



Report to the New England Commission on Higher Education

January 18, 2019

This report is a response to the Commission's letter of January 17, 2018 to President Joanne Berger-Sweeney. We are very pleased to share our progress and planning in the four focus areas identified by the Commission:

- 1) Continuing to strengthen Trinity College's financial position with emphasis on reducing operating budget deficits;
- 2) Developing and implementing Trinity College's deferred maintenance plan;
- 3) Achieving Trinity College's enrollment goals; and
- 4) Implementing and monitoring the effectiveness of the College's credit-hour policy.

Introduction

This report, in response to the Commission’s letter of January 2018, reflects the work we have been undertaking in the last year, as we implement Trinity’s strategic plan — Summit — which the Board of Trustees approved in October 2017. The Plan, combined with broad awareness of accreditation standards, has provided us with a set of concrete goals and objectives to structure our everyday work and long-term trajectory, while better aligning our resources across the organization. Though this is necessarily a work in progress for any institution, we now have in place at Trinity the processes and data-informed practices to evaluate and adjust as necessary, staying focused on our core academic mission and stewarding the College to a robust and sustainable future.

Drafts of the various sections of the report were prepared by divisional leadership, working closely with their teams and reflecting the work of key governance bodies, including the multi-constituent Planning and Budget Council, the new Summit Facilities Committee, the Admissions and Financial Aid Committee, the Curriculum Committee and the Assessment Advisory Board. Faculty, staff, trustees, and administrators all weighed in to shape the report. Final drafts were also circulated to the chairs of key governance bodies for additional feedback and input.

Brief Institutional Overview

Founded in Hartford, Connecticut in 1823, and located on a beautiful 100-acre historic campus, Trinity College is an independent, co-educational, nonsectarian liberal arts college with over 2,100 undergraduate students from 41 states and 70 countries, and almost 100 graduate students. Under the dynamic leadership of President Joanne Berger-Sweeney, who was inaugurated in October 2014, Trinity has undergone significant transformations in recent years, as outlined in the self-study, and we are proudly planning for our bicentennial in 2023—guided by Trinity’s mission of preparing students to be “bold, independent thinkers who lead transformative lives.”

Integral to the overall progress we report here has been a renewed commitment to shared governance, which we view as a necessary component of financial sustainability and institutional vitality. In September 2018, President Berger-Sweeney circulated a working document on shared governance to campus constituents, after close consultation with the Chair of the Board of Trustees and the Faculty Secretary. The document affirmed the leadership’s unequivocal commitment to the principle of shared governance, while identifying key questions, challenges, and a way forward. A series of steps ensued — from a subcommittee of the Board of Trustees initiating a campus listening tour to faculty and staff reviewing some of the assumptions underlying their governance committees. We firmly believe this ongoing work is essential to the College’s financial, enrollment, and academic goals.

Trinity College has very strong foundations on which to grow: a rich tradition of excellence in the liberal arts, enhanced by our location in a capital city; outstanding and committed faculty and staff, matched by an engaged and diverse student body and a student/faculty ratio of 9:1; as well as dedicated and generous alumni who share a deep and abiding commitment to the College. Against this backdrop, we address below each of the four areas of focus identified by the Commission, detailing our efforts and progress while identifying next steps that will ensure ongoing institutional improvement.

KEY AREAS OF FOCUS

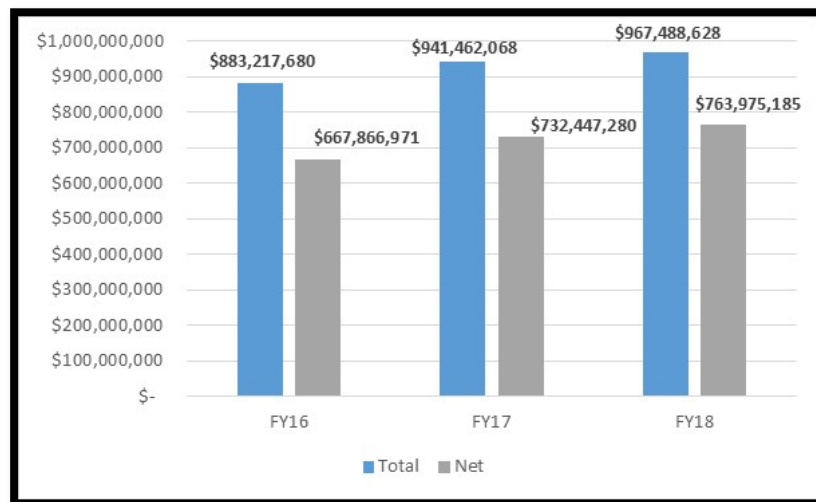
Trinity College's Progress in Continuing to Strengthen Its Financial Position

We have made substantial progress in strengthening our financial position. As a key indicator of this progress, we produced small operating budget surpluses in FY16, FY17, and FY18; and we are on track to continue this pattern in FY19. This progress is based on the following major strategies, which we describe below in more detail:

- Creating an accurate and realistic 5-year financial model;
- Making difficult decisions to reduce expenses consistent with our strategic plan, including staff layoffs in 2018;
- Meeting or exceeding our enrollment projections while improving student retention;
- Completing very successful current-use fundraising efforts and pre-launching a comprehensive fundraising campaign; as well as
- Developing new sources of revenue.

We have carried out these efforts, moreover, with a significant degree of transparency and community input, yielding positive results. At the highest level, it is worth noting that Trinity's total and net assets grew, respectively, by 9.5% and 14% from FY16-FY18. (See Figure 1.) Parallel to this growth, we have developed and implemented key practices and processes to support financial sustainability. With the exception of enrollment, which is discussed in a separate section, we detail below the principal strategies and outcomes associated with strengthening our financial position.

Figure 1
Growth in Trinity College Total and Net Assets, FY16 – FY18



Creating an Accurate and Realistic 5-Year Financial Model

Our fiscal management approach relies on adopting accurate and realistic assumptions, including for enrollment and student discounting. This reflects the view that aligning strategic priorities with budgetary realities must be done in a far-sighted and institutionally responsible manner. To that end, we have instituted several practices that help ensure realistic fiscal projections.

First and foremost, we are collaborating closely across college divisions. Based on past lessons as an institution, we know that the budget process cannot take place in isolation. It must be informed by the insights and expertise of those with substantive knowledge, including the Enrollment and Academic Affairs divisions. More than at any time in the College's history, the budget-setting process now reflects active cross-divisional collaboration and planning.

Second, recognizing that the planning process must draw on reliable institutional data, our fairly new Analytics and Strategic Initiatives Center has created a dashboard of strategic indicators to support planning at the College. Third, and relatedly, the value of setting accurate and realistic projections goes hand in hand with a broader commitment to iterative planning and dynamic budget modeling. Indeed, we are now able to review data in real-time and adjust as needed, working regularly with a five-year model. (See Table 1.) Because our financial model is conservative, moreover, in FY16, FY17, and FY18, our budget surpluses somewhat exceeded our predictions.

Table 1
Trinity College's Five-Year Budget Model: Key Assumptions

Fiscal Assumptions	FY18 Actual	FY19 Forecast	FY20 Forecast	FY21 Forecast	FY22 Forecast	FY23 Forecast
Bottom Line	\$0.1m	\$0.5m	\$0.4m	\$0.1m	\$0.1m	\$2.7m
Enrollment	2,165	2,178	2,144	2,154	2,162	2,179
Discount Rate	42.6%	42.1%	44.8%	47.6%	48.0%	47.5%
New Revenue Sources	-	-	\$0.5m	\$0.7m	\$2.0m	\$2.2m
Cost Reductions	\$10m	-	\$1.0m	\$0.3m	-	-
Budgeted Capital Renewal	\$5.3m	\$5.5m	\$5.5m	\$5.7m	\$5.9m	\$6.1m
Campaign Endowment Contributions	-	-	-	\$11m	\$16m	\$22m

Fourth, a commitment to shared governance implies that key constituents, from the Board's Finance Committee to the multi-constituent campus Planning and Budget Council and the faculty's Financial Affairs Committee, are all invited to ask hard questions about budgetary assumptions, which strengthens our overall planning and evaluation processes. Even small changes have had a positive impact; for example, introducing a calendar of key budget planning milestones has enhanced transparency and improved planning across the institution.

The results of this broader shift in organizational culture and budget modeling have been positive. For example, in fall 2018, our actual enrollment performance exceeded our budgeted objectives for FY19 (See Table 2). This had implications for both student discount assumptions and net tuition revenue in the 5-year model, which we subsequently updated to improve previously forecasted future-year deficits.

Table 2
Actual versus Budgeted Revenue Assumptions for FY19

Student Revenue	Actual FY19	Budgeted FY19
Undergraduate headcount	2,183	2,126
Discount Rate	42.1%	46.3%
Net Tuition	\$67.5m	\$65.4m

Reducing Expenses Strategically

Since the evaluation team’s visit in March 2017, the College has aggressively pursued operating efficiencies, guided by the priorities and goals of the strategic plan. As President Berger-Sweeney noted in a May 2018 letter to the community, Trinity “can do almost anything, but we can’t do everything.” Describing necessary cuts, she further observed, “the impact will be felt differently across campus because we’re not making indiscriminate, across-the-board cuts.”

FY18 indeed saw a challenging exercise in determining what we could do and what we should no longer do. The result was a FY19 operating budget that was balanced and \$2 million smaller than the FY18 budget. This was achieved by strategically cutting operating expenses by \$4.8 million, while increasing our commitment to financial aid, increasing faculty and staff salaries (with the exception of members of the President’s Cabinet), and accommodating for higher employer-benefit costs.

More precisely, these efforts involved carefully assessing cost structures and making long-term savings in our business operations. The process was done in consultation with key governance groups, and it was detailed in various public communications to the community. Reducing expenses included a range of strategies, from changing vendor relationships to moving toward some central-purchasing arrangements with area partners. It also entailed eliminating twelve existing staff positions and a handful of vacant positions based on a thorough reevaluation of needs. At the same time, we added positions strategically in advancement and communications, better aligning our resources with our priorities. Furthermore, we constructed a fuel cell — an on-site electrical generation facility — that is expected to save the College between \$0.5 million and \$0.8 million annually. Changing our outsourced investment officer also led to savings of \$1 million in endowment management fees. In total, since 2017, we have saved over \$10M out of the operating budget by strategically assessing and re-engineering our financial structure. Moody’s credit agency recently recognized these hard decisions by affirming the College’s “prudent financial management and demonstrated willingness to adjust expenses as needed.”

Indeed, Moody’s rating of Trinity has remained consistent in recent years at A1, in recognition of the College’s substantial institutional strengths, while the change in outlook from stable to negative in December 2018 mirrored Moody’s national outlook for higher education. Explaining the change for Trinity, Moody’s cited “constrained net tuition growth” and “uneven investment returns.” Having already changed investment firms from Investure to Commonfund and taken the significant corrective actions described here, we are now actively focused on renewed growth.

In looking for future operating efficiencies, which uphold our core academic mission, we are exploring new collaborations and contracts. For instance, we are in the process of bidding our outsourced facilities

and grounds operations contract, which could result in significant cost savings. While our location in a capital city certainly brings with it urban expenses, as outlined in the self-study, it also has the potential for cost-saving opportunities that come from partnering with other organizations in the City.

Successful Fundraising and Pre-Launch of a Comprehensive Campaign

We have completed very successful current-use fundraising efforts, under the leadership of a new vice president for college advancement. In FY18, for example, we raised \$37.8 million, or over \$5 million more than in FY17; this included \$8.1 million for the Trinity College annual fund, which exceeded our goal of \$8 million. More broadly, much work has gone into assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the College's fundraising operations and aggressively addressing areas of improvement. One clear weakness that was limiting our capacity to reach additional prospects was the size of the frontline fundraising staff, which we corrected by adding 5.5 FTE to that group.

We also made tactical shifts in three key areas: the annual fund, donor relations, and alumni relations. In the annual fund, we began moving to a volunteer-based program (a model in place at many of our peer schools), and we now have a robust volunteer recruitment plan in place. The Annual Giving team is recruiting new class agents, with a goal of reaching 100 this year, and we are implementing plans to rejuvenate our annual giving leadership committee. In donor relations, we have shifted focus to donor engagement, particularly at the top of the gift/prospect pyramid. And in alumni relations, we have started paying closer attention to young alumni, as well as expanding efforts to engage alumni around shared interests or affinities. In FY18, a major initiative in the alumni relations area was the Resonance Insights survey. Approximately 2,500 Trinity alumni completed the survey, providing us with a rich pool of responses as we work hard to better engage alumni. We also shared findings of the survey with the community, both through a presentation at Reunion in 2018 that was livestreamed and a story in our alumni magazine.

The College is actively preparing for a comprehensive campaign in the lead-up to Trinity's bicentennial in 2023, guided by our strategic plan and a commitment to grow the endowment for long-term sustainability. The bicentennial campaign priorities are largely focused on growth of the endowment, including support for scholarships; and we have already raised substantial amounts in cash and pledges. The Board of Trustees, moreover, has approved an annual \$1.8 million special endowment draw to fund the campaign. Two prominent trustees have agreed to provide leadership, and a special Board of Trustees campaign committee has been formed. Advancement has expanded its fundraising team and is preparing the faculty and staff for the upcoming campaign, as well as an 18-month celebration of the 50th anniversary of co-education at Trinity. As of now, our five-year forecasts reflect \$150 million of growth in the endowment fund over seven years due to the campaign. One of Trinity's strengths, according to Moody's recent report, is its "excellent philanthropic support, with three-year average gifts per student of \$12,418 for fiscal 2016-2018, and continued prospects for fundraising success."

Developing New Sources of Revenue

Being a selective liberal arts college located in a capital city creates distinctive opportunities for Trinity, including the potential for new revenue sources. We have been actively developing these possibilities and have made significant strides in the past year. As a noteworthy example, we announced in September 2018 a five-year path-breaking partnership with Infosys, the global technology consulting company that has opened an innovation hub in Hartford. We are Infosys's sole national liberal arts partner, focused on a shared vision of bridging the liberal arts and the future of digital technology. In bringing the partnership to life, we are developing several joint initiatives, with the first launching in January 2019. All are revenue-

generating undertakings; most importantly, they allow us to advance our mission by creating opportunities for students and faculty, reach new audiences, and showcase the power of the liberal arts in general and a Trinity College education in particular.

Likewise, we believe that Trinity's longstanding graduate studies program, rooted in the College's location in a capital city, has significant potential. Fulfilling this potential has nonetheless required undertaking a complex set of changes, a need that both the Commission and our own self-study recognized. Though we will be updating the Commission in our Spring 2022 interim report, we are already well on our way to making the necessary changes, having created a new governance system, reduced expenses substantially, and started investing in professional recruitment staff. Since FY16, following several years of deficits, Graduate Studies has generated budget surpluses; and we continue integrating the program successfully into financial planning and overall College operations and governance.

The foundations for generating new revenue are in place and being publicly recognized. For instance, a \$2.5 million grant from the state of Connecticut will allow Trinity in 2019 to build out one of our downtown Hartford spaces to house emerging partnerships and programs. Already, these combined efforts are generating more than \$500,000 annually in new revenue which will continue to grow. And as another sign of institutionalized attention to these areas, the dean for graduate studies is now also serving as vice president for strategic initiatives and innovation, reporting to the President to ensure mission-centered growth and overall implementation of the strategic plan. We are experimenting in other ways with generating new revenue sources, including vis-à-vis new academic programs such as alternative start programs for first-year students as well as more robust summer offerings.

Trinity College's Progress in Developing and Implementing Its Deferred Maintenance Plan

Recognizing that the College's capital renewal efforts, including its tackling of deferred maintenance, are crucial, we have taken several important steps to address these challenges. First and foremost, we have drafted a deferred maintenance plan for the College, which we have started implementing. The plan is comprehensive, and it will be enacted over the next eight years. We have organized this plan (Table 3) into short-term goals (approximately 12 months), medium-term goals (approximately 18-48 months) and longer-term goals (5-8 years).

To tackle deferred maintenance systematically, we first contracted Sightlines to produce a comprehensive facilities and deferred maintenance report, which compared Trinity to its peers. Sightlines estimated in 2018 that Trinity had \$222 million in deferred maintenance needs, or \$114 per Gross Square Feet (GSF), which placed it in the midpoint of our peer group (the median level for our peer group was \$99/GSF). Deferred maintenance needs broke down as follows: \$40 million of current needs, \$65 million of renewal needs within ten years, and \$112 million of modernization and infrastructure needs. Based on discussions with our management team and the Board of Trustees, we concluded that our goal is not to have \$0 of deferred maintenance. A realistic goal is to be at or lower than the median for deferred maintenance among our peer group. To achieve this, a sustainable, integrated plan will require focusing strategically on current needs and essential infrastructure in the short-term and renewal needs in the medium- and longer-terms.

Table 3
Overview of Trinity College’s Deferred Maintenance Plan, 2018-26

SHORT-TERM GOALS (12 Months)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage Sightlines to produce comprehensive facilities and deferred maintenance report (completed) • Create multi-constituent campus Facilities Committee (completed) • Increase annual budget allocations designated for facilities projects (completed) • Tackle facilities projects strategically and on an annual basis (ongoing) • Take offline particular buildings with significant deferred maintenance and minimal value-added to our operations, addressing campus infrastructure needs and student housing issues (ongoing)
MEDIUM-TERM GOALS (18-48 Months)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess value of issuing a \$20 million+ bond to address most pressing deferred maintenance issues (Board of Trustees, Winter 2019) • Begin fundraising for two revered campus facilities: Trinity’s historic Chapel and Athletics facilities • Continue addressing student housing issues and campus infrastructure
LONGER-TERM GOALS (5-8 Years)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve higher levels of regular funding for capital projects, incorporating these into annual operating budgets and the 5-year budget model • Increase endowment through a successful comprehensive campaign, permitting higher debt capacity for future facilities projects, especially those focused on Academic facilities • Achieve specific targets set for key areas, including residence halls, the Chapel, and the campus heating/cooling system

The deferred maintenance plan is consistent with and reflects Trinity’s strategic plan. It is part of the strategic plan’s critical focus on renewal of our historic campus and on planning and implementing a physical environment that fosters community and learning inside and outside of the classroom. Thus, Trinity’s strategic plan identifies two related objectives:

- Develop facilities plans for academic and student life spaces that facilitate collaboration and interdisciplinary learning (including the chapel, residential facilities, and athletics spaces); and
- Establish a collaborative and transparent process for participation by the campus community in facilities, sustainability, and green-space planning.

In response to a key recommendation of the strategic planning process, we have formed a multi-constituent campus facilities committee. The Summit Facilities Committee is a new multi-constituent advisory group that reports to the vice president for finance and is specifically charged with “establishing a collaborative process for community participation in the prioritization of facilities projects and deferred maintenance.” The group has already started gathering input and assessing priorities from the community on various categories of projects, including: Academic Facilities, Student Housing, Campus Infrastructure, Student Life Facilities, the Chapel, Athletics, and neighborhood improvements. We are also developing targeted strategies and action steps for each facilities category, including for deferred maintenance.

To fully grasp the magnitude of the challenge and scale of investment required for addressing deferred maintenance effectively, we also commissioned the following research and studies:

- A structural evaluation of the houses on the perimeter of campus;
- Several reports by EYP Architecture outlining the accessibility of campus buildings and pathways;
- A review of the Chapel's status and deferred maintenance needs;
- A two-day workshop to help define specific facility strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities;
- Evaluation of electrical infrastructure and crucial system upgrades;
- Annual deferred maintenance studies, benchmarked against our appropriate peer group; and
- Assessment of the age and health of trees on campus, with specific attention to the main quad.

In the short-term, we have already started increasing our annual budget for capital renewal. (See Table 1.) Our five-year forecasts, for example, call for the College to increase the budgeted capital renewal allocation from \$5.5 million in FY19 to \$6.1 million in FY23. The College also continues to address important capital projects every year. Utilizing budgeted capital development funds, proceeds from the CHEFA P bond issue, and gifts from donors, the College has made significant capital investments over the last three years. In fact, total capital spending for FY17, FY18, and FY19 has exceeded \$50.0 million. Since our spring 2017 evaluation, we have successfully completed several important capital projects, relating to Athletic fields; a new building dedicated to the arts and neuroscience; improved underground infrastructure for campus heating and cooling; renovations to one of our downtown spaces, housing our new Liberal Arts Action Lab; selling or improving off-campus neighborhood properties; enhancing accessibility throughout the campus; and installing an energy-saving fuel cell.

Significantly, addressing deferred maintenance is now a priority recognized by the community-at-large, one that we view as part of a more comprehensive long-term strategic approach. We have taken concrete steps to assess accurately the magnitude of our deferred maintenance challenge by commissioning third-party reports and studies, and we have created new governance structures and processes to engage effectively in planning and evaluation. Overall, we are devoting organizational and financial resources to maintain and enhance the College's physical resources and ensure long-term sustainability.

Trinity College's Progress in Achieving Its Enrollment Goals

We have continued to see great success in our enrollment initiatives. Since 2015, the College has either met or exceeded its enrollment goals. Starting in 2016, we set a new student (first-years and transfers) enrollment goal of 575 high-caliber students, which was considerably smaller than the goal of 600 students in 2014. This was an intentional policy designed to meet revenue targets while maintaining (and enhancing, as much as possible) academic quality. We exceeded this enrollment target every year, including transfer students: 576 in FY16, 586 in FY17, 598 in FY18, and 595 in FY19.

Other significant outcomes of our enrollment process included increasing the geographic diversity of our applicant pool and the percentage of international students, at a time when trends might suggest otherwise. For example, four years ago, tuition revenue from international students was \$400,000, while today it is over \$2 million. And we have enrolled in the past several years, the most diverse and academically qualified classes in the College's history. By the same token, we view retention as a key component of enrollment, and we are proud that the intense multifaceted approach we have adopted has already yielded results; in FY19, we achieved a 91% first-year retention rate, which is the highest since 2012. Progress in all of these areas, which we outline below, is the result of a deliberate shift in strategies and extensive cross-campus collaboration.

As detailed in our self-study, Trinity College adopted in 2015 a new strategic approach to enrollment. In June 2015, President Joanne Berger-Sweeney appointed a new vice president for enrollment and student success. This newly created, cabinet-level position leads an expanded division at the College and spearheads a new philosophy and approach toward enrollment goals and initiatives. The scope of the position underscored the importance of both enrolling a talented and diverse student body and creating and implementing strategies to ensure their success while at Trinity and after graduation. The vice president manages a division that comprises admissions, financial aid, career development, retention, the Individualized Degree Program for non-traditionally aged students, and Posse Scholars. Enrollment management is an increasingly complex and data-driven initiative at Trinity, whose outcomes have important implications for the overall health of the College. The division thus works closely with data analytics to ensure a strategic approach to all facets of enrollment and retention.

More specifically, our concrete progress in meeting enrollment goals is the result of an interrelated set of strategies. These strategies include utilizing predictive models, focusing on demonstrated interest, increasing recruitment across the United States and the world, and strategically using financial aid and merit dollars. The College has received a considerable amount of national media attention around enrollment initiatives, including its move to a test-optional policy, alternative predictors of success in evaluation, and removing barriers for low-income students.

The Admissions Office has likewise worked diligently to cultivate new relationships with high school counselors worldwide. During the past two summers, Trinity has hosted two high school counselor conferences on its campus – bringing further visibility, trust, and relationship cultivation between counselors and the institution. Approximately 450 counselors have attended these programs.

Student retention is also an integral part of Trinity's holistic enrollment approach. After several years of careful strategy and community building, Trinity's first-year retention rate rose to 91% in FY19, up from 88% the previous year and closer to an all-time high in recent history of 93% in 2001. While Trinity's retention rate is much higher than the national average, we aspire to be in the mid-90's range characteristic of other selective liberal arts colleges. The community at large has been working closely on retention efforts, and the College's decision to create an Office of Student Success to focus and strategize on these efforts is paying off. The Office of Student Success has been busy creating an effective retention eco-system. These efforts include:

1. **Admissions Strategy.** We set out to recruit and enroll students for whom Trinity is a first-choice destination. This means that students already arrive excited to be a part of the community, connect on campus, and stay at Trinity.
2. **Policy Analysis.** We partnered with committees on campus to assess academic and social policies that may be inadvertently working against our retention goals, based on careful review of policies at peer institutions whose goal is to be student-centered while upholding academic rigor. Moving forward, we will work with our campus retention committees and shared governance structures to update policies and practices, including as they relate to the criteria for required withdrawal; adding/dropping courses; and academic probation, especially for first-year students; enhanced faculty input; and proactive outreach to and counseling of students.
3. **Individualized Student Approach.** Simply put, every student counts. We intervene early when we learn there are challenges or dissatisfactions; but we also create programming, experiences and connections for students that have traditionally been more likely to transfer to another institution.

4. **New Retention-Focused Programming.** We are offering innovative design-thinking sessions, forums for high-achieving students, earlier career development connections, and student mentorship programs to ensure students connect and engage early.
5. **Task Force.** Significantly, we have convened a committee of faculty, trustees, and staff to work proactively on impacting retention and offer further solutions.

Despite the success of our enrollment initiatives, we recognize that the competition for students in the region is going to intensify. Consequently, in the next several years we are committed to pursuing a broad array of strategies, from strengthening the financial aid budget through philanthropy and enhancing geographic diversity to growing programs serving non-traditional students. In fact, we are in the process of hiring a recruiter specifically targeting enrollments in graduate studies and non-traditional program offerings. Overall, Trinity's recent track record in setting and exceeding enrollment targets reveals a comprehensive, flexible planning process, one focused on carefully balancing academic quality with financial sustainability.

Trinity's Progress in Implementing & Monitoring the Effectiveness of Its Credit-Hour Policy

As we previously reported to the visiting team, we had formalized expectations about our credit-hour policy, revising the policy so that undergraduate courses now comprise about 157 hours of engaged academic time. We had also started communicating the policy in appropriate locations, making the policy accessible to both faculty and students. In particular, the policy is now available in the Trinity College *Bulletin*, which is the central repository for information about the curriculum and is updated annually. Most notably, page 26 of the *Bulletin* clarifies expectations about engaged academic time and credit hours per course:

One Trinity course credit is the equivalent of 3.5 semester hours, or approximately 157.5 hours of student engagement per semester, as defined by federal guidelines. For each credit hour awarded, students generally complete no fewer than 150 minutes of in-class instructional or studio/lab time, and 9 hours of unsupervised out-of-class work per week, including final exams, final projects, take home examinations etc.

Additionally, in an attempt to communicate course expectations transparently and consistently to students, the Curriculum Committee and the Assessment Advisory Board jointly approved in December 2018 a policy that every Trinity College course must have a syllabus, and a required component of the syllabus is "a statement of expectations for engaged learning outside the classroom," which references the credit-hour policy in full. The policy has been circulated to all faculty, and it is currently posted on the website of Trinity's Center for Teaching and Learning.

Additionally, we have changed the course proposal submission form to direct faculty attention to expectations regarding student engagement and the credit-hour policy. As one example, the following language is now used in submissions for J-Term Courses: "J-Term courses are worth .5 course credits, and students can only take one course per term. These courses require a minimum of 79 hours of engaged learning, with a minimum of 20 contact hours over two weeks." This process now exists for all Trinity College courses.

Our goal in making these changes has been to ensure that in designing their courses, faculty members will keep students' academic engagement clearly in mind. The process of accreditation has pushed us in very productive ways to be increasingly attentive to this issue. For instance, the Curriculum Committee,

which has formal oversight of the course proposal process, now refers regularly to these questions and returns for revision course proposals in which student engagement may be in question.

The issue has also been discussed at length in various key settings, including meetings of department chairs and program directors, so the policy is reinforced in multiple ways and not simply expressed in the *Bulletin*. Significantly, Trinity's Center for Teaching and Learning has conducted several workshops and seminars to assist faculty in planning their courses, attentive to issues of student engagement.

For the first time in almost a decade, we have also been undertaking a College-wide curricular review and planning process. Throughout this process — informed by student data from Trinity and our liberal arts peers as well as broad faculty input, including a day-long faculty retreat last spring — we have been explicitly taking into account questions of student engagement and looking to ensure greater consistency of standards. One proposal emphasizes experiential learning activities, such as internships, study-away experiences, and student research. Regardless of the particular revisions implemented, we should have greater clarity at the end of the curricular revisions about the engaged learning we expect of our students when they undertake various experiential learning opportunities and how we award credit to those non-traditional learning experiences.

Likewise, we are planning to revise College-wide learning goals and graduation outcomes this academic year, which itself should trigger a revision of learning outcomes across the curriculum. As we work to integrate College learning outcomes throughout the curriculum, both in general education and the majors and minors, standards about student engagement and the credit hour will no doubt factor centrally.

Conclusion

Since the Commission's January 2018 letter, Trinity College has made substantial and concrete progress in the areas singled out for review. Changes to the credit-hour policy have generated productive conversations on campus, and we have succeeded in communicating the policy and engaging faculty in ongoing conversations about the policy and its implications. Ongoing monitoring and measurement will of course be essential, but the key processes and foundations are now in place.

Faculty enthusiasm about the quality and engagement of the student body has also risen, just as we have continued to meet enrollment goals and garner national attention for our enrollment strategies. As more students select Trinity as their first choice, and campus offices consistently support a renewed focus on student success, we expect retention rates also to rise. That said, given our placement in the higher education marketplace, we fully understand that prevailing forces necessitate we continue to make difficult choices and trade-offs. For example, to sustain the course of our enrollment strategy and its focus on academic quality *and* balance the College budget, we have had to make substantial cost adjustments. These decisions have not been easy, but we have made them strategically, intent on aligning our resources with Trinity's core academic mission.

The plans we have described for continuing to strengthen Trinity College's financial position, including launching a bicentennial comprehensive campaign and developing alternative revenue sources, are part of a careful strategy. Fundamentally, moreover, our commitment to cross-divisional collaboration and shared governance will be essential to engaging effectively in ongoing planning and evaluation. Balanced budgets, five-year budget models with new revenue sources, a comprehensive and targeted facilities planning process that includes deferred maintenance, consistent meeting of enrollment targets and proven success in increasing both enrollments geographically and student retention, are all indicators

of our institutional capacity to use our resources to support our core academic mission in sustainable ways. We are proud of the results and focused on the ongoing work ahead of fully implementing Trinity's strategic plan, consistent with accreditation standards and worthy of the College's upcoming bicentennial.

Below is an overview of our projected next steps, by area of focus, complementing the details presented in this report.

- **Financial Position and Operating Budget Deficits:** Significantly, we will launch in 2019 a comprehensive bicentennial campaign, which is projected to raise the College's endowment by at least \$150 million. We will also continue regularly updating our five-year budget model, while remaining vigilant to cost-saving opportunities, including joint ventures with consortial and regional partners. Maximizing our location in a city, we will continue actively pursuing new revenue-generating opportunities that are consistent with Trinity's core academic mission, including Trinity's path-breaking partnership with Infosys.
- **Deferred Maintenance Plan:** Developing and implementing Trinity College's eight-year deferred maintenance plan will remain an institutional priority. We will continue making progress on achieving the medium- and longer-term goals outlined in that plan (Table 3). As part of this, we will continue fundraising efforts and planning relating to our aging athletic facilities and the Chapel. We will also work on upgrading and replacing the electrical switchgear, which serves as the backbone of Trinity's electrical distribution system, as well as developing and implementing the longer-term plan to replace the College's heating and cooling system. Likewise, we will complete feasibility studies in 2019 for specific buildings, as well as explore opportunities to add another fuel cell to the campus.
- **Enrollment Goals:** In addition to the strategies for enrollment and recruitment discussed above, including completing the work of the retention taskforce, we will be leveraging the upcoming campaign to raise \$100 million in financial aid; and we will continue expanding staff for international recruitment. We also plan to improve communications strategies for prospective students, building on focus groups we recently held in various U.S. cities, while strengthening marketing materials and revamping our social-media engagement strategy. In the next 12 months, we will further develop an outreach plan to engage and cultivate independent educational consultants worldwide, complementing our work with high-school based counselors and tapping into a previously underutilized resource for Trinity.
- **Credit-Hour Policy:** As we continue implementing and monitoring the effectiveness of Trinity's credit hour-policy, we will focus more systematically on issues of measurement, as coordinated by the director of academic assessment. This will occur in tandem with continuing to raise awareness and understanding by faculty of the significance of the credit hour for teaching. Likewise, we will ensure that the credit-hour policy plays a prominent role in discussions and planning centered around curricular revisions, particularly as they relate to experiential learning.