in the area of future leadership, but the school has left itself in a very strong position to attract a highly capable leader who can continue to work with intention, talent, and deliberation to assure the strength and sustainability of the institution through its considerable resources. The Visiting Committee affirms the school's rating of SM1.

Commendations

1. The school's resources are considerable, and they are matched by the expertise displayed in their management.

2. The school's management strength is exercised across all of the functions of finance and business, exhibiting a standard of operating excellence well worth following as an institution.

Recommendation 1

The Visiting Committee refers the school to our recommendation in Standard 6 regarding Memorial Hall. Concern over its condition needs its own specific context and approach: one which Operations and Finance is fully capable of developing and deploying (as it already has in previous master planning), but which might be communicated more broadly and more intentionally.

Recommendation 2

The Visiting Committee recommends that St. Paul's School assure that succession plans for Operations and Finance leadership (and any possible structural changes) are fully considered and endorsed and that the school consider this hire a major institutional transition on the scale of head or board leadership.
Standard 15: The Accreditation Process

Standard

The school is fully committed to institutional improvement and to the process of accreditation. The school completed an inclusive Self-Study, conducted in a spirit of full disclosure and following Association guidelines; responds to Commission recommendations and the requirement to meet all Standards; and participates fully in the peer review process, hosting a Visiting Committee and sending personnel to serve on Visiting Committees to other institutions.

Visiting Team's Assessment

Standard Met (SM1, SM2): The students' experience is supported.
Standard Unmet (SU1, SU2): The students' experience is compromised.

SM2. Standard Met: Evidences understanding, evolving implementation and planning for improvement.

Narrative Summary

Brief narrative summary of the school's position with regard to this standard. Text copied from the school's Self-Study Report is in italics.

Based on the information this committee obtained through interviews, email exchanges, and documents gathered we believe that the school is fully committed to institutional improvement and to the process of accreditation. The inclusion of all members of the faculty as well as administration and staff members displays a dedication to make the process fully inclusive. The method used for assigning committees through voluntarily signing up on a Survey Monkey allowed members of the community interested in a particular area of school life to join in a particular standard committee. By utilizing all members of the faculty and administration, along with key staff members in particular departments, the school was able to fully cover all insights into all aspects of the process. At the end of our work, our committee sent out a questionnaire to all committee heads asking them to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the process, as well as offer suggestions for changes. We found their answers to be consistent across the board.

The Standard 15 Committee pointed out four strengths, (1) the organization of groups scheduled into specific times during the Late Spring and Fall terms allowed them to gather and review materials in a timely manner, (2) the use of the Canvas and Google docs, (3) that the committee members were all committed to the process and participated with a positive attitude and, (4) that committees were diverse in composition, allowing for a healthy range of viewpoints.

All of the identified weaknesses were logistical, such as difficulty in aligning our meetings with the schedules of our participating staff members, more time for the larger groups, and committees requesting members with specific expertise to be included in their group.

Observations

The Visiting Committee notes that there might be a misunderstanding regarding the timing and execution of Standard 15 as a measure of the full Self Study process. According to the Self Study report, The Committee met four times over this [September - October] period. Each aspect of the standard was assigned to a particular member for gathering of information. In November, (the Committee Chair) gathered reports from all members of
the committee and created a first draft of the report. On December 5, the committee met to review and finalize the report and load information into portal. The Standard 15 Committee reviewed the Self Study I process only in its early stages. Since the broad scope of the report was presented to the faculty in January 2018, the final document, the faculty reaction, and Self Study II were not addressed in the report on Standard 15. There is no evidence that the report as a whole, once completed, was thoroughly reviewed by the Standard 15 Committee or indeed by members of the Steering Committee.

Some of the irregularities in the final product of the Self Study report might be accounted for by the missed opportunity for full and final review. The Visiting Committee found that the Self Study was not entirely complete: several supporting documents were missing from the initial portal download, including some indicator checklists and program descriptions. We also found that certain standards were treated less thoroughly and carefully than others. By the nature of the school's approach to the formation of the Standard Committees, many administrators did not participate directly in the standard committee process; Steering Committee members did not participate in the Standard 15 process. Although the process did give some voice to the faculty, neither a unifying perspective nor penetrating observations were evident in the Self Study report, leaving open the question of the effectiveness of the approach. The Standard 15 Committee approach to its formation and work is articulated below:

The Standard 15 committee gathered information from various offices in the school. The vice rector for faculty provided names of faculty who had served on NEASC visiting committee. That list was augmented with a general email asking all community members if they had participated in an NEASC visiting committee. [The Standard 15 Committee was] given a full list of all meeting times by the dean of studies as well as various lists of committees and committee chairs. Most of the work was done in contacting the various chairs to gather feedback on the overall NEASC process.

While it seems that the administration is familiar with the study, it is unclear how two obvious formatting errors made it into the first five pages. In addition, an incorrect Standard 15 Indicator Checklist (the Indicator Checklist intended to provide quality control for the area of process itself) was submitted and others were submitted in irregular fashion. Also, the availability of faculty, staff, and administration to the Visiting Committee during the visit itself was not consistent or assured. In short, the Self Study itself and the Visiting Committee experience seemed to be engaged as mid-level priorities. While this shortcoming is perhaps understandable given competing long-term priorities and more urgent immediate matters, the Visiting Committee regrets that the school did not present itself in a more organized and functional manner for the process and visit itself.

According to the Standard 15 Committee, The School will prepare for and respond to the visiting committee's recommendations in the following manner: Each of the standard committees will identify strengths, weaknesses, and recommendations that will be included in Part I of the Self Study. Then (the dean of studies) and (the vice rector for Faculty) will take those recommendations and work with the steering committee to prioritize the recommendations which will be included in the Self Study Part II. The visiting committee will then visit in April and review our Self-Study, Part I and Part II as well as our recommendations. Once this task has been completed, the visiting committee will make their own major recommendations, and those recommendations will come back to the School for review. The School will set a timeline to address each of these based on short, medium, and long-term priorities. There will be a two-year interim evaluation that the School will also submit to update NEASC on our progress.

St. Paul's School was a polite host to the committee. Fifteen members of the current faculty have served on visiting committees, so the school seemed well-disposed to understand the intent and spirit of the process. According to the members of the community that we have interviewed, St. Paul's School has several strategies in place to move the school forward that are independent of the Self-Study though, as noted, it is not yet clear how the school will incorporate and integrate a response to the recommendations of the Visiting Committee's report. Further, because the process did not seem to be governed by a larger sense of institutional control or strategic purpose, it did not perhaps penetrate to a level of self-reflection that would provide a more true and lasting benefit to the school. It is a high expectation to require deep levels of self-reflection during an externally-motivated process, but according to many at St. Paul's the school has committed deeply to various acts of institutional self-examination. The Visiting Committee wishes that this level of engagement and intensity were more uniformly evident in the report itself.
Conclusions and Explanation of Rating

Although it is clear that the Self-Study process was handled in an open and inclusive manner, the committee chose an SM2 rating because the actual report was lacking in the areas discussed above. At a school where planning for the future exists in myriad forms, it will be important for the faculty, administration, and board to focus carefully on the results of this study -- indeed on the nature of the process itself. The Self-Study, in particular, was developed with a wide array of faculty voices but with comparatively little influence from other key leaders and stakeholders. In addition, the Standard 15 Committee did not effectively assess the process as a whole, but only the Self-Study I procedure, and thus failed to access the full value of the accreditation process. For those reasons, we are not able to hold their work up as the highest level of performance in this area or provide the highest standard rating.

Commendations

The Self-Study was clearly generated by a process that was intentionally inclusive of many voices. St. Paul's School is committed to institutional improvement in general and to the re-accreditation process as one means of informing this improvement.

Recommendation 1

The Visiting Committee recommends that St. Paul's School engage in follow-up to our visit and report with seriousness and a long-range perspective. In the words of one faculty member there must be "scrutiny paid to just this report."

Recommendation 2

The Visiting Committee recommends that St. Paul's School move towards changes in structure, process, and culture that will allow it the freedom to truly be a "student of itself." It is clear from the report, the process, and the visit that the school community is laboring under a considerable weight.
Self-Study Part II: Reflection, Recommendations, and Issues for Further Discussion

Self-Study Part II

Part II asks the school to draw together what it has learned from its Self-Study and prioritize these ideas into a thoughtful, reflective, creative summary of the school’s most significant concerns, hopes, and dreams for the future. This may include both action items and discussion items.

Overview

Descriptive paragraphs which accurately describe the school's findings may be taken directly from the Self-Study Report and are in italics.

The School continues to examine all areas of the student experience as part of our Integrated Curriculum. The Self Study Part II Committee identified the following common areas of concern and prioritized them as follows:

- Commitment to diversity and inclusivity...
- Financial aid and ongoing support for underrepresented students...
- Consistency of evaluation and communication of data...
- Transparency in decision-making and involvement of community...
- Renovation of Memorial Hall

Observations

The Visiting Committee noted that the membership of the Self-Study Part II committee included department chairs, administrators, students, and a parent representative. The color-coding and sorting of the School's proposed action steps from the body of the Self-Study into the five categories listed above made this section of the report easy for us to follow; the "Color Code NEASC Action Steps" document should be useful as a roadmap and checklist as St. Paul's School moves forward into the next phase of re-accreditation and strategic planning.

Conclusions

The Visiting Committee's observations affirm the first four priorities identified by the Self-Study Part II committee as important focal points for the school. In particular,

- Commitment to diversity and inclusivity...
- Financial aid and ongoing support for underrepresented students...
- Consistency of evaluation and communication of data...
- Transparency in decision-making and involvement of community...

We combined two of these categories into one Major Recommendation, and we added Major Recommendations about the use of the findings of the re-accreditation process and about the importance of prioritizing the many initiatives currently taking place within the program of the school.
However, the Visiting Committee does not agree that renovation of Memorial Hall needs to be a top priority in the immediate future. The overall infrastructure of the school is healthy, and while Memorial Hall will require modifications to satisfy the growing needs of the performance arts, the space seems adequate at the moment and the school should first address other concerns that are more pressing.

Commendations

1. The Visiting Committee commends St. Paul's School for constructing a clear and well-organized visual aid for understanding and summarizing the individual findings of each section of their Self-Study report.

2. The Visiting Committee commends St. Paul's School for including many constituencies -- including students -- in the Self-Study Part II process.

Recommendation 1

The Visiting Committee appreciates the value of a clear document that codes action steps into categories, whether by theme, timeframe, level of urgency, or responsible parties. This is a valuable tool to improve the clarity of internal communication, to develop an appropriate sense of accountability in all parties, and to organize the workflow ahead. Thus we recommend that St. Paul's School use a scheme similar to the one used in the development of their "Color Code NEASC Action Steps" document to organize their work going forward.

Recommendation 2

The Visiting Committee feels that this Self-Study Part II committee, which was the most representative of the diverse voices of the entire St. Paul's School community, produced a thoughtful and effective document. We recommend that St. Paul's School build on the inclusiveness of the Self-Study Part II committee -- which involved parent and student voices -- by involving more faculty and staff members in the planning and prioritizing process going forward.
Major Commendations and Recommendations

Major Commendations

1. The Visiting Committee commends St. Paul's School for its fully residential program, which we feel is one of the strongest assets of the school. Students and faculty overwhelmingly praise the vertical housing, in-house advising structures, and new initiatives such as LINC for enhancing their experience, relationships, and holistic growth. The school has constructed an exceptional experience while intensifying genuine institutional focus on student well-being and prioritizing in-person communication and relationship-building within its community.

2. The Visiting Committee commends St. Paul's School for a culture where adults on campus enthusiastically endorse a St. Paul's School education and are committed to working with students in all areas of school life. Despite the many challenges that the school has faced over the last few years, school personnel have remained focused on supporting students, creating a safe environment, and moving initiatives forward. Many faculty and staff members have taken on burdens well beyond the normal scope of school duties in the interests of preserving the quality and integrity of the student experience.

3. The Visiting Committee commends St. Paul's School on the improvements in student accountability since the last NEASC evaluation. By utilizing technology and deliberately crafted systems while remaining focused on the interpersonal relationships that are at the heart of the St. Paul's School community, the school has followed through on its duty of care by creating formal structures for both responsible supervision and meaningful adult-student interaction.

4. The Visiting Committee commends St. Paul's School for its considerable financial and physical plant resources and matching expertise displayed in their management. This expertise is exercised across all of the functions of finance and business, exhibiting a standard of operating excellence and serving as a model for other administrative functions of the school. Beyond management of existing resources, the Visiting Committee recognizes the successful integration of advancement and admissions operations in strengthening the St. Paul's School business model.

Major Recommendation 1

The Visiting Committee recommends that the school embrace the full scope of the accreditation process by continuing to utilizing the Self-Study and the Visiting Committee’s report as tools for continuous improvement. We believe that these documents provide a foundation for the position statement used to recruit the next Rector, the next iteration of strategic planning by the board, and the next round of prioritization and implementation of program initiatives.

Major Recommendation 2

The Visiting Committee recommends that the school continue to prioritize diversity and inclusivity throughout the entire St. Paul’s School community through the use of programmatic, financial, and human resources. In particular, we feel that the adult community needs to be formed and trained in such a way that it models the standards of diversity, inclusion, and effective communication it expects of its students.

Major Recommendation 3

The Visiting Committee recommends that the school leadership communicate in effective and direct ways with faculty and staff on the reasoning and process behind initiatives or changes to school policy. School leaders...
should clarify those responsible for making decisions as well as those responsible for the stages of design from announcement through consensus-building to full implementation. Decision-making should be owned by the designated administrative leaders, with the expectation that they will both accept input from members of the faculty and provide feedback on how that input has been considered. Faculty, in turn, should internalize and implement priorities and strategies identified by school leadership. Finally, the Visiting Committee recommends that the school commit to utilizing metrics to measure and quantify the efficacy of new programs, particularly the LINC program, the Integrated Curriculum, and the Ongoing Professional Learning Program.

**Major Recommendation 4**

The Visiting Committee recommends that the school continue to incorporate programs such as LINC, and the Integrated Curriculum into all aspects of the school. Successful implementation will require faculty training and clear communication around these philosophies/programs in order to ensure their sustained success. We support the ambitious and valuable programs that are in motion and suggest that sequential implementation may be the most effective, clear, and impactful model for the school.

**Major Recommendation 5**

The Visiting Committee recommends that the board engage in a thorough and inclusive review of the mission statement, with an eye towards developing a compelling articulation of the unique opportunity a St. Paul's School education provides and with the understanding that once the mission statement has been determined and accepted that it would be the lens through which all decisions are made.
Ratings Table

For each applicable Standard, please:

1. Enter the school's self-rating and the Visiting Committee's rating in the first two columns.
2. Enter an X in the column for "Unmet Rating?" if the Visiting Committee's rating is an SU1 or SU2.
3. Enter an X in "Differing Rating" if the Visiting Committee's rating differs from the school's self-rating.
4. Enter an X in the last column to indicate that you have provided evidence for an unmet or differing rating within the text of the Visiting Committee Report.

Skip any Standards which do not apply.

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