

Report to the  
Faculty, Administration, Trustees, Students

of

**WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY**  
Middletown, Connecticut

by

An Evaluation Team representing the  
Commission on Institutions of Higher Education  
of the  
New England Association of Schools and Colleges

Prepared after study of the institution's  
self-evaluation report and a visit  
September 30-October 3, 2012

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

## Introduction

This evaluation of Wesleyan University is a comprehensive evaluation following its fifth-year report submitted and accepted in 2007.

In the preparation of this report the evaluation team considered the Self-Study Report and the University's Mission Statement together with its most recent strategic plan, *Wesleyan 2020*, both approved by the Wesleyan University Board of Trustees in 2010. The team also considered other documents provided by the University, including its 2011 Financial Report, Catalogue, View Book and various handbooks, and found them to be sufficiently comprehensive and an accurate description of the state of the University. A review of these documents before and during the team's visit to Wesleyan University, the Chair's preliminary visit to the University on April 13, 2012, and the team's visit on September 30-October 3, 2012, together have provided the basis for the information and evaluative judgments contained in the 11 sections of this report, which address the *Standards for Accreditation* of the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges.

During its visit, the team met with various individuals and groups, including representatives from the trustees, administration, faculty, students and staff. President Roth hosted a dinner for the team on Sunday, with trustees and senior University leadership in attendance. The Chair and two other members of the team met with a group of four trustees, including the Chair of the Board of Trustees. Other meetings with some or all members of the team included: the Self-Study Steering Committee, the President's Cabinet (both individually and as a group), the Librarian, the Director of Financial Aid, Academic Department Chairs, the Chief Investment Officer, the Chief Information Officer, the Educational Policy Committee, the Academic Deans, as well as faculty leadership and student leadership. Open sessions with team members were conducted separately for faculty, students and staff. In all of these meetings, the participants were well informed, helpful and forthcoming.

### Standard 1: Mission and Purposes

Wesleyan adopted its first official mission statement in May 2010, as part of *Wesleyan 2020*. But, from its founding, Wesleyan has had a clear understanding of its mission and purpose. It has repeatedly articulated that mission and purpose, and has reflected on it and acted on it over the more than century and a half that the University has existed. As stated by current President Michael S. Roth, in *Wesleyan 2020*, the first articulation of this mission was made by Wesleyan's first president, Wilbur Fisk, in his Inaugural address on September 21, 1831: "Education should be directed with reference to two objects – the good of the individual, and the good of the world." Since that time, presidents have returned repeatedly to the purpose of a Wesleyan education, both articulating the University's mission and the means to pursue it. For example, in the late 1990s, then President Douglas Bennet led a strategic planning process to articulate a vision for Wesleyan as it entered the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. At the time, it affirmed that: "The task of liberal education, as we see it today, is to instill a capacity for critical and creative thinking that can address unfamiliar and changing circumstances, to engender a moral sensibility that can weigh consequences beyond self, and to establish an enduring love of learning for its own sake that will enable graduates to refresh their education throughout their lives."

Under President Roth's leadership, the University again reflected on the University's future, and formally adopted the current mission statement. The mission statement was drafted in 2009, with input from faculty, staff and students, and approved by the Board of Trustees. This Mission Statement is embedded in *Wesleyan 2020* which more completely discusses Wesleyan's vision for its future, how to accomplish it, and the continuity of this vision with Wesleyan's history.

Wesleyan's mission statement both articulates the students who will be served and the institution's distinctiveness. Diversity broadly, but in particular of its students, is a stated objective. The long history and emphasis on the synergies between research and teaching are a major component of Wesleyan's distinctiveness, as is its commitment to an open curriculum. Wesleyan has replaced distribution requirements with general education expectations, allowing and expecting students to take responsibility for their academic programs, with support from faculty and peer advisors.

Wesleyan's mission statement and *Wesleyan 2020* have been widely discussed on campus and officially adopted. There is every expectation that they will guide Wesleyan's actions going forward. While the current official articulation of Wesleyan's mission has only been in effect for two years, its consistency with the implicitly understood purpose of the institution makes it possible to judge the University's actions with its purpose, and much of the remainder of the report will comment on how the University delivers on its educational goals.

Institutional effectiveness: Wesleyan has repeatedly over its history reevaluated its mission and purposes and used those moments to plan for the future. The most recent example is the institution's work to produce *Wesleyan 2020* and its first mission statement, under the leadership of President Roth. This strategic plan is guiding decisions going forward about resource allocation and how to best enhance institutional effectiveness.

## **Standard 2 – Planning and Evaluation**

Wesleyan University has a long history of sustained strategic planning. Its most recent strategic plan, *Wesleyan 2020*, was approved by the Board of Trustees in May 2010. Most of the constituencies are aware of the current plan, if not in name, then by the three areas of focus:

- Energize Wesleyan's distinctive educational experience
- Enhance recognition of Wesleyan as an extraordinary institution
- Work with a sustainable economic model while retaining core values

The plan was formulated collaboratively and regularly guides policy decision making. It was frequently cited in meetings with members of the team.

In the intervening years since the plan was passed, the University has had to reconsider one aspect of the economic model, and has recently announced that they will no longer be completely need blind in admissions [see Standard 9 section for financial background]. This is and has been a controversial decision. Most of the constituencies on campus understand the decision, although not all agree. Some of the student leaders would like the University to consider other alternatives, and plan to come up with suggestions, but given the magnitude of the challenge (\$5 million annually) this exercise may well lead to better understanding of the decision.

The financial situation has also changed long-range facilities planning. The decision to cancel the building of a new science center [see Standard 9 section] has led to the renovation of several

buildings rather than new construction. Additionally, a new museum was planned and was also canceled. These decisions were guided by the pre-2008 economic situation and shifted master planning for facilities toward renovation rather than new construction. It is not clear how these decisions will impact other aspects of the plan long-term.

Evaluation: The Board of Trustees is very involved in the evaluation of *Wesleyan 2020* and drafted a Strategy Map to use as an evaluation tool. The Board and the University community regularly receives updates on the plan, particularly through a set of indicators developed by Institutional Research and through the Blog on Planning, which appears to be a very good method for communicating with the greater Wesleyan community. Some metrics have been developed for measuring goals and they are updated on an annual basis for the three areas of focus: academics, recognition and finance. The metrics are regularly discussed by the Cabinet and Trustees.

Wesleyan benefits greatly from membership in the Consortium on Financing Higher Education and has very good historical and comparative data. The Institutional Research function has developed two separate sets of indicators benchmarked against appropriate peers with everything from class size to participation in volunteer activities/internships to satisfaction with advising. In addition, there have been a variety of studies that support assessment, including an academic paper on “development and validation of the Wesleyan Intercultural Competence Scale” and the Essential Capabilities: Survey and Self-Assessment Results. Wesleyan is in the process of evaluating data warehousing options, which would make evaluation easier and more comprehensive.

Wesleyan has made progress on student outcome assessment since the last plan and since the 2007 letter, although more work is needed by the University to evaluate what students have learned. The University has learning goals in almost all of the majors, and departments have been asked for assessment plans. The departmental learning goals are catalogued in the Series E forms (Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators). In addition, the academic administration has asked selected departments for information on how they evaluate capstones and this information could prove to be very useful in developing an assessment plan, and also for building support within the faculty for assessment activities. No one person at the institution is in charge of assessment. The University would benefit from a more comprehensive plan (starting, perhaps, with an accounting of their efforts on assessment in one place), which would help foster a shared sense of responsibility. The University might benefit from identifying someone who could serve as the point person for collecting and maintaining assessment information, and that person could serve as a resource. There was some low hanging fruit suggested to Wesleyan by NEASC in the 2007 letter (transcript analysis, reviewing a sampling of senior thesis). The current efforts seem to be focused on assessment in the major, and assessment in the first two years is still an area that needs some attention and focus. Changes to advising are seen as a method for identifying ways to evaluate the first two years.

The student affairs division has been planning for assessment for the past three years, and has detailed rubrics in place for assessing many areas of the essential capabilities. However, there could be greater involvement of academic affairs in this initiative, beyond discussions between the President, Dean and Provost. This would create an opportunity for a broader discussion of assessment across the institution.

Institutional Effectiveness: Wesleyan should be commended for their planning efforts and for the level of participation across the University. There seems to be widespread understanding of the financial realities that drive and shape the plan, as well as the decision to change the financial aid policy, even if not everyone agrees with the decision.

### **Standard 3: University Organization and Governance**

At all levels of the institution, Wesleyan has a robust and clearly articulated governance structure, characterized by extensive networks of standing committees but also by frequent use of ad hoc committees and an increased emphasis on transparency in the sharing of institutional data and information. The team observed a high level of engagement in the governance of the University and a distinctive spirit of inter-constituency collaboration, epitomized by the presence of faculty members and students at the table when trustees are making decisions. The Wesleyan community prizes independent thinking and (as we heard from one current student) a certain vigilance toward authority. In such a community, organizational traits of transparency and collaboration vitally assist the University in accomplishing its educational mission.

Wesleyan's Board of Trustees is composed of a maximum of 33 members, nine elected by alumni to three-year terms and the rest elected by the Board to six-year terms. The Board has played an active role in overseeing the University's course through the choppy financial waters of the past five years and has partnered effectively with President Roth in setting Wesleyan on a path towards long-term financial sustainability. The Board has transferred oversight of endowment management from a sub-committee of the finance committee to a separate investment committee, has developed an endowment spending policy, and is preparing to review the University's policy on debt. Without stepping over the line into the role of management, trustees have experimented with small working groups to address issues where trustees have significant expertise and where their expertise can provide real assistance to the institution. One working group, for example, has studied the role of internships at Wesleyan, and subsequently created fifty new internships. With the president, the Board has taken responsibility for the University's recent strategic planning framework (*Wesleyan 2020*); in response to the overarching goals of this plan, the Board's sense of its own role has evolved, for example to emphasize trustees' role as "ambassadors" for Wesleyan in the external world.

Since the normal expectation over the past decade has been that trustees serve only one term, there is significant turnover on the Board. Trustees are firmly committed to this six-year norm; while mindful of the challenges of maintaining institutional memory and careful to find ways of addressing that need, they are eager to make the opportunity of Board service more widely available to Wesleyan's many highly qualified alumni/ae and believe that shorter terms encourage a more productive and dynamic trusteeship. The University offers new trustees an intensive orientation to their roles and responsibilities. In addition to the formal contact with faculty and students serving on standing committees of the Board, trustees are concerned to have frequent and meaningful engagement with faculty and students at large and have recently adjusted the schedule of their meetings to enhance such engagement. On a regular basis, trustees meet with faculty members (without the president) to hear their thoughts about questions of pressing concern.

At the same time as performing the essential fiduciary responsibilities of a Board in the areas of endowment, budget, audit, risk management and governance, Wesleyan trustees have a clear

commitment to evaluating their own effectiveness; the governance committee surveys trustees each year and reports the survey findings to the full Board. The Board also evaluates the president's performance. The Board chair and one other trustee conduct this evaluation on an annual basis, and once every three years a fuller evaluation, surveying all trustees and other members of the community, is conducted. All Board members are required to complete an annual conflict of interest statement, and no trustees have a financial interest in the University.

President Roth exercises his leadership in a notably direct and personal manner, advised by a presidential cabinet that is composed of vice-presidents as well as a number of other senior officers and (as of this academic year) the chair of the faculty. From our interviews with the president and his cabinet, it was apparent that he provides active and hands-on oversight of all aspects of the University's operations, including the curriculum and academic program. Cabinet members provide the president with expert advice and participate in decision-making, but senior administrators and faculty members told us that the current president is more visible and activist than some of his predecessors. The recent addition of the chair of the faculty to the cabinet is a noteworthy attempt to bring further transparency to the University's decision-making, by providing a new channel of communication between the administration and the faculty. This system has not been in place long enough for us to evaluate its effectiveness. Our conversations suggest that it is likely to improve the senior administration's understanding of faculty perspectives, although principles of confidentiality and collective responsibility might impede the chair of the faculty's ability to communicate back out to her/his constituency. The cabinet's agenda is largely shaped by the *Wesleyan 2020* strategic planning framework, which remains a living document two years after its development. By requiring cabinet members and the staff who report to them to develop annual goals and align their goals with *Wesleyan 2020*, the president ensures that the University is managed in a manner consistent with the overarching priorities endorsed by the Board.

As the University's self-study acknowledges, the challenge is to engage all constituencies in the consideration and determination of institutional decision-making, while making decisions in a timely and efficient way. A hallmark of Wesleyan's response to the financial crisis of 2008 has been the president's emphasis on the need for increased transparency of information and data. Wesleyan is creating a "data warehouse" accessible to all members of the community, so that the constraints under which the institution is operating can be generally understood. As the University charts its course amid these constraints, the institution's leadership has committed itself to consulting broadly; an ad hoc budget priorities committee created in 2009 to advise the president on responses to the economic crisis is credited with increasing collaboration between faculty and administration.

The Wesleyan faculty has developed a strong governance structure to ensure that they have an appropriately substantive voice in matters of educational policy and curriculum (for which the faculty have responsibility, according to the University's by-laws) and tenure, promotion and evaluation. The structure is composed of two "legislative assemblies". In the first, inclusive faculty meetings, all ranks participate, with a faculty chair and vice chair. The second is the Academic Council, consisting only of tenured faculty and three elected representatives of the tenure-track faculty, presided over by the president of the University. The Faculty holds regular faculty meetings, operates four standing committees with portfolios ranging from educational policy to faculty compensation and benefits, and constitutes the faculty executive committee (FEC), which is described as the faculty chair's "cabinet". The Academic Council has two

standing committees – the advisory committee, which is the University’s tenure and promotion committee, and the review and appeals board (RAB), which reviews decisions made by the advisory committee.

This system of faculty governance involves a significant commitment of time and resources. Around 65 faculty members need to be elected to seats on University committees (not including several ad hoc committees and task forces), while the total number of faculty members participating in committee service each year is around 100. The RAB alone has a membership of 30 faculty members. The self-study noted some strains associated with this heavy and continuing call on faculty time – low participation rates in elections, uneven distribution of the service workload, reduced attendance at faculty meetings. The governance system puts a particular burden on a relatively few faculty: for example, chairs of the four standing faculty committees also serve on the FEC, and, as noted above, the chair of the faculty now also serves on the president’s cabinet.

While we heard some concerns about the equitable distribution of this service work (see discussion of Standard 5), these concerns do not translate into a preference for a more streamlined system. (In some respects, the structure is already more streamlined than it used to be: for example, until the past decade, the review function now performed by the RAB was performed by the entire membership of the Academic Council.) Recent initiatives to boost faculty participation in elections and develop an annual faculty agenda demonstrate the faculty’s continuing commitment to meeting its responsibility for the integrity of the institution’s educational programs.

The organization of the Wesleyan Student Assembly (WSA) follows, in some respects, the faculty’s model. In addition to an executive committee, there are six standing committees and a general assembly. Students express some of the same concerns as faculty about low turnout and service apathy. In this case, the relatively small number of students participating in the WSA (38 out of a student body of approximately 2900) might partially explain the perception of many students, as noted in the self-study, that the WSA is out of touch or inaccessible. Although some students with whom we spoke suggested that students should be consulted more often or at an earlier stage about decisions in which they have an interest, the fact is that Wesleyan’s system of governance – especially the inclusion of students as voting members at Board meetings – makes extraordinary provision for consideration of student views.

Institutional effectiveness. All constituencies at Wesleyan have exhibited interest in improving their governance and organization, and over the past decade each has engaged in thoughtful and productive review of its structures and processes. The increased attention to transparency has served the University well in the difficult financial circumstances of the past several years. This principle of transparency could be extended in future to enable fuller participation of on-campus constituencies in the formulation of major institutional initiatives.

#### **Standard 4 – The Academic Program**

The academic program of Wesleyan University has a dual aspect. Wesleyan is both a fairly large and traditional small liberal arts college (2935 FTE undergraduates, 48 majors), and it also has 11 departmentally-based masters programs and six PhD-granting programs, all save Ethnomusicology in the sciences. Including the non-departmental Master of Arts in Liberal

Studies (MALS) program, there are approximately 260 graduate students, approximately half of whom are pursuing PhD's, with half the remainder pursuing a MALS.

Wesleyan's open curriculum is rare in the current era. In particular, in regard to General Education, there are no specific course distribution requirements for undergraduates. Rather, there are General Education Expectations, first adopted in 1968, which encourage (but do not require) students to take three courses in each of the three divisions of study: Arts and Humanities, Social Sciences, and Natural Sciences/Mathematics. Students are required to take two courses in each of the three areas during their first two years, and a third course in each area in the last two years. This requirement is, however, really just an expectation since students who are not interested in any of a small set of academic honors (e.g. Phi Beta Kappa) need not meet these expectations. Nonetheless, 74% of the class of 2012 did fully meet them, and an average of just over 75% of graduates has met them since the class of 2002. Some departments, as part of their majors, require students to fully meet the Expectations. Along with these Expectations, there is also a set of 10 "essential capabilities" which are "intended to guide students in the development of skills for the various social, intellectual, and ethical challenges that they will encounter" after they graduate. This set, established by a vote of the faculty in 2005, lists Writing first, and also includes such skills as Speaking, Ethical Reasoning, Quantitative Reasoning, and Information Literacy. (See p. 32 of the Self-Study.) Notations in the course catalog were used to indicate which capabilities each course emphasizes. However, these notations were eliminated in 2012 after internal studies at Wesleyan showed that most students and advisers do not use them as a tool for tracking the coherence of a student's academic path, thus drawing their utility into question. It seems likely that soon the use of the capabilities designations will disappear altogether.

As it now stands, coherence of a student's course of study is two-layered: through the Expectations for general education, and through departmental major requirements. Coherence in the first two years relies on advising. Ideally there is frequent recalibration between students and their advisers about intellectual goals and where students are in terms of meeting those goals.

In 2007, as a response to Wesleyan's interim report, NEASC noted that it would pursue the question of how the University was strengthening its advising system and how the University was dealing with imbalance in course demand. The self-study notes some actions that the University has taken in these regards since the last full accreditation in 2002. In particular, 1) the system of assigning pre-major advisees to faculty has been revamped in order to balance pre-major advising workloads and to reduce the number of pre-major advisee "orphans", and 2) online course preregistration was revised to allow students to rank their course selections and to require advisers to be present when students preregister. Two committees, one provostial and one emanating from the Faculty Executive Committee, are investigating the still-unsolved problem of imbalance in numbers of major advisees. This imbalance results in faculty in departments with large numbers of majors having a much higher total advising load, and therefore resulting in advisers being able to devote less time to each individual advisee (although, to be sure, the committee was told by a member of faculty governance that some – many? – such burdened faculty do take the time necessary). It was noted in conversations that there is interest in finding some way to have advising count in the faculty merit system. For instance, while students are surveyed on their opinions as to the effectiveness of their advisers, the results go only to the individual faculty members; would there be some way to employ these surveys in making merit judgments?



As mentioned above, while Wesleyan is unusual as a large small liberal arts college because it maintains some graduate programs through to the PhD, the requirements for the PhD from the various departments offering it are not unusual: normally, a student in one of the programs needs to take two or three years of courses, pass a preliminary exam, and write and defend an original and substantive dissertation. The self-study notes that the usual minimum time to PhD is four years, and the normal time to completion is six years. The normal time to an MA for a non-Wesleyan graduate is two years. The University has a policy of supporting graduate students with University funds for as long as they remain active, to a maximum of 6 years; they may be supported beyond that if departments have grants that can support them. Because of the size of the University, it frequently happens that there are undergraduates and graduate students in the same classes; when this occurs, graduate students are held to more stringent standards. The graduate programs are overseen and administered by a Graduate Council consisting of the Director of Graduate Studies (appointed by the Provost), eight faculty members (one from each of the six PhD departments plus one from each of the two departments offering MA programs), two graduate students, and the Director of the Office of Graduate Student Services, which monitors graduate student compliance with degree requirements and supports graduate student life. (See Standard 6.) The self-study asserts (p. 29) that the existence of the graduate program is what attracts many of the faculty in the eight departments; this assertion was echoed in conversations with several faculty and with the Director of Graduate Studies. Most graduate students serve as TA's during their first two years, and only rarely do they "own" their own courses. The self-study notes, and this again was echoed in conversations, that the administration of the graduate program is highly decentralized – for example, each department handles its own recruiting and admissions procedures (although there is a common application form). From both conversation and the self-study, this has sometimes been problematic for the Graduate Office, because it does not always get timely notification of departmental decisions. The Graduate Office is working on ways to improve the visibility of the graduate programs. This applies especially to recruiting, because there is a sense that the graduate programs are not getting the best possible pools of applicants.

Wesleyan also maintains a Graduate Liberal Studies program, administered by the Office of Continuing Studies and not centered in the departments; the program offers an MALS and MPhil in Liberal Arts. The curriculum in this program is a logical extension of Wesleyan's model for an undergraduate liberal education, and offers concentrations in art, humanities, social sciences, and science/mathematics. The self-study (p. 31) states that since the last accreditation visit the program has become more rigorous, partly by scrutinizing more carefully the backgrounds of non-Wesleyan faculty who teach in the program, and by applying higher admissions standards. Certainly, the synopses of faculty careers on the MALS website are impressive.

With respect to assessment, all of the graduate programs have their learning outcomes in place and publicized. Most PhD programs have had recent reviews and several departments have revised their programs in response to their own self-examinations.

Overall, however, in our conversations with faculty there was a notable lack of mention of the graduate program; this was true even when the individual speaking was in a department that offered a PhD. The accreditation team was told that the benefit to the institution of the graduate program has been studied recently, at least partly because the program is driven by the departments, which have had their programs reviewed in the normal course of events.

Wesleyan awards the BA as its only undergraduate degree. To graduate, a student must have 32 course credits (at least half of them earned at Wesleyan or in a Wesleyan-sponsored program), satisfy the requirements of a major, attain a cumulative numerical average of 74 or higher (just under a C in the Wesleyan scale of letter/number equivalencies) and, for students entering as freshmen, have at least 6 semesters of full-time residency at Wesleyan. The typical one-credit course meets for 39 hours, plus a final exam or substitute; in a one-credit course, roughly 80-120 hours of additional work are also expected. A one-credit course not conforming to the standard meeting time must still require roughly 120-160 hours of work. These graduation requirements and course expectations are published in various venues. Examination of a sample of syllabi from one-credit courses supports the conclusion that both in policy and in practice Wesleyan's credit hour requirements are in line with the Federal standards.

The self-study notes that there is not a lot of bureaucracy involved in getting new courses or programs up and running. However, since the faculty bears much of the load in generating new programs, it is the grassroots efforts of getting faculty support in the face of potential philosophical, pedagogical, or allocation issues that may require time and work. The self-study does note that initiatives requiring no new resources are approved fairly easily. New courses are vetted by the dean of the relevant division. New majors, programs, etc. are in the purview of the EPC.

Efforts of the sort described above have resulted in several new programs in the past five years. These include the College of the Environment, the Allbritton Center for the Study of Public Life, the Disability Studies Cluster, and initiatives in arts and sciences across the curriculum. These are in addition to the College of Social Studies and College of Letters. The latter, for example, is an interdisciplinary major for the study of predominantly European humanities from antiquity to the present; it is open to students by application. Its courses include some offered by other departments and some offered exclusively by and for the College. The College of the Environment requires students to have a departmental major as well. Wesleyan also supports robust internship and study-abroad programs, as well as a Center for Service Learning. The University has also experimented with certificate programs, in which faculty from several disciplines design a coherent course of study, outside the named majors but mostly using existing courses, that students can pursue in a guided fashion. A list of such certificates can be found on p. 28 of the self-study; it includes a certificate in Writing. To the team, they had the feel of interdisciplinary minors; and this was affirmed in conversations. The creation of departmental minors was approved by EPC in the spring of 2011, and several have already been approved.

The certificate in Writing is part of the University's efforts to enhance critical writing in the curriculum. Together with the First Year Initiative (FYI) Seminars and the Senior Capstone Initiatives, these are efforts to further general education. In particular, all seminars emphasize the University's priority of writing. Although each incoming freshman is assigned to a FYI seminar, in keeping with the open curriculum, he or she has the option of dropping the course; over the past 5 entering classes approximately 74% of students have completed an FYI seminar. Continuing discussions among faculty and administration have resulted in refining the learning goals for these seminars to focus on writing, research, and oral presentation. A pilot program is being run during the current academic year to see whether the design of such seminars can be more intentional. The University is also examining ways to employ FYI as a community builder.

The Senior Capstone Initiatives are intended to be the intellectual round-off to a student's undergraduate career, and may take various forms, e.g. thesis or a senior seminar. However, even though all majors offer the opportunity for a capstone, and 25 of the 48 require one, not every department is able (e.g. because of high enrollments or a large number of majors) to provide a thesis supervisor for each of its majors. The self-study notes (p. 39) that the EPC considered whether to require all departments/majors to require capstones, and because of the capacity problem just noted, decided the capstones should be encouraged, but still not required. Efforts to reconcile limited capacity with the desire to require capstones are continuing, including the possibility of creating more types of such capstones.

Under the auspices of the provost and the EPC, Wesleyan began systematic discussions of assessment in 2008. While faculty were initially suspicious of requirements being imposed from outside the institution, the suspicions seem largely to have been allayed (although at least one conversation revealed that there is still some worry in this regard), and the self-study asserts that concern for teaching/learning effectiveness pervades all areas of curriculum design.

Wesleyan has chosen Option E1, the Inventory, in order to give the basic documentation for its assessment efforts. A look at the Inventory shows 42 departments or majors, along with general education, have developed and publicized formal learning outcomes, while only 6 have not. The Inventory also indicates that the majority of undergraduate majors/programs have either been reviewed in the past 10 years or have reviews scheduled for 2015 or earlier. The self-study indicates (p.43) that there is an average of 3 reviews per year; that would indicate roughly a fifteen-year cycle. Of the 42 entities with formal learning outcomes, 28 have made changes to their programs; several other departments/majors have made recent changes to their programs even in the absence of formal learning outcomes. In the event that a department/major wants to put through a significant change in its programs, it must receive approval from the EPC. Moreover, beginning this past spring, each department must submit an annual report to the Office of Academic Affairs which detail what it learned from, and how it will react to, its assessment of student outcomes. The University is also studying whether outcomes assessment in general education might be aided through a grant-funded program focused on writing (p. 41).

**Institutional Effectiveness:** Overall, the accreditation team is struck by the vibrancy of the Wesleyan open curriculum, with its wide variety of courses, taught by a dedicated and highly qualified faculty of teacher/scholars. It is clear that the University is focused on the quality of its academic program: not only what is taught, but also via its continuing assessment efforts, what is learned.

### **Standard 5: Faculty**

As of the fall of 2012, the 389 members of the faculty at Wesleyan University included 249 tenured and tenure-track members (117 full professors, 66 associate professors, and 66 assistant professors). One hundred forty faculty members comprise the remaining 36% of the faculty as adjuncts, full- or part-time visitors, teaching post-docs, and artists-in-residence. Adjuncts account for about a third this group and are by definition "long-term renewable (but non-tenured) appointments" (p. 54). Faculty members at Wesleyan serve a total student body of 3262 students at the undergraduate and graduate levels, resulting in a student-faculty ratio of 9:1.

**Diversity in Hiring and Retention of the Faculty:** Whereas the high quality of the faculty is unquestioned, the visiting team encountered some concern about its diversity, particularly with regard to the representation of women in the non-life sciences and minorities in general. The

academic leadership at Wesleyan has instituted several procedures in hiring and retention to help achieve greater diversity. These procedures are themselves subject to ongoing review. Requests for replacement or incremental positions generate from Wesleyan's individual departments and programs and are evaluated by the Provost and Associate Provost, who are advised by the academic deans of Wesleyan's three divisions. Among the newer features of Wesleyan's faculty hiring and retention procedures that have shown proven effectiveness are: 1) an online application and review process; 2) reviewing the short list and the search report for every approved search by the relevant divisional academic dean and the Vice President for Diversity; 3) the encouragement that each junior faculty member procure one or multiple senior faculty mentors; and 4) the developmental support provided for new as well as continuing faculty by the Center for Faculty Career Development. Wesleyan enjoys the advantage of close proximity to the academic human resources available in New Haven and in the greater New York City metropolitan area. Nevertheless, there is sentiment within the faculty itself that desirable levels in the hiring and retention of a diverse faculty remain far from being achieved, and there is vocal support for redoubled effort on the part of the academic administration in realizing this goal.

Teaching, Scholarship, and Service: Wesleyan fully demands, fosters, and celebrates the pursuit of the conventional professional vocations of teaching, scholarship, and service on the part of its faculty. The great majority of the faculty passionately regards the teaching of students as its primary obligation, and teaching is supported and evaluated in various ways. Wesleyan functions on a model of course equivalency instead of exact correspondence across all course loads. Most tenured and tenure-track faculty members—and particularly those in Division I, Division II, and the Department of Mathematics—teach 4 courses a year. Those in Division III, owing to their staffing of Ph.D. programs and conduction of laboratory instruction, teach either 2 or 3 courses a year. Full-time faculty with ongoing renewable “adjunct” appointments and full-time visiting faculty with non-renewable appointments, teach 5 courses per year. Wesleyan is also unique among its cohort of liberal arts institutions in maintaining a corps of graduate TAs, which is drawn mainly from the graduate student ranks in the sciences. However, the instructional use of this group is quite limited, being restricted to lab assistance and conducting course review sessions. Teaching at Wesleyan is evaluated, in part, through student-submitted teaching evaluations. Also, in some departments and programs, senior members visit the courses of junior members and offer constructive advice.

Research, scholarship, and creative production are also constituents of the normative set of expectations for a Wesleyan faculty member and have been amply encouraged and supported. The self-study cites two “pillars” internal to Wesleyan that have greatly facilitated these pursuits. The first is Wesleyan's uncommonly generous sabbatical program which affords eligibility to tenured and tenure-track faculty for a semester's leave at full pay after every six semesters of teaching. Adjunct faculty members are also eligible after ten semesters of continuous teaching. Discussions about the criteria for the granting of sabbaticals have intensified of late, resulting in such constraints as stricter enforcement of the limits on the number of faculty members in a particular department or program who may be on sabbatical at one time. The second “pillar” is a University-wide in-house grants program. The self-study cites the internal availability of more than \$500,000 annually, ranging from general research grants up to \$500 per faculty member to project grants up to \$2500. Grants up to \$2400 per year are available for the presentation of new research at professional meetings and, in the fall of 2011, Wesleyan inaugurated a fund of an additional \$40,000 a year in support of student “internships” directed toward the enhancement of faculty research. (p.48).

Faculty service, primarily through service on an array of standing and/or ad hoc committees, conforms to a long-held model of shared governance and is viewed as a vital ingredient leading to institutional success. The linchpin of collegial engagement is a culture of open elections. The chairs of some (mostly large) departments and programs are elected; in smaller departments chairing typically rotates among members. Many chairs are supported by being awarded course release that is roughly proportional to the sizes of their departments and programs. The Chair of the Faculty, Chair of Educational Policy Committee (EPC), and the members of Advisory Committee, all of whom are elected, also receive teaching load reductions of one course a year. Other release time at Wesleyan for committee service is neither common nor normative. Wesleyan's collegial engagement tradition is not without imbalances and imperfections. Since Fall 2005, slightly more than half of eligible faculty have served on a standing committee, and open elections can and do often result in the burdens of service falling more heavily and more frequently on those viewed as the most talented based on past service. The rotational model for chairs is less equitable for members of smaller departments and programs, who over the course of their careers must serve frequently. Discussions are ongoing on strategies for countering these problems while still maintaining the collegial engagement model, and a newly formed ad hoc Committee on Faculty Service Contributions has undertaken the task of better accounting for and quantifying the role of service in such processes as the evaluation of the faculty for tenure and promotion. Still, from an evaluative standpoint, the visiting team found that the faculty almost universally viewed this longstanding model of service as the appropriate one for Wesleyan.

Tenure and Promotion in the Evaluation of the Faculty: Particularly since the time of the mid-cycle reaccreditation self-study of 2007, Wesleyan has adopted numerous practices designed to improve the evaluative procedures for faculty tenure and promotion. Shortly thereafter in February 2008, the Academic Council established an ad hoc committee to appraise Wesleyan's existing tenure and promotion procedures. The result was a set of recommendations that was adopted by vote of the faculty as protocols in 2009. These protocols have led to: 1) the enhancement of the transparency of the process leading to tenure and promotion through a dissemination of information regarding the key aspects of the University's procedures; 2) the creation of ad hoc committees that clarify and document "University-wide expectations for evaluation of teaching in the promotion and tenure process" as well as develops and proposes "more comprehensive and effective measures of teaching excellence"; and 3) the installation of a mechanism for candidates under review that permits the appeal to the Review and Appeals Board (RAB) of negative decisions made by Advisory Committee. Related to these changes is an additional strongly encouraged but unlegislated outcome of 2008, which stipulates that the President should "clarify the criteria to be applied in making an independent judgment regarding the merit of a case, and should provide an account of his or her deliberations in such cases." (p. 52) All of these recommendations either have been or soon will be effected.

Developing More Fully a Culture of Advising: While recognizing the importance of the advising of students, especially in shepherding them toward the disciplinary major, Wesleyan University faculty members also subscribe overwhelmingly to its well-established open curriculum. The challenges of performing the former function within the latter context have emerged increasingly as stark realities. The shortcomings of the present state of student advising are especially evident at the pre-major level, which is precisely the time when guidance toward curricular coherence is perhaps most crucial.

One of the major deficiencies in the Wesleyan pre-major advising experience is that too many members of the faculty view pre-major advising as yet another form of institutional service rather than a part of their obligations as teachers. One unfortunate aspect of this attitude is the burden—especially in the forms of excessive numbers of advisees and expended time and energy—exacted on colleagues who take the responsibility of pre-major advising seriously. The recommendations of the ad hoc Taskforce on Advising and the ad hoc Committee on Faculty Service Contributions have yet to become available. However, their deliberations would seem to share a common purpose in bringing about a transformation in which faculty come to regard all student advising as a natural extension of their teaching rather than another component of service.

**Institutional Effectiveness:** The faculty members of Wesleyan University are effective and dedicated teacher-scholars, administering to the institution in ways that are wholly consistent with its mission. The institution is also steadily, if incrementally, advancing toward embracing an increasing number of metrics in assessing faculty and especially teaching effectiveness that are more objective than in the past. There is also an active and ongoing dialogue within the institution concerning its academic priorities as well as the best ways in the present and future to forge conformance/congruity/alignment between its mission and its practices.

### **Standard 6: Students**

**Admissions:** In 2012, Wesleyan University enrolled 2940 undergraduate students and 322 graduate students. The acceptance rate for undergraduate admissions was 21%. At the graduate level, Masters degree programs accepted 28% of applicants and Ph.D. programs admitted 22% of all applicants. Under-represented minority students in degree-seeking programs comprise 30% of undergraduates, and 28% of all enrolled students are minority students.

The University values a diverse student body and has been increasing the populations of international, first generation, and low-income students. In 2007, President Roth introduced a low-income-family initiative and from 2007-2011, the number of students of color entering the University increased from 32% to 41% of the class. Three years ago the University began a partnership with QuestBridge to increase its reach to talented low-income students.

In 2011, 49% of students received financial aid. In the spring of 2012, Wesleyan introduced an initiative that changes the approach to financial aid by allocating 1/3 of the University's tuition charges to financial aid. While need blind for all students remains an aspiration, this initiative allows Wesleyan to be "as generous as possible" while sustaining its own fiscal stability (p. 56). Currently, it is expected that approximately 90% of each class will be admitted need blind. The University's goal is to meet the financial need of students without increasing indebtedness. As Wesleyan raises more money toward its endowment, the financial aid budget could increase.

**Retention and Graduation:** The 6-year graduation rate is 91%, a slight increase over the last 10 years, and the one-year retention rate has remained flat but is high at 95%. The University has been tracking the data on its student body carefully and as new strategies have been implemented, they have assessed the impact of those measures given the institution's goal of diversity as part of educational excellence. With the new approach to financial aid announced last spring, it will be very important to evaluate any changes in applicants, yield, composition of the student body, academic success, and retention.

Student Services: Wesleyan characterizes its campus culture as promoting “independence of mind and generosity of spirit” (p. 55). The curriculum, advising, and services are designed to support these valued qualities. When there are concerns, as is noted regarding some student behavior with alcohol or drug use, they return to these values to find a solution that fits.

The last accreditation review recommended that Wesleyan strengthen communal aspects of residential life. In this review, we noted that they have instituted efforts to strengthen community across a range of services, and we heard positive comments about the impact of these initiatives. The Usdan University Center is certainly the largest and most tangible expression of this interest on the campus. Careful planning and input from all campus populations created a campus center with the physical spaces and services to bring together students, faculty, and staff, particularly by supporting food and meeting rooms that encourage formal and casual interaction.

Wesleyan introduced a community based living program in 2003, and with many improvements in its residential structures has continued to affirm community through its residential options.

The wood frame houses for seniors are maintenance intensive but popular and fit with the progression to independent living.

The goal to strengthen community is programmatic as well as facility-based. This review team noted that the involvement in the Dartmouth collaborative to address high risk drinking was a positive step to reduce alcohol use, which Wesleyan identified as an area where it needed community interventions. Some efforts to promote diversity such as Making Excellence Inclusive and the campus climate log are important signals of commitment and values across the campus.

Wesleyan identified an interest in improving advising and support services and has added a range of academic and student life programs that aim to improve the cohesiveness of the undergraduate experience, which was a suggestion of the last review. A significant change to improve advising was made in 2005 when the class deans began following students through their four years instead of handing off each year. This innovation means that class deans now track students through their four years and can work with students on academic and personal goals as the deans have more in-depth and sustained knowledge of individual students. In our conversation with students, they identified class deans as a valuable resource, particularly in the first two years, and indicated that they would recommend the class deans to friends.

In addition to the class deans, a few measures were taken to assist students in developing a cohesive pre-major through major program. First Year Matters initiatives including the Common Moment and the first year seminars are designed to shape an experience through the earlier and broader exploration and into the more focused program of the later years. Students reported to us mixed experiences with the quality of first year initiatives and seminars but affirmed the importance of a small class early on with faculty contact and a chance to get to know peers.

When we asked students about their contact with faculty members outside of classes, graduate and undergraduate students responded that the Wesleyan faculty is dedicated, accessible, and open. Graduate students find their faculty committed to student success and very interested in involving students in their research. Undergraduates report that Wesleyan faculty members make an effort to meet with students in residence halls as well as in their offices. In some cases, the faculty members are more available than students will utilize given the independence and variety of student activities competing for their time. Faculty and Student Affairs administrators

expressed an interest in finding the right opportunities for interaction outside the classroom.

Graduate students confirmed statements in the self-study that they are pleased with the integration of the Office for Graduate Student Services into Student Affairs and report that the Office has been very responsive to their needs. Since most campus services cater to undergraduates, graduate students struggle to develop a strong graduate student community, but they feel that they are making progress. In some cases, graduate students utilize faculty and staff services on campus and in other instances utilize the undergraduate services. This situation has led to some confusion. For example, when graduate students made a request for career guidance, the Career Services Center had been oriented to undergraduates but was willing to initiate work with graduate students over summers and University breaks. More awareness of graduate students and their needs would be helpful across the range of student services.

Graduate and undergraduate students had positive comments about the University Health Service and Counseling Center (CAPS), which conducted an external review to improve its services. The accreditation team was impressed with the additional sexual assault services and peer advising that have been added.

University policies are clearly communicated to graduate and undergraduate students in a variety of ways. Efforts to strengthen orientation, particularly for graduate students, improved the initial introduction to University regulations and resources. Administrators reported regular reminders to students about policies and some increased enforcement to make it evident that the policies are to be taken seriously. In our meeting with students, the undergraduate and graduate students stated that they were aware of policies but that the sheer volume of communication from the University meant that it was hard to remember specific details. Wesleyan's strong web resources, making policies and resources easy to find, will continue to be important.

Wesleyan's self-study raised some questions about the role of Athletics and balancing the varsity student athlete experience and recreational users of facilities. Students reported satisfaction with the range of athletic opportunities but mixed experiences in terms of the integration of varsity athletes and some team culture that could be viewed as insular. They noted, however, that many student organizations have their own tight groups and that most students move in and out of many affiliations.

**Institutional Effectiveness:** In general, the accreditation team concluded from the self-study report and our meetings on campus that students appreciate the committed faculty, deans, and administrators who make themselves available and are sincerely interested in supporting the student experience. Students prize the open curriculum and the opportunities that Wesleyan affords for them to follow their academic and co-curricular interests at the graduate and undergraduate levels. They are proud of the strong student culture on campus and the number of student-initiated options for involvement and enrichment while pursuing a degree. They are clearly learning in their classes, on campus, and from faculty, staff, and peers.

Since the last accreditation visit, Wesleyan has made a strong commitment to addressing areas identified for improvement then and at the mid-cycle review. They demonstrated progress in strengthening community development and advising. They continue to assess their efforts and to use data to determine priorities while keeping in sight University values for a strong academic program, diversity, and economic sustainability.



## **Standard Seven: Library and Other Information Resources**

**Resources and Access:** Wesleyan University provides information services via two primary campus departments: the Wesleyan University Library and Information Technology Services. The University recently deliberated a merger of these two departments under common leadership; however, in 2012 it was decided to maintain them as separate entities. In August 2012, after a three-year vacancy, a new Vice President for Information Technology and Chief Information Officer was hired to lead the Information and Technologies Services department. Both organizations have a clearly defined public mission statement, and each report regular collaboration with the other on institution-wide projects.

Recent fiscal constraints have caused the Wesleyan University Library to lose eight staff lines since 2006; however the realignment of responsibilities has resulted in new efficiencies: “[a]lthough this reorganization was difficult at times ... it has on the whole been successful.” (p. 73) Space constraints of the library facilities have presented challenges to housing the physical collections, and have been proactively addressed with collection shifts and efforts to review and de-accession materials. Collection growth remains steady and the Library has actively purchased and explored an array of electronic resources. The Library has also leveraged consortia collaboration with Trinity College and Connecticut College to seek ways to share costs and broaden access to resources. While the acquisitions budget has remained strong, the reduction in library staff may, in time, impact the library’s ability to adequately support the institution’s information resource needs. The effects of the financial crisis on funding for facilities maintenance, particularly in areas like furniture repair and replacement, will also ultimately impact the effectiveness of the library.

The Information Technology Services leadership has been in transition for several years, and like many areas in the University, absorbed budget cuts. Despite this, the projects and products articulated in the self-study attest that they have been able to adequately respond to University needs. During the campus visit, it was acknowledged that the new Vice President for Information Technology and Chief Information Officer is still working on assessing the department’s resources and needs.

**Information and Technological Literacy:** Each department offers a broad array of services to the Wesleyan community, both in-person and via the network; and each provides a variety of ways for the community to seek help in the respective environments. In addition to individually initiated research requests, the Wesleyan University Library works with faculty to design and support instruction that supports information literacy—averaging about seven hundred library instruction sessions over the last four years. Information Technology Services, via their Academic Computing Services, maintains strong ties to the faculty across the three divisions, but lack any coordinated outreach to students that integrates with the academic program.

**Institutional Effectiveness:** The Wesleyan University Library has created an organizational structure that assigns staff as liaisons to departments and programs, however more formalized communications across the administration and faculty are less defined. In response to recent faculty concerns about library policy, a Library Faculty Advisory Committee has been newly reinitiated. Information Technology Services maintains a number of different advisory committees and, within their Academic Computing Services, also assign staff as liaisons to

departments and programs. However, Information and Technology Services also notes “[i]mproving faculty participation in ITS oversight is a priority” (p. 79). While both departments have active conversations across their different constituencies that inform their services and resources, neither has a developed methodology for collecting or assessing data related to their effectiveness. Joint participation in a MISO (Measuring Information Service Outcomes) study is an excellent first step, but more work could be done in this area.

### **Standard 8: Physical and Technological Resources**

In 2002, Wesleyan created a set of committees to include broader community participation in the planning process. In 2003, the University completed a Strategic Facility Masterplan that outlined the next decade of campus improvements. All of the strategic priorities identified in the 2003 Masterplan have been addressed or completed in the last decade. Since 2003, approximately \$267 million has been invested into Wesleyan’s facilities, including the restoration of historic buildings such as Downey House and Allbritton Center, new buildings such as the Usdan University Center, the expansion of the Freeman Athletic Center, the Schoenberg Dance Studio, the Center for Film Studies, and the construction of student housing for 340 students. At the same time, improvements were made in the area of major maintenance, utilities infrastructure, fire safety, and code compliance. Capital improvements for accessibility to buildings not scheduled for renovations and operating funds for expenses related to the Americans with Disability Act are funded in the annual budget. Overall, the facilities support the mission of the University. The campus appears to be well maintained, with commitment over the past and into the present to use resources to maintain and renew its historical buildings and grounds.

In December 2006, the University engaged the services of Payette Associates to design a new Molecular and Life Sciences Building at an estimated cost of \$160 million, but this project was canceled in 2008 in favor of upgrades to the existing Hall-Atwater and Shanklin Laboratory facilities at a rate of approximately \$2 million per year. The decision to cancel the project was based on financial constraints. The major elements in the upgrades include: updating life safety systems including fire sprinklers and alarm systems; improving indoor air quality in Hall-Atwater; renovating all teaching labs in Hall-Atwater original to the building; creating new shared research and teaching equipment and work zones; and renovating new and existing faculty research labs that are original to the building. Each year the dean of Division III meets with the designated project manager to review the list of impending projects and to develop the scope of work for the subsequent year. Once funding is approved by senior administration, a committee of affected faculty becomes engaged in the design process. Since 2009, \$8 million of capital improvements have been made to the Hall-Atwater and Shanklin buildings. Renovated classrooms and laboratories have allowed spaces to be reconfigured to address the current needs of the sciences. Based on interviews and a tour of the space, the newly renovated labs are considered “state of the art” and faculty have accepted the upgrade process.

In 2011, Wesleyan’s 311 buildings totaled 2.85 million gross square feet and were valued at approximately \$1.1 billion. The number of buildings on campus has decreased from 375 to 311 since 2002. Approximately 43% of the space is assigned for residential use, 40% for academic and administrative uses, 9% for athletics, 5% for student life, and 3% for support services.

**COMMISSION ON INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

**New England Association of Schools and College**

**Preface Page to the Team Report**

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

**Date form completed:**

11/19/2012

**Name of Institution** Wesleyan University

**1. History** Year chartered or authorized 1831 Year first degrees awarded 1833

**2. Type of control:**  State  City  Other; specify: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Private, not-for-profit  Religious Group; specify: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Proprietary  Other; specify: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

	Full-time	Part-time	FTE	Retention <sup>a</sup>	Graduation <sup>b</sup>	# Degrees <sup>c</sup>
Associate						
Baccalaureate	2924	0	2924	95%	91%	713
Graduate	189	64	210	100%	65%	83

(a) full-time 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> year (b) 3 or 6 year graduation rate (c) no. of degrees awarded most recent year

**5. Number of current faculty:** Full time 338 Part-time 51 FTE: 355

**6. Current fund data for most recently completed fiscal year:** (Specify year: 2012)  
 (Double click in any cell to enter spreadsheet. Enter dollars in millions; e.g., \$1,456,200 = \$1.456)

**Revenues**

Tuition	\$87,057.000
Gov't Appropriations	
Gifts/Grants/Endowment	\$54,064.000
Auxiliary Enterprises	\$37,153.000
Other	\$9,336.000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$187,610.000</b>

**Expenditures**

Instruction	\$84,419.000
Research	\$10,651.000
General	\$41,881.000
Auxiliary Enterprises	\$41,714.000
Other	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$178,665.000</b>

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

**8. Number of degrees and certificates offered electronically:**  
 Programs offered entirely on-line 0 Programs offered 50-99% on-line 0

**9. Is instruction offered through a contractual relationship?**  
 No  Yes; specify program(s): \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Other characteristics:**

The Facilities Department has 136 full-time equivalent positions: 73 full-time employees and 63 contract employees. The annual operating budget for the Facilities Department is \$14.2 million including compensation, service contracts, materials, and minor equipment repair/replacement and \$8.2 million in utilities. In 1989, the University established a major maintenance fund to upgrade and maintain all campus buildings. The original fund was budgeted at 2% of the replacement value of the buildings. In fiscal year 2013 and 2012, the University budgeted approximately \$7.1 million and \$6.8 million, respectively, for major maintenance projects. Depreciation expense is not included in the operating budget however; the amount budgeted for major maintenance approximates depreciation expense. The planning process includes three years of projects in priority order which is reviewed and approved by the Facilities Planning Committee and the final list is posted on the University website.

Sustainability is also a focus at Wesleyan. The Sustainability Advisory Group for Environmental Stewardship (SAGES) – a committee of students, faculty and staff chaired by the director of Environmental Health Safety and Sustainability (EHHS) – is responsible for developing a Campus Climate Action Plan. In 2007, President Roth signed the American College and University’s Climate Commitment Pledge with a goal of carbon neutrality by 2050. In the last five years, Wesleyan estimates that it reduced its total carbon emissions by 25%. Since 2005, Wesleyan has completed nearly \$30 million in energy conservation projects with \$5.4 million in grants and incentives that is estimated to save \$2.6 million in annual energy costs. Wesleyan’s cogeneration system uses natural gas to simultaneously generate electricity, heat and steam for University use. Wesleyan also installed solar photovoltaic panels on the roof of the Admission building and at the Freeman Athletic Center.

Wesleyan utilizes Sightlines, a collaborative of colleges and universities that share data, to benchmark the performance of the facilities organization with peers. Due to the age of Wesleyan’s building portfolio, deferred maintenance is identified as a challenge, and according to the self-study, the budget “has not kept pace with the replacement value of the campus” (p. 83). The most recent report from Sightlines completed in 2011 estimates that approximately \$42 million of major maintenance has been deferred over the last 10 years.

Wesleyan is developing a new master plan for academic spaces in the arts and a short-term master plan that will include the next phase of the science master plan renovations to existing facilities. The Facilities Planning Committee will also update the plan for disposition of vacant buildings, continue a project to optimize the existing real estate portfolio, and implement student housing projects to accommodate increased enrollment projections. The University has sold 50 houses surrounding campus in an effort to divest its real estate portfolio, reduce related operating costs, and provide opportunities for faculty and staff to purchase property close to campus.

The mission of Information Technology Services (ITS) is to support the Wesleyan community in its use of information technology for teaching, research, and administration. ITS has a decentralized support model where departments have an assigned desktop support specialist and faculty have an assigned liaison. There are numerous committees and working groups within ITS, including five academic computing committees, three administrative computing committees and six working groups. A new Vice President for Information Technology and Chief Information Officer was hired by the University in August 2012.

The University has policies and procedures posted on the ITS page of the University’s website to ensure the reliability of the systems, the integrity and security of data, and the privacy of

individuals. On an annual basis, those logging into the system are asked to agree that they have been informed of the terms of use including security and privacy. There is a single sign-on through the University's homegrown electronic portfolio; however newer protocols will be evaluated to allow for authentication across multiple systems. Faculty and staff are using more mobile devices such as tablets and smart phones for business applications. Wesleyan has committed to improving wireless saturation in all academic buildings and residence halls. In 2011, ITS developed the University's first mobile device application and policies for mobile technology are expected to be developed in the future. Capital resources support the technology infrastructure. The Provost's office manages the budget that supports computer replacements for faculty while the ITS budget supports computer replacements for staff.

Institutional effectiveness: The University has a good overall sense of its needs in the areas of physical and technological resources. The Facilities Planning committee oversees the planning and approval of capital and major maintenance projects consistent with Wesleyan's needs and mission. The Committee's goals include evaluating the effectiveness and funding level of the annual major maintenance program and developing a short-term plan for facilities. The University hired a Vice President for Information Technology and Chief Information Officer who will need to focus on staffing, committee/working group structure, and budgets.

### **Standard 9: Financial Resources**

One of the three overarching goals of *Wesleyan 2020* is to "work within a sustainable economic model while maintaining core values." To this end, Wesleyan has been working to establish a sustainable financial structure with important changes in both asset management and long-term budget planning.

Financial planning is informed by the goals of *Wesleyan 2020* as well as a continuously updated ten-year planning model, which incorporates input from senior leadership. The Budget Priorities Committee is utilized to gain broad input into the budget priorities. The Finance Committee of the Board reviews the University's planning assumptions and market data in the annual capital and operating budgets, as well as the establishment and monitoring of a long-range financial plan. The Board of Trustees approves the annual operating and capital budgets in May. The Audit Committee of the Board monitors the integrity of the University's financial statements, compliance with legal and regulatory requirements, and oversight of risk assessments practices and adequacy of internal controls. The Investment Committee, officially formed in 2011, has responsibilities related to the University's Investment Policy Statement, overseeing the work of the Investment Office and reviewing the endowment's asset allocation and performance.

The University restructured its debt portfolio in May 2010. At that time, 100% of debt was in the form of weekly or daily floating variable rate demand bonds. Wesleyan refinanced all of this debt into 90% fixed and 10% variable bonds and terminated all interest rate swaps. These changes reduced Wesleyan's risk from bondholders, counterparties, and banks. The refinancing also created budget certainty by fixing costs of borrowing at approximately 5% in 2012. Beginning in 2010, Wesleyan cut \$25 million from its budget and eliminated over 60 staff positions, mostly through a voluntary separation program. Reductions included a salary freeze in 2010 and slower compensation growth. These budget cuts and reduction in staff positions are still in place and were done to respond to the financial constraints experienced in 2008-2009 and to achieve the objective of a balanced operating budget.

During the fiscal year ended June 30, 2011, the University's net assets increased by \$120 million (20%) from \$603 million to \$723 million. Wesleyan's total assets increased to \$1.0 billion in 2011. The projected unaudited endowment market value of \$613 million as of June 30, 2012, has rebounded from a low of \$442 million in March 2009. In 2011, investment performance was 21% with a 10-year annualized performance of 5.8%. Projected unaudited investment performance for 2012 is 3.9%. Review of the University's audited financial statements as of and for the year ended June 30, 2011, indicated the financial statements are presented fairly in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and the audit was performed in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Management letters have not been issued by the University's auditors. The Audit Committee takes appropriate action in its review and acceptance of the financial statements.

In order to further ensure the long term financial health of the University, the Finance Committee appointed an Endowment Policy Working Group to review and recommend changes to Wesleyan's spending rule. The goal of the working group was to determine whether Wesleyan's current spending rule met the University's short term and long-term financial and strategic objectives and whether alternative spending rules could offer other solutions. The Finance Committee articulated two clear objectives in its analysis: minimize disruptions to the annual payout from the endowment in order to enhance the University's budgeting and forecasting; and, maximize the potential for intergenerational parity between Wesleyan's current stakeholders and future beneficiaries. In order to maintain real purchasing power over the long term, payouts plus expected inflation must be less than expected investment returns. The working group recommended and, in 2012, the Board adopted a new spending rule to address Wesleyan's long-term financial goals. The new spending rule, a 70/30 Tobin rule, is a calculation that incorporates explicit links to recent spending levels and endowment values, allowing Wesleyan to balance its goals of maintaining purchasing power and reducing volatility of spending payouts.

A new Chief Investment Officer was hired two years ago. Beginning in August 2010, the Investment Committee and investments staff undertook a reevaluation of the Wesleyan endowment, placing priority on reviewing asset allocation, benchmarks, investment policy and governance matters. In addition, with the new investment staff in place, reviewing the existing investment managers was a priority in 2011 and an important starting point for developing a plan to strengthen the portfolio and position it for stability and growth in the future. The number of investment managers currently stands at 32 with numerous shifts since 2010. In addition, the investment office is using a comprehensive performance tracking system that feeds into the financial system of the University, which provides a better match of qualitative judgments and quantitative analysis. A disciplined approach to managing the endowment is being used with regular rebalancing, which has been a positive change.

The University regularly reviews the effectiveness of the financial aid policy and practices in advancing the mission and helping to ensure the University enrolls and supports the student body it seeks to serve. In 2012, members of the University finance team performed analyses of the increasing costs of financial aid that projected a budget deficit of \$5 million per year on a go-forward basis by maintaining the University's need-blind financial aid policy. Specific guiding principles were identified so that the University would not cut the academic core/quality, not increase loans and not "gap" students. Based on these analyses, in the spring of 2012, President Roth introduced an initiative designed "to make Wesleyan more affordable in a sustainable way," with three principal elements. The first is to establish a discount rate that is as generous as

possible, but that is also one Wesleyan can afford.” (p. 91) Current budget projections show that just under one third of the University’s tuition charges will go to financial aid which is approximately the percentage of the budget devoted to aid from 2000-2008. Based on interviews, setting financial aid to a discount rate is a significant change in practice for Wesleyan. From 1997 to 2013 (projected), the discount rate has risen from 22% to 37%. Beginning with the class of 2017, the Admission Office will also consider the capacity of some students to pay, as is done now with transfer and international students. Current estimates are that about 90% of each class depending on the level of need will continue to be admitted on a need-blind basis. The University engaged a consultant to perform modeling exercises, which will be used in conjunction with the admission process. The budget for financial aid will be set based on the discount rate and thus the impacts will need to be assessed as students are admitted and enrolled.

The second component of the affordability effort will be linking tuition increases to the rate of inflation. Restraining tuition increases will require the University to find efficiencies while also investing in educational innovation across the curriculum. The third component is to emphasize a three-year option for those families seeking a Wesleyan experience in a more economical form. Allowing for some summer expenses, Wesleyan estimates that families would still save about 20% from the total bill for an undergraduate degree.

The University is redefining its fundraising efforts toward the fulfillment of institutional purposes, which include increasing the endowment going forward. The endowment spending payout rate was modified and exceeded the spending rule in 13 periods between 1981 and 2010, which has resulted in the endowment value being lower than the University’s peers. The endowment is a critical component of the University’s financial health and therefore is a focus of the upcoming campaign. Based on interviews, the campaign is expected to launch in February or March of 2013 and will be a \$400 million campaign, of which \$225 million will be for endowment purposes, both for financial aid and academic purposes. The donor base is described as being very supportive and understanding of the shift from raising annual fund resources to endowment resources.

Institutional effectiveness: The University utilized an inclusive approach, including working groups, in responding to its financial concerns since 2008-2009. The University recognized the need for change in the endowment spending policy and management of the endowment and implemented changes based on the input of the working groups. Wesleyan’s annual budgeting process and long-range planning, and the annual audit process assure appropriate evaluation of its fiscal condition and financial management. The impacts of the changes in the financial aid policy will need to be assessed as students are admitted and enrolled. The University will also have to evaluate situations where stresses in the operating budget, including those imposed by the impact of the change in spending policy, may be addressed on the margin.

### **Standard Ten: Public Disclosure**

Wesleyan University maintains and provides a comprehensive set of information about the University primarily via the institution’s website, although the Course Catalog continues in print form. The institution’s mission is clearly stated and there are accurate descriptions about the University including information about programs, courses, services and other offerings at the University. The website, and the catalog, provide a complete account of the Board or Trustees,

the Officers of the College, and the members of the Faculty. The institution accurately states its accreditation status and provides access to current financial statements.

The website maintains information regarding admissions and financial aid, including access to financial calculators. The policies and procedures regarding transfer of credit, charges and refunds, current course offerings, and academic policies and procedures are accessible. Data related to retention, graduation rates and post-graduation plans of students are available. While both the printed catalog and the website provide statements regarding the goals of the educational program, the website could be improved on to make data more clearly accessible. While retention and graduation rates are provided, broader data with regard to the success of students in meeting the goals of the University's "three-pronged approach"—general education, essential capabilities and major concentrations—would be welcome.

Overall, while much of the data can be found online, the navigability of the information on the University website is not always intuitive, and may lead to information being unavailable by default.

**Institutional Effectiveness:** While key areas of the website, such as Admissions and Financial Aid, have clear oversight; the University reports that comprehensive management across the breadth of the website remains a challenge and that there is not always a consistent level of quality. As part of a current conversion to a new content management system, all web pages are being reviewed for timely and accurate content; plans to address periodic review would be useful.

### **Standard 11: Integrity**

Wesleyan University is committed to integrity in all of its affairs. It has policies articulating this commitment across its divisions and activities, and it implements these policies. It has also reconsidered these policies, making amendments, over time as needed by the changing landscape. These policies, where they are posted, and the responsible offices are reported in the self-study.

Wesleyan is committed to both academic honesty and academic freedom, as articulated in the Faculty Handbook. Non-discrimination policies are overseen by Human Resources. Grievance procedures are outlined, as are policies prohibiting retaliation. The University's on-line University Code of Conduct, which all employees are required to review, informs the community of key policies. It also allows employees to ask questions and report concerns.

Expectations for students are articulated in the Honor Code, the Code of Non-Academic Conduct, and the Joint Statement on Rights and Freedoms of Students. Students play a significant role in the enforcement of these standards, with guidance and support from the Office of Student Affairs. Several of these policies have been revised since the previous reaccreditation.

The University strives to be transparent in its operations and makes decisions with input from all constituencies. President Roth's commitment to this was made clear especially in responding to the 2008/09 economic recession. Students, faculty, staff and others participate in decision making through their own governance structures.



The institution's commitment to integrity is reflected, for example, in the creation of a new Cabinet position: Vice President for Institutional Partnerships and Chief Diversity Officer. This officer oversees the University's commitment to non-discrimination, but also supports an environment that encourages and supports diversity broadly. By supporting the institution in living up to its commitments embodied in its mission, this position contributes to the integrity of the University's operations.

The announcement of Wesleyan's recent decision to move away from need blind admissions is an example of the institution's commitment to transparency and honesty. A clear statement of the policy change was issued and the reasons for the change articulated.

Institutional Effectiveness: Wesleyan regularly considers its policies in this area and makes changes as needed. It then monitors the implementation of these policies. The University is at a point in time where many of these policies have recently been reconsidered and will primarily be monitoring and evaluating effectiveness over the coming years.

### **Institutional Effectiveness Summary**

Wesleyan University has repeatedly over its history effectively reevaluated its mission and purposes and used those moments to plan for the future. There seems to be widespread understanding of the financial realities that drive and shape those plans. Constituencies at Wesleyan are engaged in thoughtful and productive review of governance structures and processes, and are focused on the quality of its academic program. The institution is also advancing toward embracing an increasing number of metrics in assessing teaching effectiveness. Students appreciate the committed faculty, deans, and administrators who are sincerely interested in supporting the student experience. Wesleyan has made a strong commitment to address areas identified for improvement at the mid-cycle review by strengthening community development and advising, and to assess their efforts and use data to determine priorities. Advisory committees in the areas of the Library and Information Technology Services promote active conversations across constituencies but would be well served by developing methodologies for collecting or assessing data. The Facilities Planning committee oversees the planning and approval of capital and major maintenance projects consistent with Wesleyan's needs and mission. More generally, the University has utilized an inclusive approach in responding to its financial concerns since 2008-2009, and will need to assess the impacts of the changes in the policies on endowment spending and financial aid.

### **Affirmation of Compliance**

To document Wesleyan University's compliance with Federal regulations relating to Title IV, the team reviewed the University's Affirmation of Compliance form signed by President Roth (Self-Study Appendix, p. 99). Wesleyan University publicly discloses on its website and other relevant publications its policy on transfer of credit along with a list of institutions with which it has articulation agreements. Public notification of the evaluation and visit was made by the University one month prior to the visit in The Middletown Press, the Middletown Patch website, and University's website. The University's grievance procedures are disclosed on its website and in its Course Catalogue. At the time of the visit, the University did not operate any distance

or correspondence education programs. The team's discussion of the University's credit hour policy can be found in Standard 4.

## **Summary**

It is the view of the Evaluation Team that Wesleyan University offers a superb undergraduate education to its students, consistent with its history, its stated mission and its vision for the future. It also offers a small number of graduate programs, which are also consistent with and supportive of Wesleyan's educational goals. The institution is led by a dynamic and decisive president, who is supported by an engaged Board of Trustees. The talented faculty are committed to the teacher scholar model of the University. The staff support all the operations of the University effectively, and are recognized as important to accomplishing the University's goals.

President Roth became president of Wesleyan in 2007. At that time, there were plans to construct a major new science facility. He determined that the University could not afford the planned building, and cancelled the project. This was just before the recession of 2008/09, which significantly reduced Wesleyan's endowment, further challenging the University's financial situation. The community accepted the decision not to undertake such a large capital investment, particularly given the financial crisis that followed. It would have been even more difficult to adjust to the financial crisis with the burden of additional debt to finance the project. More recently, a decision was made to move away from need blind admissions and to slow the rate of tuition increases to the rate of inflation, to further contribute to the financial sustainability of the institution. These are important decisions in service of an important goal. Of course, these changes will have implications for the institution, and evaluating these implications in the next few years will be important to Wesleyan's future.

With all this in mind, the team offers the following summary of what we have come to see as Wesleyan's significant strengths and significant challenges in the years ahead. We believe that most, if not all, of these reflect views of members of the Wesleyan community, and we hope that our input assists the University in seeing its way forward.

### *Strengths*

- Wesleyan has a clear view of its mission and values. These are consistent with its history and its vision for its future. The University recently officially adopted a mission statement, as part of Wesleyan 2020, which articulates successfully what had previously been more implicit and embedded in various presidential statements. But, its vision is clear and understood by members of the community. It involves a commitment to quality teaching and research on the part of the faculty, an open curriculum that puts responsibility on students to take control of their education with support and advice from faculty, and to a diverse community.
- The campus facilities support the mission of the University. The campus appears to be well maintained, with commitment over the past and into the present to use resources to maintain and renew its historical buildings and grounds.
- The faculty, staff and students all seem very committed to Wesleyan. The institution appears to generate a loyalty to the institution that is even intense in some cases.

- With the financial crisis of 2008/09, the administration made the decision to adopt a very transparent approach to communication with the University community. Significant information has been made available to inform the community about the state of the college's finances, in particular.
- It seems clear that Wesleyan was on an unsustainable expenditure path, especially after the financial crisis of 2008/09, but also before this external shock. The University's response to this has been impressive and important. It is always easy just to postpone adjustment. Instead, Wesleyan reduced expenditures by significant amounts compared to previous projections. In addition, financial aid policies and the number of enrolled students were changed to further move the budget toward sustainability. While the President and the Administration took the lead on these policy changes, the community was involved in discussions through a variety of channels, including a joint budget committee.
- Wesleyan has made significant progress on evaluating student learning since the last review. The Administration asked each department to establish learning goals for their majors, and then determine how to evaluate the extent to which the goals were being accomplished. Different departments have developed different strategies, and are exchanging ideas about what works and what doesn't.
- The University took the recommendation from the previous 5-year review to consider the curricular cohesion of the academic program seriously. After examining the usefulness of the "essential capabilities," which had been developed earlier on, the University has moved toward recognizing that advising of students is probably the most effective means to assist students in planning their education at Wesleyan. As a result, they are working on evaluating and improving pre-major advising.
- The University has a vibrant and evolving curriculum. In addition to strong departments, a variety of interdisciplinary programs thrive on campus. Some of these take the form of "colleges", supported by both the faculty and the administration.
- Wesleyan has a small number of graduate programs. While in many ways they seemed to us to not be particularly visible, they are distinctive and contribute to Wesleyan's character and to differentiating the University from its peers.

### *Concerns*

- While the administration has taken major steps toward increasing transparency, there is still a feeling among some groups on campus that consultation is limited on important decisions, or that consultation takes place too late in the decision making process to have an impact. Increased efforts to include key constituencies in decision-making could both avoid unnecessary pitfalls and also increase the sense of community on campus.
- Despite concerns about process in some cases, there seems to be overall understanding of the challenging financial situation that the University has found itself in and respect for the direction that the University is taking to address the financial sustainability of its plans. As Wesleyan goes forward, it will be important to evaluate the implications of all the decisions taken on the mission of the institution, particularly, the effects of the new financial aid policies and the commitment to keep tuition increases in line with inflation.
- There was also an understanding of the need for reductions in the operating budget after the 2008/09 financial crisis. Many constituencies expressed an understanding that hard decisions

had to be made, and in fact, expressed confidence that those cuts had been made while preserving what was core to Wesleyan. It does seem appropriate to evaluate situations where stresses that have been created could be addressed on the margin. Also, it seems important for the institution to make decisions about what can no longer be accomplished, rather than expect offices to do the same with fewer resources. Otherwise, it puts excessive stress on individuals working at the University. Being clearer about whether particular changes are temporary or more permanent would be useful in this regard.

- Given the distinctiveness of Wesleyan's graduate programs, there is an opportunity to increase their visibility and celebrate their contributions to the University's mission, making them part of Wesleyan's strategic vision.

Finally, we encourage the University to continue its historic commitment to diversity, of both its students and its staff. Financial exigencies will challenge this commitment, by affecting both financial aid resources and growth in the faculty, but it clearly remains a core value deserving attention going forward.