



Institutional Self-Study

October 2016

**Prepared for the Commission on
Institutions of Higher Education**

**NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF
SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES**

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Institutional Characteristics Form

This form is to be completed and placed at the beginning of the Self-Study report:

Date: July 28, 2016

1. Corporate name of institution: Charter Oak State College
2. Date institution was chartered or authorized: 1973
3. Date institution enrolled first students in degree programs: 1973
4. Date institution awarded first degrees: 1974
5. Type of control:

Public	Private
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State	<input type="checkbox"/> Independent, not-for-profit
<input type="checkbox"/> City	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious Group
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	(Name of Church) _____
(Specify) _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Proprietary
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: (Specify) _____
6. By what agency is the institution legally authorized to provide a program of education beyond high school, and what degrees is it authorized to grant?

The Connecticut General Assembly and the Connecticut Office of Higher Education legally authorize Charter Oak State College to grant certificates, associate degrees, bachelor's degrees, and master's degrees.

7. Level of postsecondary offering (check all that apply)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than one year of work	<input type="checkbox"/> First professional degree
<input type="checkbox"/> At least one but less than two years	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Master's and/or work beyond the first professional degree
<input type="checkbox"/> Diploma or certificate programs of at least two but less than four years	<input type="checkbox"/> Work beyond the master's level but not at the doctoral level (e.g., Specialist in Education)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Associate degree granting program of at least two years	<input type="checkbox"/> A doctor of philosophy or equivalent degree
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Four- or five-year baccalaureate degree granting program	<input type="checkbox"/> Other doctoral programs _____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____

8. Type of undergraduate programs (check all that apply)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Occupational training at the crafts/clerical level (certificate or diploma) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Liberal arts and general |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Occupational training at the technical or semi-professional level (degree) | <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher preparatory |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Two-year programs designed for full transfer to a baccalaureate degree | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Professional |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

9. The calendar system at the institution is:

- Semester Quarter Trimester Other _____

10. What constitutes the credit hour load for a full-time equivalent (FTE) student each semester?

- a) Undergraduate 12 credit hours
- b) Graduate 9 credit hours
- c) Professional _____ credit hours

11. Student population:

- a) Degree-seeking students – IPEDS 12-Month Enrollment, 2015-16

	Undergraduate	Graduate	Total
Full-time student headcount	309	0	309
Part-time student headcount	2198	0	2198
FTE	950	0	950

- b) Number of students (headcount) in non-credit, short-term courses: 51

12. List all programs accredited by a nationally recognized, specialized accrediting agency.

Program	Agency	Accredited since	Last Reviewed	Next Review
Bachelor of Science in Health Information Mgt.	Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management Education (CAHIIM)	October 2015	July 2015	2025 with annual program review report during the interim

13. Off-campus Locations. List all instructional locations other than the main campus. For each site, indicate whether the location offers full-degree programs or 50% or more of one or more degree programs. Record the full-time equivalent enrollment (FTE) for the most recent year.

Add more rows as needed.

	Full degree	50%-99%	FTE
A. In-state Locations			
Not applicable			
B. Out-of-state Locations			
Not applicable			

14. International Locations: For each overseas instructional location, indicate the name of the program, the location, and the headcount of students enrolled for the most recent year. An overseas instructional location is defined as “any overseas location of an institution, other than the main campus, at which the institution matriculates students to whom it offers any portion of a degree program or offers on-site instruction or instructional support for students enrolled in a predominantly or totally on-line program.” **Do not include study abroad locations.**

Name of program(s)	Location	Headcount
Not applicable		

15. Degrees and certificates offered 50% or more electronically: For each degree or Title IV-eligible certificate, indicate the level (certificate, associate, baccalaureate, master's, professional, doctoral), the percentage of credits that may be completed on-line, and the FTE of matriculated students for the most recent year. Enter more rows as needed.

Name of program	Degree level	% on-line	FTE (2015-16)_
General Studies	Associate degree	100%	52
General Studies	Bachelor's degree	100%	521
Business Admin.	Bachelor's degree	100%	120
Health Care Admin.	Bachelor's degree	100%	86
Health Information Mgmt.	Bachelor's degree	100%	38
Cybersecurity	Bachelor's degree	100%	29
Psychology	Bachelor's degree	100%	52

16. Instruction offered through contractual relationships: For each contractual relationship through which instruction is offered for a Title IV-eligible degree or certificate, indicate the name of the contractor, the location of instruction, the program name, and degree or certificate, and the number of credits that may be completed through the contractual relationship. Enter more rows as needed.

Name of contractor	Location	Name of program	Degree or certificate	# of credits
Not applicable				

17. List by name and title the chief administrative officers of the institution. (Use the table on the following page.)
18. Supply a table of organization for the institution. While the organization of any institution will depend on its purpose, size and scope of operation, institutional organization usually includes four areas. Although every institution may not have a major administrative division for these areas, the following outline may be helpful in charting and describing the overall administrative organization:
- Organization of academic affairs, showing a line of responsibility to president for each department, school division, library, admissions office, and other units assigned to this area;

- b) Organization of student affairs, including health services, student government, intercollegiate activities, and other units assigned to this area;
- c) Organization of finances and business management, including plant operations and maintenance, non-academic personnel administration, IT, auxiliary enterprises, and other units assigned to this area;
- d) Organization of institutional advancement, including fund development, public relations, alumni office and other units assigned to this area.

19. Record briefly the central elements in the history of the institution:

Charter Oak's History

June 1971	Enactment of P.A. 71-537, AN ACT CONCERNING EXTERNAL DEGREES AND COLLEGE CREDIT BY EXAMINATION, establishing the Task Force on External Degrees.
May 15, 1972	First meeting of Committee on Alternative Approaches for the Delivery of Higher Education.
June 22, 1973	Enactment of P.A. 73-656. AN ACT CONCERNING A BOARD FOR STATE ACADEMIC AWARDS.
November 3, 1973	First meeting of the Board for State Academic Awards.
May 10, 1974	Appointment of Dr. Bernard Shea to the position of Executive Secretary (later Executive Director) of the Board for State Academic Awards following a nationwide search.
October 1, 1974	Board for State Academic Awards authorized by Connecticut Commission for Higher Education to enroll candidates and to award the degree of Associate in Arts.
December 27, 1974	First graduation - four candidates awarded Associate in Arts.
May 6, 1975	Board authorized by Connecticut Commission for Higher Education to award the degree of Associate in Science.
October 28, 1976	Board for State Academic Awards admitted to candidacy for regional accreditation by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges.
1976-77	Electronic data base developed for maintenance and processing of academic records; operations of Registrar's office fully computerized.
March 8, 1977	Initial licensure and accreditation to award the degrees of Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science.
March 17, 1977	First baccalaureate degrees awarded.

September 15, 1977	Connecticut Open Learning Assistance Corporation established (Title changed in 1983 to Charter Oak College Foundation, Inc.).
May 1978	First issue of <i>BSAA BRIEFS</i> , the College newsletter, appears (Currently called <i>Connections</i>).
June 1980	General Assembly authorizes use of title Charter Oak College.
October 1981	College attains regional accreditation by New England Association of Schools and Colleges.
July 1983	Board membership increased from five to seven by addition of a graduate and student.
1983-84	Faculty develops and standardizes battery of seven comprehensive examinations in Business subjects.
October 1986	Continuation of regional accreditation following re-evaluation by New England Association of Schools and Colleges.
July 1987	Establishment of Bernard D. Shea Endowed Chair for Charter Oak College Foundation honoring first Executive Director.
October 1987	College moves from Hartford to Farmington.
October 1989	Honored outgoing Board chairman, Dr. Gerald Lamb, for his many years of distinguished service with the Honorary Doctor of Law Degree.
December 1989	Dr. Merle Harris appointed as President of the College following completion of nationwide search
Spring 1992	Legislation passed to add state to the college name
Spring 1992	College offers its first video based courses
July 1993	Alumni and student associations established.
Spring 1996	Board increased from seven to nine members
Fall 1996	College calls together colleges to form Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium
April 1997	Reaccredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges
Spring 1998	The College offers its first online course.
April 1998	Groundbreaking for Charter Oak State College Building
May 1998	Board approves Doris G. Cassidy Award

May 1998	College celebrates its 25 th Anniversary
May 1998	Charter Oak State College Foundation launches first endowment campaign with a goal of raising \$500,000 in private contributions over five years with the state matching one dollar for every two dollars raised.
May 1998	College awards first Doctor of Humane Letters, <i>honoris causa</i> , to Eileen Kraus
July 1998	College launches payment plan
April 1999	College moves into its new building.
October 1999	College gets first approval to participate in Federal Student Financial Aid programs
October 1999	Official Ribbon Cutting for new building
Fall 1999	College establishes its Women in Transition program and admits its first student to the program.
May 2000	First graduation webcast
Fall 2000	College begins to use technology for live chats with perspective and enrolled students
2000-2001	MOU with Army National Guard
March 2001	College embarks on its first corporate partnership – Aetna program
Spring 2001	General Assembly includes money for grants to needy students in College appropriation
Summer 2001	College provides e-commerce option for registering for online courses.
Summer 2001	Agreement with the Army National Guard Institute and the Coast Guard Institute for degree completion program.
Fall 2001	Addition of accelerated online courses in management, leadership and criminal justice.
Fall 2001	College offers Nursing Refresher Course - first online, non-credit course.
Fall 2001	First student takes Early Childhood Pathways exam.
Fall 2001	Introduction of online tutoring.
Fall 2001	Access to Connecticut Digital Library
Summer 2002	Endowment campaign goal achieved (\$500,000 in gifts from donors earning a state match of \$250,000).

Summer 2002	Legislation passed to establish grant program for Charter Oak under the Connecticut Aid to Public College Students Grant with an appropriation of \$25,000.
Summer 2002	First summer online offerings.
Fall 2002	Enrollment exceeds 1,500.
Fall 2002	College begins program to award the Connecticut Director's Credential for Early Care and Education.
2003-2004	Charter Oak built its first data center.
Fall 2003	Adoption of new logo and tagline, Degrees without Boundaries.
2003-2004	Attained the highest number of online enrollments of all Connecticut Public Institutions.
2004-2005	MOU with Coast Guard
Fall 2004	For the first time, provided students online access to their records.
Fall 2004	Students are able to complete a number of concentrations using Charter Oak online courses, including American Studies, Public Safety Administration and Health Care Administration.
Fall 2004	Awarded TANF Bonus Funds for the College's Women in Transition program for FY 2005 and FY 2006.
Winter 2005	Added a writing assessment instrument and a computer assessment instrument with a tutorial.
Winter 2005	Accepted to Alpha Sigma Lambda Society and able to induct students who meet Society's honors criteria.
Winter 2005	Added a connection to Jones e-global Library to increase student access to information resources and library services.
Spring 2006	Implemented the Jenzabar Student Information system.
April 2007	The College received its ten year accreditation from the New England Association of Schools and Colleges.
2007	Received state licensure for Alternate Route in Early Childhood Education.
Fall 2007	Award \$1.7 million for SDE to administer the Early Childhood Environmental Rating System.

Fall 2007	Received state funding for the CT WAGE Program to complement the WIT program.
February 2008	Ed Klonoski is appointed 4 th President of the College after a national search.
2008-2009	MOU signed with Navy College Program Distance Learning Program.
	Hit the 200 mark for online courses and instituted Charter Oak email accounts for all students and faculty.
2009	Implemented Capstone graduation requirement.
2009	Expanded facilities at CTDLC location on Alumni Road to house part of the College staff.
March 16, 2009	Developed state-wide LPN to RN articulation agreement among the community college system, Tech High School Adult LPN program, and Charter Oak
2009	Conducted Connecticut Credit Assessment Programs Evaluations of Judicial Marshalls and Department of Corrections programs for a state-wide articulation with the community colleges.
June 2009	Changed our enabling legislation to grant us permission to develop Master's degrees.
April 2010	Launched Visioning Team and new Vision statement: Charter Oak State College: A dynamic community of online learners, advancing the nation's workforce one graduate at a time.
June 2010	Added academic dean position to the Provost Office.
Fall 2010	Launched new Cornerstone Course as a required experience for new students. This joins the Capstone as a six credits of residency at the College.
Fall 2010	Began using Acxiom, student verification system.
Fall 2010	Implemented document scanning.
Jan 2011	Teaching faculty and Consulting faculty became employees for purposes of payment. This changed them from consultants on Personal Services Agreements to part time employees.
July 2011	The College fee structure was changed with the Academic Services Fee (originally the Matriculation Fee) was reduced by 40% and renamed the College Fee. The course enrollment fee was slightly increased, re-aligning the College fee structure toward the course enrollment fees, which have become the major revenue source for the institution. The year is now structured as three semesters. This change was rolled out as a revenue neutral change beginning in July 2011.

The “Distance Learning Program” was retired and replaced by the Undergraduate Program. The modality of course delivery is now a given for the College—we are an online college—and online courses are central to the mission of the institution. So students who use Charter Oak courses are simply participants in the Undergraduate Program.

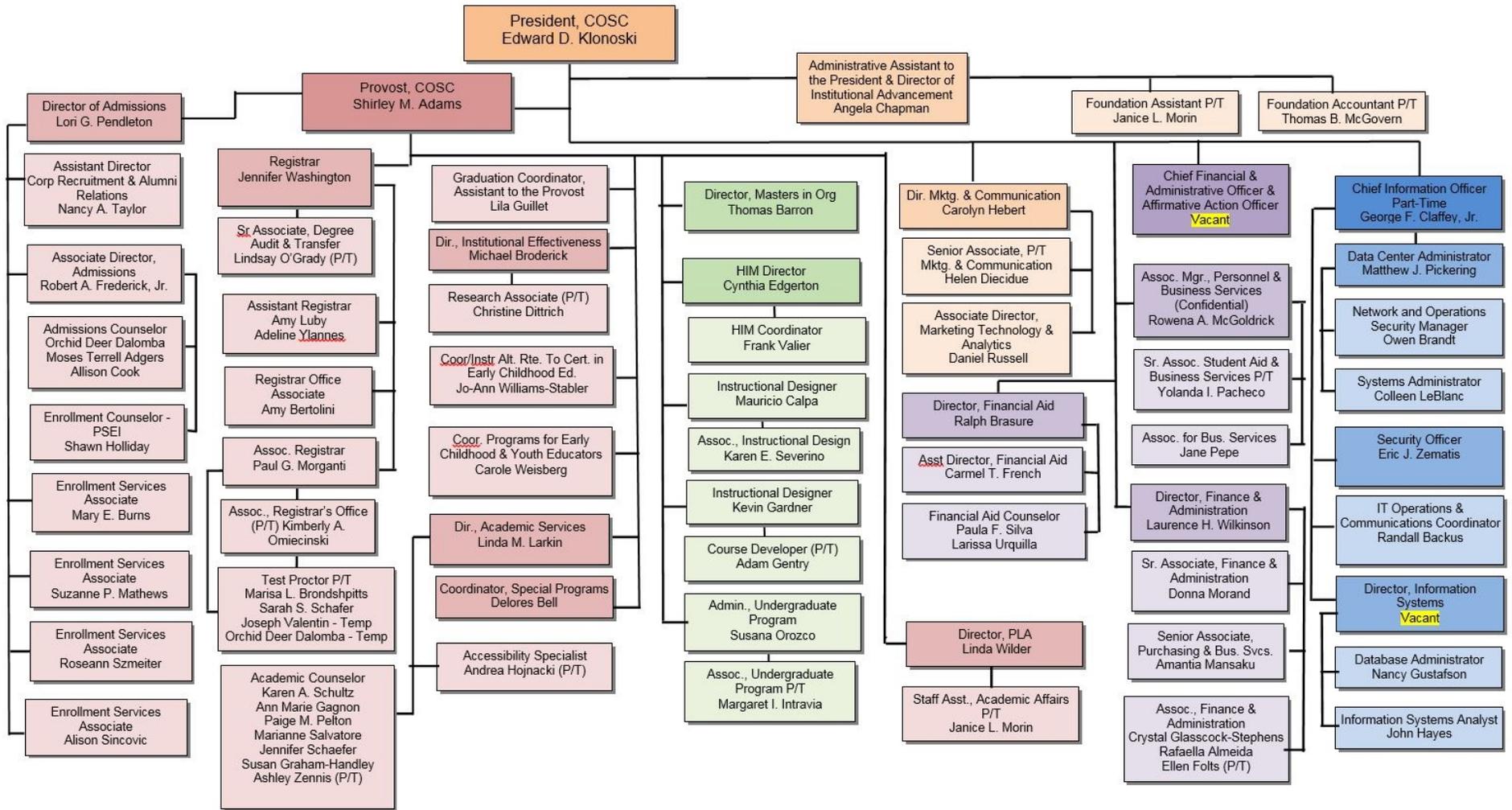
July 2011	New Board of Regents created to oversee Charter Oak, the Connecticut State Universities, and the Connecticut Community Colleges. Charter Oak was allowed one alumni representative on the Board. The BSAA met for the remainder of 2011 and then ceased functioning as the new BOR took over. The BOR will appoint a permanent President of the system in January 2012.
Fall 2011	Began using Starfish Retention solutions as an advising and retention tool.
October 25, 2011	Established President’s Discretionary Fund for students in financial need.
June 2012	Granted an honorary doctorate to Doris Cassidy, one of the College’s founders.
October 2012	One of four colleges in CT to receive approval for the Early Childhood Teaching credential (ECTC) for pre-school endorsement.
October 2012	Launched Health Information Management, the first major for the College, and hired the first full time faculty member to direct the program.
Spring 2013	Began Pilot program with College Unbound
April 2013	Received endorsement for Infant-Toddler ECTC
Summer 2013	One of seven colleges nation-wide selected by Public Agenda to form Competency Based Education Network (C-BEN)
June 2013	Health Care Administration major licensed and accredited by the BOR.
Fall 2013	Implemented electronic catalog.
Fall 2013	Added confidence level survey as part of online student orientation.
Sept. 2013	Gained licensure for our third major—Cybersecurity.
November 2013	College celebrates its 40 th Anniversary at the Mark Twain House. The Celebration included a Shea Lecture entitled “Health Care: the next 40 years.”
Spring 2014	Developed reverse transfer program with three CT community colleges
Spring 2014	Invited to participate in the Lumina-funded think tank around college completion.
	Began using electronic transcripts

June 2, 2014	Launched "Go Back To Get Ahead" program. The governor and legislature funded this project for \$6M. Charter Oak led the initiative that included a “buy one get one free” offer for up to nine credits. We handled purchasing a CRM system, marketing (both direct mail and media), hiring admissions staff, training the other Colleges, producing reports, and managing the financial reporting. We received over 6,500 inquiries that led to over 1,400 enrollments across the system. Charter Oak’s Fall enrollment increased 30%.
Summer 2014	Launched PLA Scholarship as part of Breakthrough Model Incubator project
October 2014	Psychology and Business majors licensed and accredited by the BOR.
Dec 30, 2014	Received a \$20,000 donation from Doris Cassiday for the Shea Lecture endowment.
May 2015	First Master’s degree in Organizational Effectiveness and Leadership was approved by the Board of Regents.
May 2015	Health Information Management major accredited by BOR
Sept 2015	Cybersecurity major accredited by BOR
Fall 2015	Smarter Measure pilot (“grit” survey)
October 28, 2015	Our Health Information Management (HIM) degree received its final accreditation from CAHIIM.
March 2016	Master’s formally approved by NEASC. Scheduled to launch in September 2016.
March 2016	First 10 Transfer Pathways approved by the BOR.

CHIEF INSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS

Function or Office	Name	Exact Title	Year of Appointment
Chair Board of Trustees	Matt Fleury	Chair of the Connecticut Board of Regents for Higher Education	2016
President/CEO	Ed Klonoski	President	2008
Executive Vice President			
Chief Academic Officer	Dr. Shirley Adams	Provost	2008
Deans of Schools and Colleges (insert rows as needed)			
Chief Financial Officer	Vacant		
Chief Student Services Officer	Linda Larkin	Director of Academic Services	1999
Planning			
Institutional Research	Michael Broderick	Director of Institutional Effectiveness	2012
Assessment	Dr. Shirley Adams Michael Broderick	Provost Dir. of Inst. Effectiveness	2008 2012
Development	Angela Chapman	Administrative Assistant to the President and Director of Institutional Advancement	2011
Library			
Chief Information Officer	Dr. George Claffey	Chief Information Officer	2002
Continuing Education			
Grants/Research			
Admissions	Lori Pendleton	Director of Admissions	2009
Registrar	Jennifer Washington	Registrar	2010
Financial Aid	Ralph Brasure	Director of Financial Aid	2016
Public Relations	Carolyn Hebert	Director of Marketing & Public Relations	2008
Alumni Association	Christopher May	President of the Alumni Association	2014
Other			

Organizational Chart for Charter Oak State College and the Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium



CHARTER OAK STATE COLLEGE

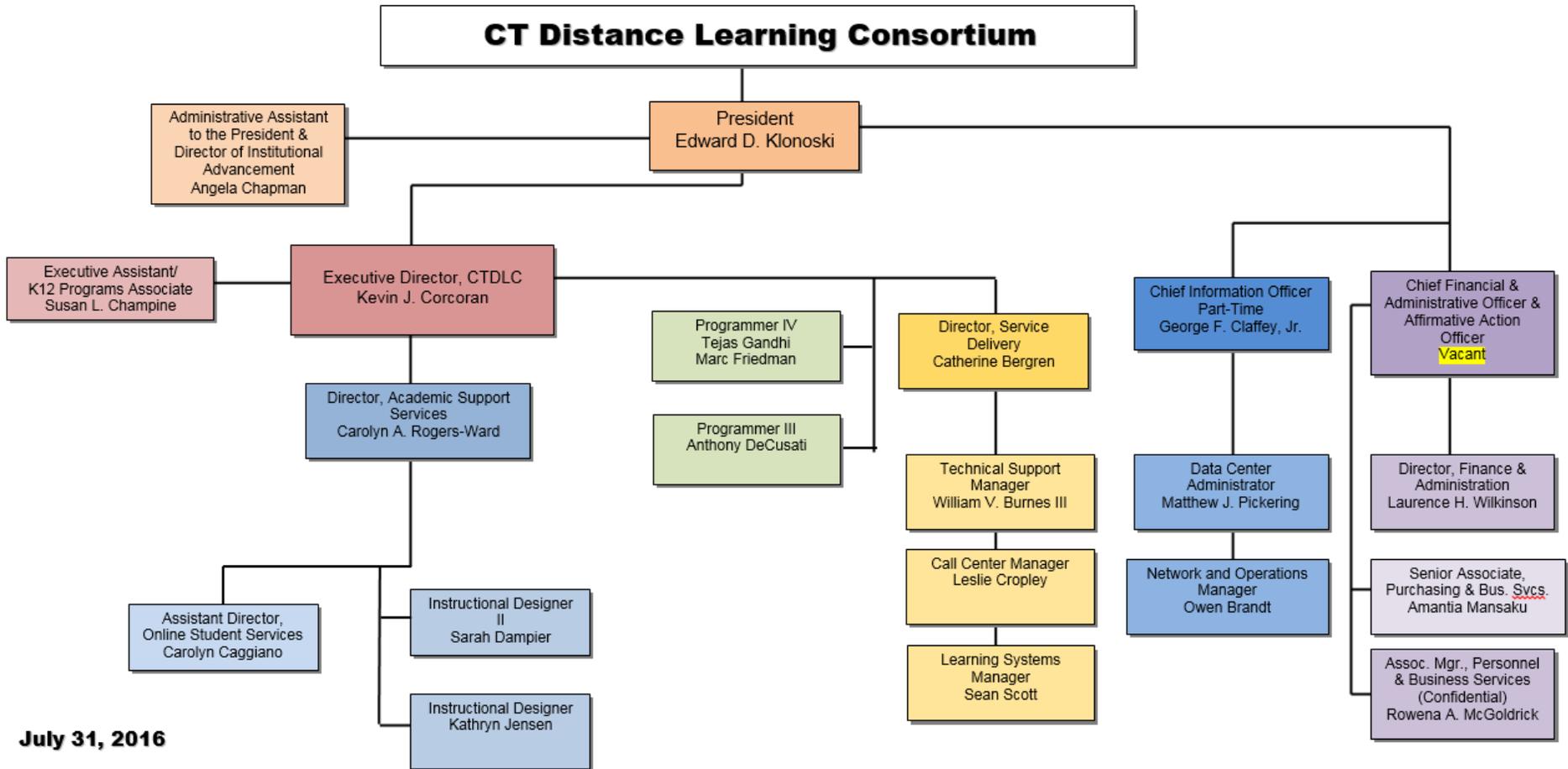


Table of CIHE Actions, Items of Special Attention, or Concerns

Date of CIHE Letter	Summary of CIHE Actions, Items of Special Attention, or Concerns	Detailed Actions, Items of Special Attention, or Concerns	CIHE Standards Cited in Letter	Self-Study Page Number
11/21/2011	Progress on the following six areas:	Needed to report in 2013. Progress made on 5-year review. Based on progress, the report was accepted.		
	Institutional development	College continues to evaluate its product line, finances, and other resources	2.1 and 2.3	8-9, 12-21
	Involvement of faculty in planning processes	College has continued to increase faculty involvement in decision-making, curriculum initiatives, and assessment		8
	Evaluating new BOR governance structure	Charter Oak has no control over the governance structure	3.6	23-30
	Adequacy of library resources	College began a comprehensive review of its library holdings in February 2016. Also participating in system-wide library initiative	7.22	80
	Achieving enrollment goals and ensuring adequate resources	College establishes budget in line with enrollment goals	7.6 and 7.7	69-74
	Need for substantive change if role and scope change	College has submitted a number of substantive changes, which have been approved		43, 55
4/2/2014	Cybersecurity substantive change	The substantive change visit is concurrent with the 10-year visit		
	Enrollment goals for Cybersecurity	One year behind in enrollment goal due to late start of program	5.6	43-44, 54-55
	Review of programs	Program was being reviewed as part of 2015-16 review	4.7	33-34, 36, 43-44
	Adequate financial resources related to Cybersecurity	Program makes money. No longer have a revenue share with InfoSec	7.6	43, 72

Introduction

The Ten-Year Self-Study was prepared by assigning a Charter Oak staff member to each of the standards. Where there were standards that overlapped departments, two or three people were assigned. The College began with a meeting led by the Provost, who went over the assignments, reviewed briefly the recommendations made in the Fifth-Year review, and reviewed the material from the NEASC meeting on how to prepare a self-study. Each person was given a number of handouts including the standards, the letter from the fifth-year review and subsequent letters, and a time-line for submissions. The Director of Institutional Effectiveness (IE) went over the Data First and E-Series forms. A file was set up on Staff Share, an internal drive, so the team members could post their work and others could view it. A number of meetings were set up to keep everyone on track. The first meetings and the first documents drafted were brainstorming sessions. In other words, the person in charge of the standard was to write down everything that he/she could think of pertaining to the standard he/she was responsible for. Those were shared so others could add items or items could be moved to different standards. The lead person for each standard was to collaborate with other members of the staff, faculty, and students as needed to secure the information needed. Once all drafts of each standard were received, the Provost and the Director of IE reviewed each standard to tighten them up, delete redundancies, etc. Once that was done, all of the standards were sent to each of the team members, as well as to the Charter Oak staff and Core Faculty, for their input and for discussion. The Faculty Assessment Committee addressed Standards 2 and 8 at their April meeting. The Academic Council provided input at the June meeting. The draft was also posted on the website to gain input from students and discussed by the Student Association. Input was gathered from the staff at the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities system office for the standard on governance. The input received was incorporated into the final draft. A list of the standard leads, members of the Assessment Committee and members of the Academic Council is included in Appendix E. The final copy of the self-study is posted on Charter Oak's website. Public notification of the accreditation evaluation and invitation for public comment was done in print and online via *Update* (Charter Oak State College's newsletter). Students and alumni were emailed a link to the self-study. Lastly, an ad was placed in the Hartford Courant.

The Ten-Year Self-Study has given the College a chance to reflect at what it has accomplished—what worked and what did not work, and to assess why or why not. It serves as a great foundation to the College's development of its strategic plan. The Self-Study has also been developed at a time when a number of significant changes are taking place. As a result what the Self-Study reflects may not be the case in November when the team arrives. Charter Oak has had to adjust its staff size to mitigate legislative budget cuts. The Executive Staff was very deliberate in its staff reductions to ensure that student and faculty support did not suffer. This has resulted in a shared Chief Financial Officer position with the Board of Regents as the College is replacing its CFO due to retirement, a shared Chief Information Officer position with Western Connecticut State University due to less need for IT staff as more IT is being moved to the Cloud, and the layoff of the Academic Dean as part of the overall College layoff strategy. Although these changes come with challenges, they also have given the Executive Staff a chance to reevaluate the College's staffing infrastructure in line with its mission and budget. The Executive Team will update the visiting team on any changes.

Institutional Overview

Charter Oak State College was established as the Board of State Academic Awards (BSAA) in 1973 by the Connecticut State Legislature “to develop and coordinate the implementation of new methods of awarding undergraduate degrees and college credits. . .” and to serve adult students who needed to complete their degree. The BSAA evolved into Charter Oak State College. In 2011, the College became part of the CSCU system, which merged the 12 community colleges, the four state universities, and Charter Oak under the Board of Regents.

Charter Oak was established as an open admissions, external degree granting program that accepted credits earned at other accredited institutions or through non-traditional means such as standardized examinations (CLEP, DAN TES). It has expanded its options, first to include tests developed by Charter Oak, contract learning courses, video-based courses, and since 1998 online courses. In order to serve its students at a distance, the College provides all academic support services using technology. Students can also receive services at the Charter Oak office.

The College offers five degrees: Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, and Master of Science. Until 2012, the College did not offer majors, only concentrations within the bachelors’ degrees. Each concentration had a minimum of 36 credits. In 2012, the College launched its first major, Health Information Management. In 2015, the College received approval to offer its first master’s degree, Master of Science in Organizational Leadership and Effectiveness.

Charter Oak was created to serve adult students intent on completing a degree. IPEDS data from Fall 2014 show that nearly 30% of students attending two-year or four-year institutions were aged 25 or older. In addition, the Census Bureau indicates that nearly 35 million adults aged 25 or older had some college, but no degree, in 2013 (<http://www.census.gov/hhes/socdemo/education/data/cps/2013/tables.html>). The adult population that could benefit from degree completion makes the Charter Oak mission more necessary than ever. Charter Oak has a long and impressive history of providing degree completion to adults at rates that exceed any other higher education institutional type. Our mission of assisting working adults to finish their degrees is growing more important as the number of U.S. jobs that require such credentials grows. So the College is bullish in its niche and enthusiastic about its ability to fulfill the expectations in front of it.

The College is run by a dedicated staff of employees and 67 Core Faculty recruited primarily from other regionally accredited colleges and universities in Connecticut. In addition, the College has over 200 Teaching Faculty, who are recruited for their subject expertise from all over the country and approximately 130 Special Assessment Faculty who are recruited as needed to perform specialized assessments.

Since the 2011 Self-study, there have been a number of significant changes at the college, but all have supported the mission of the College.

- The College added majors and a master’s degree which will be launched in fall 2016. As a result, the College has undergone two substantive change visits—the addition of the Health Information Management major and the contract with Big Picture Learning/College Unbound, a partnership program with an entity in Rhode Island. As

part of the College's 10 Year Self-Study, the NEASC team will also be reviewing the cybersecurity major.

- The College recommitted itself to prior learning assessment (PLA). As a result, the prior learning assessment program has been strengthened, an audit tool that prospective students can use to self-assess their chances for earning prior learning credit was developed, and a scholarship fund was established.
- The College administered a major project for the CSCU system called "Go Back to Get Ahead" that returned over 1,400 students to one of the seventeen colleges to complete their degree.
- The College developed an ADA strategic plan and has implemented against the plan. This included making the building entrance more accessible, hiring a disability specialist, and ensuring that all courses meet ADA requirements.
- The College has become part of the CSCU system. This has impacted both positively and negatively how the College operates. The CSCU system is still wrestling with how to function as a system and still trying to set boundaries between the system and each of the colleges.

Charter Oak Students

Charter Oak attracts adults from varied backgrounds with diverse educational and life experiences. Here is a small sample:

Linda, currently a senior at Charter Oak State College, is pursuing a Bachelor of Science degree in Individualized Studies. After serving our country in the military, Linda married and after her divorce she was a single parent of four children. For a time they were homeless and subsequently lived in public housing. With an understanding that her life could have taken a different direction, Linda chose to take charge of her future. Linda went back to school to increase her job opportunities and to set an example for her children and grandchildren. They have set their sights on earning a college degree as well.

Alfred, a junior at Charter Oak State College, is doing extraordinary things. He entered Charter Oak through the College Unbound program. Following his incarceration, he became aware of the high recidivism rates for ex-offenders. With a dearth of resources to support ex-offenders in their transition back into society, Alfred knew that he had found his calling to make a difference. Through hard work and insight, he founded the Freedom Project which encompasses several programs. One is the Life Enhancement Skills Program that assists ex-offenders in successfully reintegrating into the community. Each participant is assigned to a peer mentor. Among the services are help in finding a place to live, with finding a job as well as help with personal life skills. Each participant is given a small weekly stipend. Those who successfully engage fully, are invited to take part in the Peer Mentor Training Program. In addition to serving as mentors, they are also eligible to earn certificates in such areas as CPR, CPI Non-Violence Crisis Intervention, and Narcan training. While managing all of this, Alfred maintains an excellent GPA.

LaVonda, an out-of-state student, is a 2015 graduate who earned a Bachelor of Science in Liberal Studies with a GPA of 3.94. She earned 9 credits from a community college, 8 credits from two different four-year institutions, 30 credits from CLEP examinations, 33 from DANTES examinations, 12 from UEXCEL examinations, 27 credits from FEMA, 10 credits from three

different American Council on Education program recommendations, 3 from an online college, 3 from portfolio assessment, and 9 credits from Charter Oak.

Eric received a Bachelor of Arts with a concentration in Public Safety Administration in 2016. He earned 9 credits from the Police Academy, 18 community college credits, 65 military school credits, 15 credits from his military MOS, 9 credits from Federal Emergency Management Institute (FEMA), and 64 credits from Charter Oak courses.

Ethan received his Bachelor of Science degree in General Studies in 2016. He earned his degree by taking 37 standardized exams for a total of 111 credits, 3 credits from a university, and 7 credits from Charter Oak. Ethan is the sixth from his family to graduate from Charter Oak. All of his siblings, including him, have sung the National Anthem at the College's graduation ceremony. All have also been home schooled out-of-state.

Response to Areas Identified in 2005 Self-Study

Below is a brief summary of how the College addressed concerns from the Five-Year study. There is more detail in the individual standards.

The College continues to evaluate its program offerings, its marketing, and finances to ensure that the College continues to be both academically and financially viable. As noted above, the College has added a number of new programs to meet workforce demands and thus to increase enrollment. The new Health Information Management (HIM) major, as well as moving some of the concentrations to majors, has been very successful. The cybersecurity major was to begin in Fall 2013; however, due to initial problems with course development, it wasn't totally launched until Fall 2014. As of May 2016, there were 64 students in the program, thus meeting the enrollment goal. In addition, to increase enrollments, in July 2015, the College launched its first out-of-state marketing campaign. The Florida campaign was based on previous enrollments from that state and agreements already in place with some of the community colleges. The College is just beginning to see the results of that effort since it takes time to build name recognition and brand awareness.

The Marketing Department has established a robust lead tracking system that can measure what works and what does not. This has helped the Department to develop more targeted marketing.

The College has strengthened the faculty's role in decision making, curriculum initiatives and assessment. For example, Charter Oak's faculty participated in the CSCU general education review process. They are participating in the CSCU transfer articulation pathway (TAP) process, and are involved in the seven-year program review process. In addition, they provided input for the CSCU's first strategic plan and they serve on the CSCU Faculty Advisory Committee.

The College has contracted a review of its library (databases) for this spring. In addition, Charter Oak is part of the CSCU library review process, which is designed to share library resources among the system colleges. The College's orientation is also being redesigned to have a segment on how to use Charter Oak's library.

The College attempts to align its budget with enrollment goals by looking at past enrollment patterns and at a new inflow/outflow model. However, as a state agency and as part of the CSCU

system, the College does not have total control over its finances. For example, this year the State rescinded funds three times.

The College attempts to set realistic enrollment goals, again based on past performance. Enrollment in 2014-15 was up due to the "Go Back to Get Ahead" program. This year's enrollment dropped back down close 2013-14 enrollment. Over the years, the College has learned that the enrollment fluctuations are often out of its control—the economy, the job market, etc. all impact enrollment. However, the College is increasingly using analytical tools to better predict enrollment and retention. In addition, it has changed some of its internal processes, such as the addition of a "grit survey" to help with retention and a team approach to move accepted applicants to matriculants.

Summary of 10-Year Self-Study Findings

The Self-Study has clearly demonstrated that the College has stayed true to its mission of serving adult students by providing multiple options of earning a quality and affordable education. It also reinforced the premise that if the College is going to continue to be financially viable, it must increase its student body through both enrollment and retention and by offering new programs that will attract and retain students.

The declining support from the state, along with the small tuition and fee increases permitted by the state or the BOR, increased operational costs mandated by technology security needs, limits on faculty teaching loads, increased fringe benefits on staff and faculty, and assessment requirements, have begun to erode the College's budget even though enrollments have remained fairly steady. As we begin the strategic planning process this fall, this will be paramount to the planning.

Projections: Each of the standards have specific projections with staff assigned to each projection. Below is a summary of those projections:

- The College will develop a five year strategic plan in Fall 2016.
- The Executive Team will continue to work with their peers in the other sixteen colleges and the CSCU system office to help them better understand the role Charter Oak plays within the system, the region, and nationally.
- The College will develop a new enrollment and retention plan, including developing new markets and exploring new tools and survey instruments.
- The College will develop ten new programs in ten years, which began in 2014-15.
- The College will reexamine the role of faculty and explore expansion of that role.
- The Provost will work with the faculty and the ID staff to make all courses ADA compliant by Fall 2018.
- The College will explore gaining efficiencies in all departments as part of the strategic planning process.

- The President and CFO will continue efforts to outline the discrepancy in state funding for Charter Oak in comparison to their peers in the Board of Regents.
- The President and CFO will continue to advocate for additional space for Charter Oak.
- The College will explore a number of general education and program assessment projects over the next few years.

Standard One: Mission and Purposes

Description

Charter Oak State College, founded in 1973 by the Connecticut General Assembly to provide diverse and alternate opportunities for adults to earn degrees, holds a unique place in American higher education as a free-standing, external degree-granting institution with a very liberal transfer and prior learning assessment policy and no geographic limits. The College truly provides degrees without boundaries. In 1996, 25 institutions in Connecticut established the Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium (CTDLC) to develop and promote online learning, with staff from Charter Oak taking the lead role. Initially, there was a direct allocation from the state for a portion of its operational costs. Now the funding for CTDLC comes from Charter Oak's state allocation and from revenue generated from services. CDTLC functions as a service provider to the College and to other colleges both within and without the Connecticut State College and Universities (CSCU) system.

The Governing Board

In 2011, the Connecticut General Assembly (via Public Act 11-48 as amended by Public Act 11-61) created the Connecticut State College and Universities system comprised of the 12 community colleges, four state universities, and Charter Oak State College and established the Board of Regents (BOR) as the governing board. Therefore, the BOR serves as the board of trustees for the College which includes the CTDLC. Until 2011, Charter Oak had its own governing board—the Board of State Academic Awards (BSAA).

The Mission

Charter Oak State College's mission directly relates to the mission and vision of the Connecticut State College and Universities (CSCU) system:

“Our Vision for CSCU

The Connecticut State Colleges & Universities will continually increase the number of students completing personally and professionally rewarding academic programs.

CSCU's Mission

The Connecticut State Colleges & Universities (CSCU) contribute to the creation of knowledge and the economic growth of the state of Connecticut by providing affordable, innovative, and rigorous programs. Our learning environments transform students and facilitate an ever increasing number of individuals to achieve their personal and career goals.” (<http://www.ct.edu/regents/mission>)

Charter Oak's mission statement is also based on its statutory responsibilities that guide its work. The mission statement provides the broad purposes for Charter Oak, including the CTDLC. In 2014, when the CSCU system was formed, the Board of Regents (BOR) asked its constituent units to make their mission statements more concise. Charter Oak's revised statement was approved by the BOR and appears on its website (<http://www.ct.edu/regents/mission>). Charter Oak's Role and Scope further delineates the mission of the College and provides the foundation

for decision making, and its Educational Philosophy further explains its commitment to the adult learner. All are available in the catalog at <http://www.charteroak.edu/catalog/current/general-information>. They are also incorporated into the *Teaching Faculty Handbook* (<https://www.charteroak.edu/aboutus/teaching-faculty-handbook-rv-072315.pdf>) and are discussed in orientation sessions for new core faculty held every September.

Role and Scope

As a nontraditional college, Charter Oak State College is designed to provide adults with alternate means to earn degrees that are of equivalent quality and rigor to those earned at other accredited institutions of higher learning. The College, therefore, collaborates with and complements the missions of other Connecticut colleges and universities.

Charter Oak State College awards four undergraduate degrees and one graduate degree: Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, and Master of Science. These degree programs enable students to meet career and personal goals. The content of the bachelor's degree programs is also structured to provide the foundation needed for advanced study since a large number of Charter Oak State College alumni continue their education in graduate school. In addition, the College offers a number of credit certificate and non-credit programs. Enrollment at the undergraduate level is open to any adult who demonstrates college-level achievement. The College endeavors to recognize the diversity and achievements of its entire community.

Recognizing that learning takes place in many forms, Charter Oak State College provides a flexible approach to higher education. At the undergraduate level, academic credit may be awarded for course work completed successfully at other accredited institutions, academic instruction sponsored by non-collegiate organizations, military training evaluations, online courses offered by Charter Oak State College, testing, portfolio assessment, contract learning, and for learning acquired through many licensure and certification programs. At the graduate level, students may transfer in six credits from regionally accredited institutions and earn six credits through portfolio assessment.

Charter Oak State College has no instructional campus and offers no on-ground classroom instruction, but assists its students through academic support services including program planning, testing, and evaluation. The College also delivers online courses, serves as a testing center and provides credit registry services, as well as information regarding other educational opportunities. The College identifies qualified faculty from regionally accredited colleges and universities and other experts to assess academic achievement in areas not measured by standardized tests and to serve as instructors for programs such as online courses, contract learning, and practicums. In recruiting these faculty and experts, the College actively seeks to identify educators who value the impact of broad and diverse experience acquired by students.

Charter Oak also assists other Connecticut colleges and universities seeking to provide their students with alternate ways to validate college-level learning, develops partnerships with the corporate and non-profit community to meet the state's workforce needs, and through its Connecticut Credit Assessment Program (CCAP) and Credential Evaluation, evaluates and formally recognizes non-collegiate learning regardless of how or where such learning is acquired.

Charter Oak conducts institutional research and assessment to monitor and evaluate the progress and success of its students, graduates, and programs. The College uses the results of these assessments to evaluate its effectiveness and to make changes that respond to student, institutional, and societal needs. As part of its assessment process and to ensure that its undergraduate students succeed academically, the College instituted a six credit residency requirement in the form of a Cornerstone Course for new students and a Capstone Course for seniors.

Educational Philosophy

Charter Oak State College holds a unique place in American higher education. It pioneered the development of an alternative to the traditional college model. Instead of viewing college as a residential experience in which young adults mature intellectually and personally under the tutelage of faculty in a prescribed curriculum, Charter Oak developed an innovative distance learning program for undergraduate adult learners that affords them the opportunity to apply towards a college degree the learning they acquired through life. Charter Oak's undergraduate degree program model recognizes the characteristics of adult learners, honors the traditions of liberal education, and prepares students to apply knowledge in their daily lives.

The Charter Oak State College institutional philosophy asserts that:

- College level learning can be acquired anywhere, anytime, and in many ways
- Such learning can be assessed
- When assessed, it should be accredited via appropriate means
- Learning is effectively enhanced via collaborative interaction with faculty and peers
- Advisement is critical to student success

Charter Oak State College undergraduate students can earn their credits in many different ways, and students come to Charter Oak having earned numerous credits. Since the average age of the Charter Oak undergraduate student is approximately 39 years old, Charter Oak students have already acquired many of the skills necessary to succeed in life, such as being a responsible citizen, the ability to work with others, and the ability to work independently. Therefore, the General Education requirements at Charter Oak build upon these skills. The General Education requirements emphasize the liberal arts and the skills necessary to enable students to succeed in their profession, be good citizens, and to continue as lifelong learners and meet the standards of both its state and regional accrediting associations.

Charter Oak believes that its undergraduate students should be liberally educated, as evidenced by the 60-credit liberal arts requirement for a Bachelor of Science degree and the 90-credit liberal arts requirement for a Bachelor of Arts. The liberal arts component of the General Education requirement helps students:

- Acquire knowledge of American history and the history and culture of another country
- Gain an understanding of what it means to be a part of a global and diverse society
- Acquire the ability to use scientific and mathematical inquiry to solve problems
- Learn how the arts and humanities enhance our lives

- Understand how the social sciences and behavioral sciences explain past endeavors and guide future efforts at living together in political, economic and cultural communities

The General Education program is also designed to help students enhance specific skills and knowledge:

- To think critically
- To communicate effectively
- To use information literacy in conducting research
- To make ethical decisions

These skills are infused in a number of the liberal arts courses and in courses required for the concentration or major.

Charter Oak has adapted this philosophy to its graduate program by allowing students to transfer in credits and to earn credits through portfolio assessment.

Purpose

The major purpose of the College is to provide adults with access to higher education in a way that overcomes barriers of time and geography. The mission stresses the innovative delivery of programs and services while maintaining quality and rigor. Further, the College provides the opportunity for students to demonstrate learning and earn credit through multiple options. At the undergraduate level, these options include transfer of credit from traditional classes and distance learning courses from regionally accredited institutions as well as credit earned through Charter Oak distance learning courses, contract learning, testing, review of non-collegiate-sponsored instruction such as military, business and government-sponsored employee learning programs, special assessment, and portfolio review. As mentioned above, at the graduate level, transfer and portfolio credit will be options. Key features of the Charter Oak program are the individualized advisement and student-centered services that the student receives throughout the educational process.

Both the *Mission* and *Role and Scope* underscore the need for quality in academic and student services and the need for innovative ways to meet the requirements of adult learners. They not only allow for the flexibility that Charter Oak students need but give the institution the flexibility necessary to meet the demands of a changing environment and a changing higher education landscape. A prime example is in the area of online learning. As it became clear that online learning was an important and excellent way to provide access to higher education for students with work and family responsibilities, Charter Oak, because of its adjunct faculty model, was able to move ahead quickly in developing its online program.

The CTDLC, which is part of the College, further supports the mission of the College by providing support services for students, including tutoring, help desk support, and financial aid call center support. In addition, it has assisted with the training of Charter Oak faculty on issues of open educational resources (OER) and ADA compliance. CTDLC also offers a number of these services for other colleges within the CSCU system.

The *Mission and Role and Scope* for Charter Oak also emphasizes the importance of complementing the missions of other Connecticut institutions. To that end, Charter Oak has worked with community colleges on developing associate degree programs that transfer directly into its bachelor degrees. Two examples are Health Information Management and Cybersecurity. Charter Oak has assessed credentials and non-credit programs for credit that the community colleges will accept, for example police academy training and licensed practical nursing training.

Appraisal

The College periodically evaluates its mission and purpose when it is making policy and/or program decisions. Over its 45 year history, Charter Oak, while staying true to its mission, has changed in response to the needs of its constituency. Charter Oak has strategically moved from being purely an aggregator of credits to offering over 350 online courses in response to the demands of students and to the changing educational landscape. The College still offers four undergraduate degrees: Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, Bachelor of Arts, and Bachelor of Science. However, since the last NEASC review in 2006, the College has begun creating majors and now has six—General Studies (its original major), Business Administration, Psychology, Health Information Management, Cybersecurity, and Health Care Administration. The five new majors were developed to meet student demand, were based on marketing research, and were in response to the decision by the Connecticut State Department of Higher Education, now the Office of Higher Education, to no longer allow Charter Oak to develop concentrations within the General Studies major. Charter Oak also awards certificates in a number of career areas as recognition of mastery of a specific body of knowledge. In addition, in keeping with its mission of serving adult students and at the request of its alumni, the College was approved to offer its first master's degree—M.S. in Organizational Effectiveness and Leadership. This degree has passed review by the Board of Regents and NEASC and the College will begin accepting students for Fall 2016.

As Charter Oak began expanding its online course catalog, its marketing reflected this change. Its original focus as an aggregator and assessor of learning was overshadowed by the push to promote the online courses. This change did not go unnoticed by the College's faculty or staff and quickly became the discussion at faculty and executive staff meetings. As a result, the College recommitted to strengthening and marketing its prior learning assessment (PLA) and its aggregator role. Through a Breakthrough Model Initiative grant from the Gates Foundation, the College has upgraded its PLA web site, developed a PLA audit tool, revamped its PLA course, developed PLA videos, established a scholarship fund within its Foundation, and signed an agreement and established standards with its peer colleges around acceptance of credits for non-credit programs. The College now successfully balances its multiple roles as an online course provider, as an assessor of prior learning, and as an aggregator of credits.

The fact that the mission does not define a geographic delivery area is viewed as a strength of the institution. The ability to accept students from out of state has helped keep costs more reasonable for in-state students and has enhanced services for Connecticut residents. The ability to attract students from diverse backgrounds and different parts of the United States also enriches learning experiences in online courses. Some students have commented in the graduation survey on the value of this interaction.

The mission statement is also broad enough to allow the College to address ever-changing workforce needs. Therefore, the College has played an important role in a number of state workforce initiatives, providing community service even though this is not explicit in its mission. These initiatives include the areas of STEM education, early-childhood education, nursing (credit and non-credit), public safety and homeland security, cybersecurity, health information management, and health care administration.

Most important, the mission continually drives innovation. The Charter Oak faculty and staff successfully balance access, innovation, and quality. This is a demanding role and requires dedication and sophisticated knowledge about the broader academic community, adult learning, and technology. Literature and reports are shared with the staff and faculty regarding the field of adult learning, distance learning and the future of higher education. In addition, funds are available for faculty and staff training to keep them current in their fields of study or areas of expertise. Information and ideas gained from these sources also serve as an important springboard for strategic planning.

The mission has allowed the College to continue to change programming to meet the needs of adults who want to earn a degree or certificate through “diverse and alternate ways.” To that end, the College has entered into agreements with Straighterline, Sophia Learning, Saylor, and edX. The College’s faculty have vetted the courses and the College both sends and receives students through these agreements. The College also participated in the American Council on Education (ACE) alternate credit program.

In addition, the College’s mission supports the College offering prior learning assessment as part of its graduate degree.

Because of the nature of Charter Oak’s mission, orientation material and sessions for new faculty and staff are very important. The College ensures that each component of the institution understands the mission and its role in achieving the mission before working with students or crafting and approving policy for the institution. The need for this understanding prompted the development and continual updating of comprehensive faculty and student handbooks and orientation sessions for new faculty and students.

The CSCU System Office has begun utilizing Charter Oak’s expertise in serving adult students, online education, open educational resources (OER), technology, prior learning assessment, distance education and call center operations to assist the entire system. This is best illustrated by the "Go Back to Get Ahead" program that Charter Oak managed for the system which returned over 1400 students back to the colleges within two semesters; its roles in assessing prior learning as part of a number of Community College Department of Labor grants in the manufacturing and health science fields; its management of the installation of high tech classrooms at the 17 campuses; and its leadership on the legislated OER committee. However, the BOR and the CSCU System Office still struggle to have system-wide conversations about strategic directives that include Charter Oak’s distinct mission and audience. Faculty representatives to the BOR from the other institutions often have difficulty including Charter Oak’s mission and purpose in their advice about strategic directions.

Being part of the CSCU system continues to be challenging. However, now that Charter Oak is part of CSCU system, other colleges within the system are paying more attention to what the College does and its methodology.

Ultimately, the success of carrying out the institutional mission rests with the Board, which assigns this responsibility to Charter Oak's President. The President works with senior staff to ensure broad-based understanding of the components of the mission and that the mission is reflected in the College's strategic plans. A review of the College's strategic plans indicates that the mission is closely linked to the planning process and plans produced by the College community (Appendix F).

Projection

- The ever-changing landscape of higher education requires colleges to be nimble. As the Provost begins the five-year strategic planning process in the fall of 2016, it will reexamine its mission to assess if it still affords the College the flexibility that will be required.
- The President and Provost and other members of the Executive Team will continue to work with their peers in the other sixteen colleges and the CSCU system office to help them better understand the role Charter Oak plays within the system, the region, and nationally.

Standard 1: Mission and Purposes

Attach a copy of the current mission statement.

Document	Website location	Date Approved by the Governing Board
Institutional Mission Statement	http://www.charteroak.edu/catalog/current/general-information/	11/20/2008 (updated)

Mission Statement published	Website location	Print Publication
? College Catalog	? http://www.charteroak.edu/catalog/current/general-information/	None

Related statements	Website location	Print Publication
? History	? http://www.charteroak.edu/catalog/current/general-information/	None
Role and Scope	http://www.charteroak.edu/catalog/current/general-information/	None
Educational Philosophy	http://www.charteroak.edu/catalog/current/general-information/	None

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

Standard Two: Planning and Evaluation

Description

Charter Oak State College has a planning and evaluation process that seeks to accomplish its mission and purposes. Key components of the mission are to validate student learning through coursework and alternative methods, deliver high quality degree and certificate programs to adult students, and provide an affordable education. These aims are informed by a strategic planning process focused on the prudent deployment of the College's human, financial, and technological resources to provide students with a solid education.

Planning and evaluation is comprehensive and broad-based. It begins with discussion among the President's Cabinet, which is composed of senior management and departmental directors. Mindful of the aims of student learning, academic program delivery, and affordability the Cabinet reviews the College's strategic goals and progress made on them, the strategic goals of the Board of Regents (BOR), enrollment data, enrollment projections, and current and proposed budgets in order to develop some parameters for planning. Cabinet members then work with their departments to create departmental strategic plans. If plans intersect, then the heads of the affected departments meet for coordination purposes.

Since Charter Oak is a small institution, it is easy to involve the entire college staff in the planning and evaluation process. The process elicits input from all departments, which includes the Business Office, Registrar's Office, Admissions, Academic Counseling, Financial Aid, Institutional Effectiveness (IE), Instructional Design, Provost's Office, President's Office, and Marketing. Faculty involvement around academic planning occurs by way of the faculty committee structure, which provides external perspectives to complement internal viewpoints.

Department heads assign responsible parties to implement different parts of the departmental plans. These assignments become part of the SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-bound) goals in the performance and appraisal process for individual staff members. Needs for additional funding are identified and requests are made to senior management. Departmental plans are shared with the entire staff via Staff Share (an intranet folder) and updates are provided at Cabinet meetings.

After the Cabinet reviews departmental plans and agrees to them, the Provost compiles the plans into a single document. Before the plan is finalized it is shared at an all staff meeting for final input. When the budget allows, funding is set aside for new strategic initiatives. For example, for 2015, the College set aside \$50,000. The Career Services Project and the COSC Learning Studio proposed by the Academic Counseling Department were funded. The Professional Counseling Services and the Regional representatives for the State of Florida were not funded. Funds are allocated based on senior management's review of departmental requests. The final plan is filed in Staff Share. In addition, the plan is shared with the faculty through the faculty committee structure. Feedback from the faculty is shared with the Cabinet through the Provost. Progress on the strategic plan is tracked in a spreadsheet and updates are provided to faculty and staff throughout the year.

Data needed to inform the strategic planning process and evaluate initiatives come from all departments. However, most of the data come from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness,

which fulfills the institutional research function at Charter Oak. The office is staffed by a full-time director and half-time research analyst (1.5 FTE). This staffing is sufficient to support college-wide planning and evaluation efforts because departments run their own data for day-to-day operations.

The Office of IE is primarily responsible for research pertaining to enrollment, course registration, retention and graduation rates, student success, program completion, course evaluations, post-graduation outcomes, and student and alumni surveys. Additional data about admissions, financial aid, human resources, budget and finance, academic program review, and the curriculum come from the departments that oversee those domains.

The latest strategic plan can be found in Appendix F.

Appraisal

As indicated in the College's last Fifth-Year Report (2011), Charter Oak has made a long-term, sustained effort to move from being a college that grants general studies degrees based on credit aggregation and assessment of prior learning to a college that augments this tradition by offering online courses, undergraduate majors, and a master's degree. To grow in this way, the College systematically invested in an instructional design staff, an academic dean, technology, faculty and staff training, and additional supports for students.

Since 2013, Charter Oak has been developing one-year strategic plans. The College recognizes that it should be doing longer-term planning, but this has been difficult due to budget challenges at the state level and turnover at the BOR (see Standard 3 for more details). The College will be embarking on a five-year strategic plan in Fall 2016.

Over the past few years, Charter Oak has aligned its strategic plans with goals established by the BOR in 2013:

1. A Successful First Year – Increase the number of students who successfully complete a first year of college
2. Student Success – Graduate more students with the knowledge and skills to achieve their life and career goals
3. Affordability and Sustainability – Maximize access to higher education by making attendance affordable and our institutions financially sustainable
4. Innovation and Economic Growth – Create educational environments that cultivate innovation and prepare students for successful careers in a fast changing world
5. Equity – Eliminate achievement disparities among different ethnic/racial, economic, and gender groups

Academic, enrollment, financial, and technological planning over the past few years has led Charter Oak to work in the following areas:

1. Develop new student services and improve existing ones
2. Develop new academic programs and maintain existing ones
3. Improve retention and graduation rates
4. Increase enrollments and improve enrollment management
5. Maintain affordability

6. Utilize technology to scale up services with minimal staff increases
7. Strengthen the budget on the revenue and expense sides
8. Integrate with the Connecticut State College and University System (CSCU)

Development and Improvement of Student Services

In Fall 2013, the Office of IE began administering a new student survey every fall, spring, and summer. The survey seeks to understand how well administrative departments serve students as they begin their education. New students receive the survey at the beginning of their second semester so they have an experiential base on which to respond. For example, new fall students receive the survey at the beginning of the spring semester. Results can be found in Appendix G.

Although the response rate for the survey is low, running 10-16% in the recent past, the College is able to glean data to use for improvements to student services.

The survey asks students whether they agree with individual statements that it is easy to contact their admissions counselor and academic advisor, as well as the Financial Aid Office, Business Office, and Registrar's Office. The College aims for at least 80% agreement. Admissions counselors and academic advisors generally meet this threshold, while the Registrar's Office, Financial Aid Office, and Business Office sometimes fall below it.

In addition to asking about the ease of contacting different offices, the survey also asks students whether they agree with statements that the information they receive is useful. Academic Counseling and Admissions rank consistently above the 80% agreement level, while the Business Office is mixed, and Financial Aid and the Registrar's Office are often below.

Finally, the new student survey has alerted us to the need to improve ACORN, which is the College's multi-tabbed student services portal. In particular, information about departmental processes, registering for courses, and making payments was not as clear and easy to follow for students as the College would like them to be.

A number of improvements to ACORN have already been made. The biggest change was the creation of the *Student Self Service* tab. Prior to its creation, students had to hunt through separate departmental tabs in order to interact with those departments. This was logical from an internal, institutional perspective, but it was not intuitive to students. In contrast, now the most common administrative actions sought by students have been collected into one easy-to-use portal page, while departments still maintain their own tabs for more esoteric information, such as policies and procedures. Now students can add/drop courses, pay tuition bills, review financial aid awards, perform course searches, and print a class schedule all from one location. Anecdotally, this has reduced the number of phone calls asking how to find things on ACORN.

Other ACORN improvements include:

- De-cluttering the *Home* tab by moving the academic calendar to the *Registrar* tab
- Moving the course search and add/drop links from the *Home* tab to *Student Self Service* to push students towards that collection of resources
- Fixing the search function to provide better results

- Including the words "Student Portal" on the ACORN logo with the aim of getting students to recognize that ACORN and the student portal are synonymous
- Creating a more prominent display for announcements and deadlines near the top of the *Home* tab

In addition to collecting information about administrative services from new students, two departments recently had in-depth reviews with external consultants. Financial Aid had a review in Fall 2014 and Academic Counseling had one in Spring 2015.

During its review, Academic Counseling reflected on changes in the role of counselors at the institution. It looked at mission, the structure of the college and the department, the responsibilities of academic counselors, the needs of students, and what functions the institution expects the department to serve. Past NEASC reports have always noted that academic counseling is central to the College's mission and that it is effective and essential. Student surveys consistently corroborate that assessment.

The College hired Dr. Ann Rancourt from Keene State College as an external reviewer for Academic Counseling. She was recommended by the New England Educational Assessment Network (NEEAN) and served on its board for a number of years. She made the following recommendations after visiting the College and completing the review:

- There is a need for better collaboration and communication between Academic Counseling and other departments, particularly IT.
- Academic Counseling should focus its attention on advising and retention.
- Counselors need to be able to spend more time providing students with what they want, namely information about how long it will take to complete a degree and how best to accumulate credits to meet that goal.

Based on these recommendations, Academic Counseling has had several tasks re-assigned to other departments and began a new collaboration with Admissions to transition students more smoothly during the matriculation process. Additional work still needs to be done to find efficiencies and to develop an ongoing assessment process of Academic Counseling.

The College hired Attain, an external consulting firm, to review the Office of Financial Aid. Staff members in the department met with Attain to discuss staffing issues, training, relationships with other departments, and policy and procedures. Attain's findings and recommendations were as follows:

- The financial aid team exhibited key traits for successful operations and student service and that the office was very knowledgeable in specific areas of responsibility.
- Cross-training in the office is lacking, as is collaboration between the Financial Aid Office, Admissions Office, and Registrar's Office.
- The institution should facilitate college-wide discussions to enhance its understanding about Title IV requirements and associated compliance issues that impact other areas of the institution.
- Additional Jenzabar and PowerFAIDS training should be provided to improve staff skill sets and keep abreast of system functionality. Furthermore, a thorough review of current

system configurations should be completed, and the department should seize all opportunities to utilize automated processes to build efficiencies.

- A full-time associate director should be added to the department. This person would be tasked with stepping into the role of director when needed.

In response to these findings, Charter Oak brought in a financial aid consultant from Jenzabar in Spring 2016. He was hired as the Director of Financial Aid in Summer 2016. Cross-training has begun in the Financial Aid Office, and the Director is going over different aspects of PowerFAIDS with departmental staff. The Director also met with the Cabinet to promote the *Financial Aid Inquiry* screen in Jenzabar and discuss how the College might comply with Title IV requirements more efficiently.

In 2015, the College hired a part-time Accessibility Specialist to work with students, faculty, and staff. Prior to that time, student accessibility issues were managed by the Director of Academic Services. The hire was part of the College's strategic and disability plans, as well as in response to student requests for services.

The College has developed an accessibility plan for its physical facilities, academic programs, and student services. The plan was approved by the Executive Committee and Cabinet in Spring 2013. As a result, automated wheelchair-accessible doors have been installed at the Manafort building. In addition, the College purchased JAWS screen reading software to identify areas on the Charter Oak website, student portal, and Blackboard that need to be remedied and Kaltura video software to ensure that content in all courses is ADA-compliant with closed-captioning.

Charter Oak is in the early phases of providing career services for its students. In Spring 2016, the College rolled out a career services webpage, which is a collection of external links regarding personal assessment, career exploration, job trends, and salaries. In addition, one of the academic counselors who is a Certified Professional Résumé Writer is providing assistance to students working on résumés, cover letters, job searches, and interviewing. The College has also provided faculty moderated WebEx sessions on major-oriented careers.

Development and Maintenance of Academic Programs

Charter Oak has a record of success in planning and implementing academic programs. A marketing study in 2010 led the College to develop new programs in Health Information Management (HIM) and Cybersecurity, both of which involved a substantive change with NEASC. Furthermore, the College has transitioned a number of bachelor's degree concentrations to majors with the intent to provide degree completers with an academic award that employers and the public understand better than a general studies degree with an auxiliary concentration. Thus far, transitions include Business Administration, Health Care Administration, and Psychology.

The College saw its years of planning come to fruition when the Master's Degree in Organizational Effectiveness and Leadership was approved by the BOR in 2015 and NEASC in 2016. It will be launched Fall 2016. The College set a modest goal of 20 new students each semester. This allows the College to better serve its students and the adult market, and makes the College more competitive with its peers in the area of degree offerings.

Charter Oak also has plans to create more programs and transition more concentrations to majors. A team of people from Academic Affairs, Academic Counseling, Admissions, Marketing, and Institutional Effectiveness is working to determine what programs to pursue. The research is focused on understanding what programs students want (using IPEDS program completions data) and where the job market is heading (using Bureau of Labor Statistics data). As a result of this exploration, the decision has been made to convert the Criminal Justice and Sociology concentrations to majors and develop certificates from the Cybersecurity major. Once the new graduate degree is firmly established, then additional master's degree programs will likely be Health Care Administration, Informatics, and Psychology.

The College also participates in the seven-year program review process of the CSCU system. In 2014-15, the College reviewed the HIM major and the concentrations in Communications, Computer Science Studies, Public Administration, and Mathematics. Results of that first review are discussed in Standard 4. In addition, the CSCU system requires each College to review its new program enrollment projections. Both of these processes have helped Charter Oak update their programs and marketing efforts.

Charter Oak received a Breakthrough Models Incubator (BMI) grant, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and administered by Educause, to strengthen its prior learning assessment program, a main component of its mission. The grant helped the institution balance its original mission with its new role as a course provider. As a result, the College redesigned its prior learning assessment marketing. Furthermore, it produced prior learning assessment videos, developed a prior learning assessment audit tool to help students self-assess whether they are good candidates to pursue prior learning credits, and funded a scholarship program to assist students pursuing PLA with paying for exams and portfolio reviews.

As discussed in Standards 4, 5, and 6, Charter Oak's PLA program has undergone an extensive review with the hire of a new coordinator and with the financial assistance of the BMI grant. The College tracks student participation in PLA and can demonstrate that those who utilize PLA have a higher graduation rate. Student focus groups funded by the BMI grant informed us that the College needed to do a much better job of marketing PLA both internally and externally. This has been done with the redesign of the website, the audit tool, PLA videos, and meetings with internal staff. To date \$4,360 has been spent on awards to twenty-three students, resulting in 54 credits awarded at a total cost-savings to the students of \$10,544. The PLA Coordinator is tracking the scholarship recipients to see what impact the scholarship has on degree completion

Retention and Graduation

Seeking to improve the retention and graduation rates of its students is an important aim in Charter Oak's strategic planning. Improving these rates, if possible, is good all around. It is good for students because it means they have been successful and it is good for the College because it stabilizes enrollment, ensures a more predictable revenue stream, and helps achieve its mission.

Some activities the College has engaged in to try to improve retention rates are outreach to students via email, phone, and text, tutoring, student activities, and intrusive advising. Retention and graduation rates are key measures of Charter Oak's educational effectiveness. They are discussed in detail in Standard 8.

Enrollment Management

Charter Oak relies on a variety of tools to help understand its enrollment trends and plan for the future. The Office of IE sends out an enrollment report every Friday afternoon (Appendix H). Until 2016, the report showed a two-year comparison in terms of head count and seat count. The data were disaggregated by degree to show where growth and decline occurred. The two-year comparison allowed report recipients to see how the College compared to the prior year at the same time.

Because the "Go Back to Get Ahead" (GBTGA) program in 2014-15 dramatically increased the enrollment, the report showed significant enrollment growth over 2013-14. A year later, the report showed a dramatic decline in 2015-16 because 2014-15 represented a spike in enrollment between two more typical years. Therefore, the IE Office decided to initiate a three-year comparison that would allow the College to keep an anomalous year in perspective. The report will also include graduate student enrollments starting Summer 2016.

Unduplicated Head Count of Registered Students and Year-to-Year Change

Semester	AY 2012-13	AY 2013-14	AY 2014-15	AY 2015-16	4-Yr Change
Fall	1644	1580 (-3.9%)	1929 (+22.1%)	1735 (-10.1%)	+5.5%
Spring	1749	1724 (-1.4%)	2003 (+16.2%)	1766 (-11.8%)	+1.0%
Summer	1031	967 (-6.2%)	961 (-0.6%)	837 (-12.9%)	-18.8%

Another set of tools IE implemented to understand enrollment patterns is the inflow/outflow model coupled with the retention flow model and Monte Carlo simulations of future enrollment (Appendix I). The inflow/outflow model tracks registered students from semester-to-semester. Using past registered student counts, it provides a history of how students behave over time. It takes a prior semester's total head count of registered students, then adds new matriculants, re-admits, visiting students, and returning stop-outs, while subtracting graduating students and those not re-registering, to arrive at the bottom line enrollment for the new semester. Based on a history of 4-5 years, the College can see the minimum and maximum number of students being added and the minimum and maximum percent of last semester's total being lost to attrition and graduation. These numbers set realistic parameters for discussions about goal-setting for admission and retention.

By itself, the inflow/outflow model is a useful way to understand enrollment. The College is just beginning to understand its use in enrollment prediction, and as that understanding grows, it should be the basis for discussing what the College expects enrollment to look like in the future.

The inflow/outflow model coupled with the retention flow model and Monte Carlo simulations is even more powerful. The retention flow model takes the total enrollment from one semester (registered students plus non-registered matriculants) to see how they behave in terms of course registration. Registered students have a high probability of registering in the following semester, while non-registered matriculants have high probability of not registering in the following semester. The Monte Carlo simulations allow the College to predict the most likely enrollment scenarios based on historical data, as well as determine the probability of achieving any particular enrollment goals it sets.

A small percent of registered and non-registered matriculants graduate every semester, some registered students stop-out, and some stop-outs register again, but the most important fact with respect to enrollment management is that registration leads to registration and non-registration leads to non-registration. This fact is key, particularly because the College has a significant percentage of its total enrollment who do not register for courses in any given semester (25-32% in fall or spring semesters going back to Fall 2010).

In Fall 2012, the Director of IE began tracking the split between registered and non-registered students in the overall enrollment. Prior to this time, it was assumed that the vast majority of non-registered matriculants were pursuing credits from courses elsewhere or PLA. While this is true for some students, there is a subset of the non-registered population that is either paying the student services fee to maintain matriculation status (while failing to transcribe credits with the Registrar) or choosing not to pay the fee and waiting to be administratively withdrawn from the college.

The Office of IE reports data about non-registered matriculants and the last time they transcribed credits with the Registrar in the student profile report, which is published at the end of every semester (Appendix J). Reports from Fall 2014, Spring 2015, and Fall 2015 show that an average of 590 students (24% of total enrollment) were not registered in Charter Oak courses, but remained matriculated. Out of this number, 8% transcribed transfer or PLA credits with the Registrar during the semester. This is the ideal behavior for non-registered matriculants because it shows steady progress by way of transfer or PLA credit. The remaining 92% did not have any credit accumulation during the semester, so it was necessary to discover how long it had been since they made documented progress toward degree completion. The remaining 92% broke down as 40% having documented credits within the past six months, 28% having done so within the past 6-12 months, and 24% not having transcribed any credits in over a year.

Not transcribing credits within that past six months or longer is akin to stopping out for a semester or more at a traditional brick-and-mortar institution. This behavior is of concern because student retention research indicates that stopping out is a retention risk behavior that puts degree completion in jeopardy.

Charter Oak reaches out to non-registered matriculants annually to encourage them to become active. The students also receive registration information each term. Non-registered matriculants are deactivated after five years of inactivity. Information gathered by the academic counselors on these students is placed in Jenzabar's "notepad" module. Notepad is a handy location to capture supplemental information about students, but the College's process for doing this is not systematized enough to extract data for analysis. Right now, the notepad is used for individual counseling. The College will begin working with Academic Counseling to systematize the use of notepad so data can be extracted for analysis.

Other data that come from the student profile includes demographic and geographic information, counts of majors and concentrations, and credit generation by academic area. These data show the popularity of different majors, which majors have students who tend to register in Charter Oak courses, and where the students are located.

Geographic data on students supplemented by marketing data about who visits the Charter Oak website and admissions data on prospective students has made it clear that the College needs to

expand marketing efforts and recruitment of out-of-state students if the institution is to grow enrollments. Some work has already been done on this front. As of Fall 2015, out-of-state students make up 20% of Charter Oak's registered student body.

The Admissions Office, Marketing Department, and Office of IE researched potential out-of-state regions for marketing and recruitment outreach. Data on population size, percentage of bachelor's degree holders, community college markets, industries that align with programs the College offers, affordability of media buys, Charter Oak's current penetration into different regions, and the number of alumni residing in potential new markets who might act as ambassadors for the College were reviewed.

Florida is the first market the College pursued since it looked promising based on the factors studied. Marketing and Admissions have partnered to launch multiple campaigns in the market, including online advertising, radio advertising, targeted email communications, social media, corporate outreach, community college outreach, alumni ambassador assistance, and programmatic outreach for the military, public safety, and health care sectors. As a limited time incentive, the College waived the \$75 application fee to Florida residents who were new to the institution.

The campaign had a budget of \$100,000 with an objective of driving 250 inquiries into the admissions funnel. The objective was exceeded by obtaining 370 inquiries. Facebook and Google advertising provided the greatest number of visits to the College website and the lowest cost per inquiry. Radio and Twitter advertising did not perform as well.

See Appendix K for analytics about the Fall 2015 campaign. A Spring 2016 campaign is currently underway with more emphasis placed on Facebook and Google advertising. The College hopes to seek other markets to venture into, though its capacity to do so may be challenged.

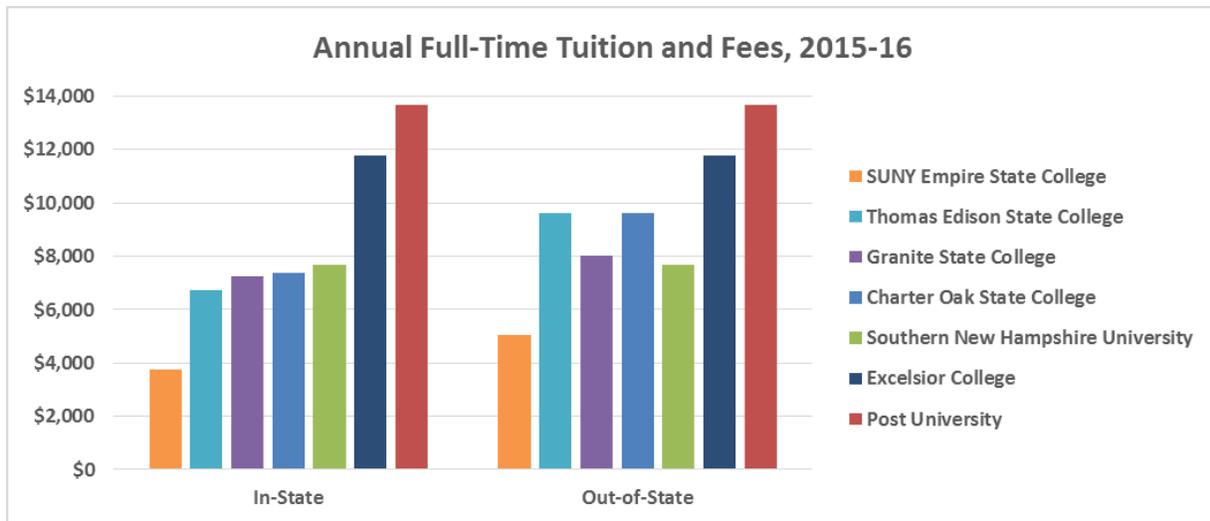
Enrollment management is an area that Charter Oak continues to improve. The GBTGA program, which the College administered for the CSCU system, demonstrated what a robust enrollment management program can accomplish. A more detailed report on GBTGA is in Appendix L. However, the College lacks the staff and funds to purchase the customer relations management (CRM) tool needed to replicate the GBTGA experience. While the College has tools in place to aid its understanding of enrollment patterns, the enrollment process itself could be better coordinated. The College is exploring better ways to use the existing tools and reports in a more targeted way to generate better inter-departmental discussions and planning among the Business Office, Admissions, Marketing, Institutional Effectiveness, and Academic Affairs. The College recently renovated its building to house the admissions counselors together with the "front-line" staff who handle all of the inquiries as part of the process to revamp the admissions office.

In addition, the College conducted a pilot in 2015 that employed a team approach to assisting accepted applicants to matriculate. The team consisted of representatives from Admissions, Advising, Registrar's Office, Financial Aid, and the Business Office. This pilot reduced the number of communication pieces that were sent to students. The College will be analyzing the data to see if it had a positive impact on students.

Affordability

Charter Oak is an affordable institution, particularly for in-state students. Its annual, in-state, full-time tuition and fees cost \$7,359 for 2015-16. This is middle-of-the-pack in comparison to a group composed of four peers with similar histories of credit aggregation, PLA, online course offerings, and service to adult students (SUNY Empire, Thomas Edison, Granite State, and Excelsior), one in-state, for-profit online competitor (Post University), and one out-of-state, not-for-profit online institution (Southern New Hampshire University).

For out-of-state students, Charter Oak is a bit more expensive, but still under \$10,000 per year. All of the public institutions charge a premium to out-of-state students. In addition to Charter Oak, this group includes SUNY Empire, Thomas Edison, and Granite State. The remaining three private institutions have no tuition and fee differential based on the location of their students. All of their students pay the same rate.



In the past, tuition has been established by the former Board for State Academic Awards. Since Charter Oak became part of the BOR, the tuition has been established by the BOR unrelated to what was needed to cover rising costs. In 2016, the Colleges were asked by the CSCU staff to recommend a tuition increase for FY 2017 which then was sent to the BOR for approval. To calculate Charter Oak's tuition request, the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) developed a number of models estimating enrollment, as well as the state appropriation and increases in salaries, benefits, and operational costs. At the time the College projected the 4% increase, it was sufficient to meet expenses providing that there was not another decline in enrollment or other financial give-backs to the state. However, given the state's budget shortfall, the College anticipates further reductions in its state allotment, which could result in layoffs and further budget cuts.

Because of the budget problems at the State level and projected enrollment, the Executive Committee is reviewing all expenses, including staffing, to determine how the budget will be balanced in 2016-17 since the College had two 1% rescissions plus a "claw back" of the state allocation.

The College is looking at other revenue sources through new program development, out-of-state marketing initiatives, and some possible long-term foundation funded activities.

Due to the success of a pilot program in 2014-15 that afforded the College the opportunity to offer scholarships to students pursuing prior learning assessment options for earning credit, the Charter Oak State College Foundation established a permanent PLA Scholarship Fund. This helps students who would like to use PLA options, but do not have the money to cover the costs since the costs are not covered by financial aid. A full report for FY16 is available in Appendix M.

Charter Oak also offers the Women in Transition Program and the CT-WAGE program for low income, single parents so they can return to college to complete their degrees. These programs provide financial assistance and a laptop computer.

Technology

Planning for and evaluating technology are guided by Charter Oak's strategic plan along with consideration of legal requirements and Board of Regents mandates. For each strategic plan initiative, IT evaluates the initiative to determine what technology, support, and resources will be required to support the initiative. Any costs required to implement and maintain the IT requirements for the initiative are determined and incorporated into the Charter Oak budgeting process. Examples include hardware and software-related needs, allocation of staff hours for report writing and system maintenance, and costs for outside consulting.

Technologies are selected by teams composed of technology staff and staff or faculty from the academic or administrative area impacted by the technology under consideration. This ensures the technology tool supports the strategic purpose as well as Charter Oak standards, system compatibility and personnel capabilities. Proposals for new technologies are submitted to the Change Advisory Board and vetted through the existing change control process.

The acquisition of approved new technology follows State of Connecticut purchasing guidelines and regulations. Existing state contracts are utilized when available. Bids are created for items whose cost is above the purchasing limit threshold. Purchase orders are issued for purchases whose costs exceed P-Card purchasing limitations and P-Cards are utilized when costs are below those limitations.

Information concerning software licensing expiration dates are recorded and monitored for compliance and assets are tagged and recorded according to existing procedures.

Information technology and technology planning has shifted significantly since the CSCU merger. Prior to the merger, Charter Oak IT engaged the Executive and Cabinet-level teams, in addition to cross-agency CTDLC teams, and merged the strategic plans of both organizations into a cohesive foundation of information technology. This technology often had underpinnings in the data center, where large-dollar physical investments could be organizationally virtualized. Prior to the merger, the IT department had full direction of technology in backend workspace, and partnered with Cabinet and Executives for academic and administrative application setting.

For a number of years, the Enterprise Systems Owners Group (ESOG) served as the steering committee for navigating system changes. The group was composed of key members from all

offices on campus. Whenever front-line staff recommended changes to a system, the request would be run through ESOG for discussion and coordination. ESOG recommendations would be presented to the Cabinet for approval. Major changes involving large purchases or substantial impacts to departmental processes went to the Executive Committee for approval.

In Fall 2014, some members of the Cabinet raised the concern that ESOG was an inefficient use of time. Most ESOG members also sat on the Cabinet, so it was redundant for them to sit through ESOG meetings and Cabinet meetings. Cabinet voted to dissolve ESOG and roll ESOG-related matters into the Cabinet meeting. ESOG members who are not part of the Cabinet would be invited to Cabinet meetings to discuss system changes as necessary.

The largest change to the technology planning was the creation of the CSCU system office information technology division. The system office “inherited” three disparate equipment standards from the three major systems (Charter Oak, CSU, CCC). Post-merger, the CSCU system office has developed a series of new policies and procedures. Today, the CSCU system office largely sets direction for information technology hardware and software acquisitions. Often, but not exclusively, the CSCU system partially or fully subsidizes technology aligning to the new unified standards, policies, and guidelines reducing the burden for end-campuses. The advantage of the merger has meant that the CSCU office is financially supporting a number of technologies. For example, the BOR system office is paying for Blackboard, Kaltura, Palo Alto Firewalls, Cisco Switches, SailPoint Single Sign-On, Office365, and dark-fiber infrastructure which connects our two Charter Oak buildings to the CSCU system office and the public internet.

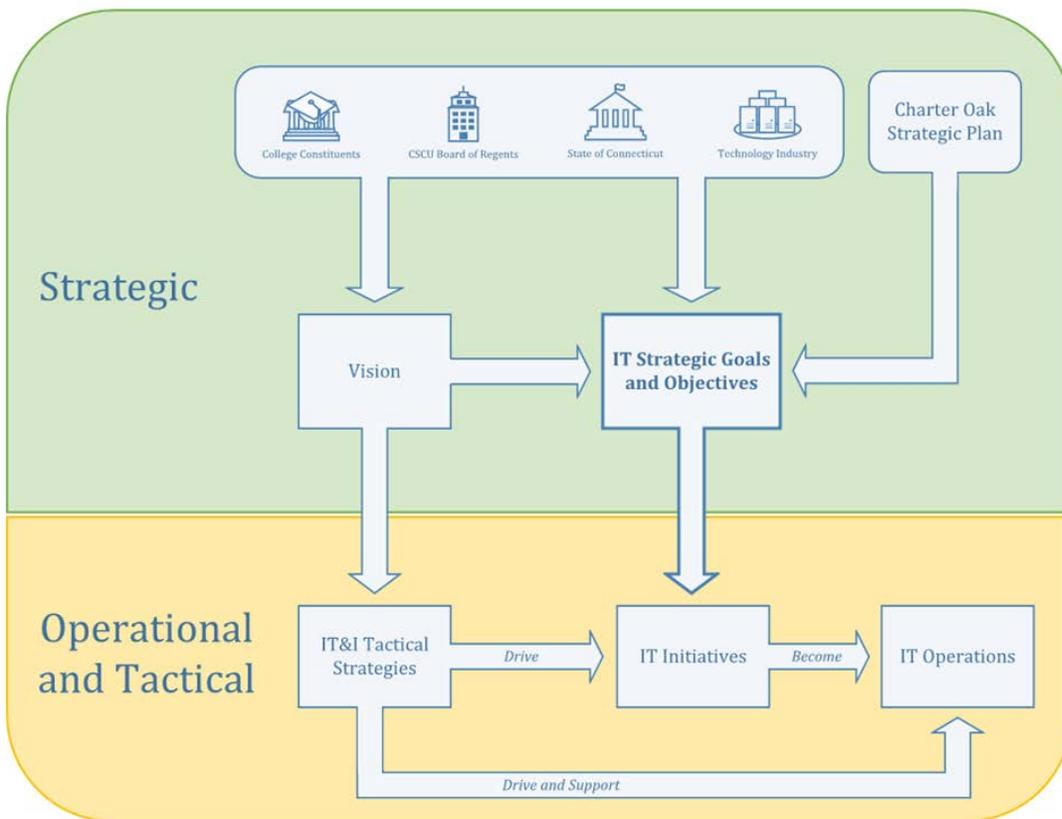
The CSCU standards are voted on by a council of six senior IT leaders who represent the CSCU constituents. Charter Oak holds one vote on the IT leader council and this seat is held by the Charter Oak Chief Information Officer.

Locally, academic technology is central to Charter Oak's ability to deliver online courses to students. Over the past few years, Charter Oak has planned for and implemented many technologies that serve its academic mission. The principle academic technology is the Blackboard Learning Management System, which was implemented in 2002 and is complemented by the Starfish Early Alert System and SCORM Cloud. (SCORM is short for *Sharable Content Object Reference Model*.)

Challenges since the College has become part of the CSCU system are compatibility of technologies and responsiveness to needs. Charter Oak is the only college that does not use Banner as its student information management system. Charter Oak was the only college using Starfish for attendance verification. All seventeen colleges use Blackboard as the learning platform. Until the merger with the BOR, Charter Oak had its own instance of Blackboard. Since the merger, Charter Oak has not been able to be as responsive to student, faculty, and staff needs because it no longer has direct access to Blackboard Customer Service or Starfish representatives. The College has to rely on the BOR to upload students into the courses. The BOR does the maintenance of the Blackboard. Occasionally, this has created problems for staff, faculty, and students. However, the College has worked with faculty to ensure that students would not be penalized for late work or for non-attendance if the fault was with the system. The ID staff notifies students and faculty of any down time and how the problem will be handled. Having one instance of Blackboard has not worked out.

As a result, the system office with input from the CIOs at each of the seventeen colleges, made the decision to continue to financially support Blackboard, but to allow Charter Oak and each of the other four state universities to have their own instances of Blackboard. (The community colleges will continue to share one instance of Blackboard.) Charter Oak has already begun moving in that direction and will make the transition prior to the start of the Spring 2017 semester. The new Blackboard environment will be a Cloud environment and will provide additional support services for both students and faculty. This dovetails with a new model supported by the system office where schools can create institutional brands and sub-organizations of tools while still aligning to the system standard or preference.

As information technology continues to evolve and the direction of the CSCU system is becoming clearer, Charter Oak has developed the planning model seen in the figure below. This allows the Charter Oak IT team to integrate direction from regulatory and advisory organizations while continuing to set and define goals and objectives which are unique to the college. As stability with the CSCU system has increased, the College's ability to leverage this system and use it effectively has grown.



Strengthen the Budget

Once again, Connecticut is beset with budget issues. In FY 2016, the College received a \$44,151 budget reduction from the state, approximately 2%. Any budget cut greatly impacts the College's ability to plan and create new programs, expand marketing, purchase new technologies and software, or to hire much needed staff.

Charter Oak is a tuition-dependent institution that is supplemented by state funding. Eighty percent (80%) of the College's revenue budget comes from tuition and fees. Much of the budget is dedicated to mandatory spending for payroll, fringe benefits, and operational expenses. Discretionary income is not plentiful.

Charter Oak is further hampered by not having total control over setting its own tuition. The BOR and the state set tuition with the aim of keeping tuition low. While keeping college affordable is an important goal and part of Charter Oak's mission, there is also the need for the College to be able to pay for its operations and plan for the future to fulfill its educational mission. When tuition is kept too low, the College has to increase enrollments to boost revenue, dip into its small reserve fund to fill deficits, or cut back on services and planning for new initiatives.

Charter Oak has talked to the current BOR President about being able to set its own tuition and garnering funding parity with other CSCU institutions. To illustrate the lack of parity, 27% of Charter Oak's personnel costs are covered by the state appropriation in contrast to 63% at the state universities. This year, the Colleges were able to recommend their tuition increase.

Tuition revenue and budget projections are closely monitored. When tuition or the state appropriation is less than expected, expenditures are reviewed in order to bring the budget into balance. Sometimes, however, the College is not able to react to shortfalls in enough time to make corresponding budget reductions. When this occurs, the College's reserve fund fills the deficit. Over the last five years, there were only two years (2012 and 2014) when the College had to draw from its reserves to balance the budget due to a shortfall in tuition and fee revenue.

There is a need to involve IE and Admissions more in enrollment projections and budget discussions. Currently, enrollment projections are primarily tied to the probable enrollment calculated by the Finance Office. To complement budget development, IE and Admissions could bring additional information to bear on the feasibility of meeting identified enrollment and tuition targets by providing data on admission, retention, and graduation trends.

Integration with CSCU

In addition to its own planning and data collection, the College works with the CSCU system on various projects. Data requests from the system office are fielded by the Office of IE and other offices as necessary. Key staff members, including the President, Provost, Chief Financial Officer, Registrar, and Director of Institutional Effectiveness, meet with their counterparts at the other 16 CSCU institutions on a frequent basis to discuss issues affecting the system.

Specific system initiatives with which Charter Oak is involved include the CSCU Data Warehouse Advisory and Steering Committees, Reverse Transfer Program, Transfer and Articulation Program (TAP), and Go Back to Get Ahead (GBTGA).

Projection

- The College will embark on a five-year strategic plan beginning in Fall 2016 for 2017-22 led by the Provost. The process will involve the Cabinet, faculty, staff and students.

- The Academic Counseling Department and IE will monitor the progress made on student services and seek to expand them. In particular, it will assess the career services and disability services that were strengthened in 2015.
- The Provost working with the faculty and other members of the staff will continue to expand its academic program offerings. The College is working on a "Ten Programs in Ten Years" plan, which began in 2014-15, aimed at identifying which programs to transition from concentrations to major or which new programs to develop
- Other parts of Charter Oak's strategic plan will include:
 - Reallocating advertising and recruitment into select out-of-state markets. As mentioned above, a team is working on what these markets might be.
 - Updating existing enrollment reports so they include graduate enrollment and show three-year comparisons to help put unusual year-to-year changes in perspective. This will be done by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.
 - Involving Admissions and Institutional Effectiveness in a discussion of budgeted enrollment figures to build into an enrollment target based on data instead of just setting a target based on what is needed to pay for continuing expenses.
 - Developing and implementing a plan to provide better outreach to non-registered, matriculated students to encourage them to register for courses to speed up their time to completion or at least stay up-to-date with paying their student services fee if they do not plan to register. This will be developed by a cross-college team.
 - Research collaborative marketing opportunities with partners to bolster recruitment efforts and enrollment.

Program review schedule (every X years or website location of schedule)

As needed or requested

Sample program review reports (name of unit or program)*

Academic Counseling

See Appendix O

Other significant institutional studies (Name and web location)*

Date

*Insert additional rows, as appropriate.

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

Standard Three: Organization and Governance

Description of Board of Regents and System Office

Reorganization and Governance Responsibilities

The State of Connecticut consolidated the governance of its twelve community colleges, four state universities and Charter Oak State College under a single Board of Regents for Higher Education (BOR), effective July 1, 2011.¹ The BOR retains the powers and responsibilities of the respective former Boards of Trustees and the Board for State Academic Awards and may act as such when necessary;² it also retains many responsibilities for setting state-wide policy of the former Board of Governors for Higher Education,³ including approval of academic programs.⁴

Board Composition

The BOR consists of 21 members who are distinguished leaders of the community in Connecticut and reflect the state's geographic, racial and ethnic diversity. Voting members are not employed by or serve as a member of a board of trustees for any independent institution of higher education in Connecticut or the Board of Trustees for The University of Connecticut. Voting board members may not be employed by or be elected officials of any public agency during their term of membership on the Board of Regents for Higher Education. Nine members of the board are appointed by the Governor. Four members of the board are appointed by the majority and minority leaders of both house of the Connecticut General Assembly. The chairperson and vice-chairperson of the student advisory committee serve as members of the board. The chairperson and vice-chairperson of the faculty advisory committee serve as ex-officio, non-voting members of the board. The Commissioners of Education, Economic and Community Development and Public Health and the Labor Commissioner shall serve as ex-officio, nonvoting members of the board.⁵

Committee Structures and Responsibilities

Board Bylaws, last amended on September 17, 2015⁶, prescribe a committee structure to provide for its normal operations. Standing committees of the Board are the 1) Executive Committee, 2) Academic and Student Affairs Committee, 3) Audit Committee, 4) Finance and Infrastructure Committee, and 5) Human Resources and Administration Committee.

As allowed per board bylaws, the chair of the Board may appoint Special Committees to address subjects or issues as appropriate. Currently, one special committee of the Board exists: the Special Committee on Collective Bargaining, which is charged with providing advice, counsel, and as-needed direction to CSCU management and negotiating teams.

¹ Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) 10a-1a. http://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_185.htm#sec_10a-1a

² CGS 10a-71 http://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_185b.htm#sec_10a-71, CGS 10a-88 http://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_185b.htm#sec_10a-88, and CGS 10a-143(d) http://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_185b.htm#sec_10a-143.

³ CGS http://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_185b.htm#sec_10a-6.

⁴ CGS 10a-35a https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_185.htm#sec_10a-35a

⁵ CGS 10a-1a. http://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_185.htm#sec_10a-1a

⁶ BOR Bylaws: <http://www.ct.edu/files/pdfs/bylaws.pdf>

The BOR meets annually to conduct a self-evaluation.

System President and Staff

A President of the Connecticut State Colleges & Universities system serves as the chief executive officer of the CSCU system, who administers, coordinates, and supervises the activities of the board in accordance with the policies established by the board. The system President's performance is evaluated annually by the BOR. The system President has responsibilities for:

1. Implementing the policies and directives of the board and any additional responsibilities as the board may prescribe
2. Implementing the goals identified and recommendations made by the Planning Commission for Higher Education
3. Building interdependent support among the Connecticut State University System, the regional community-technical college system and Charter Oak State College
4. Balancing central authority with institutional differentiation, autonomy and creativity
5. Facilitating cooperation and synergy among the Connecticut State University System, the regional community-technical college system and Charter Oak State College.

Under the direction of the President is an executive staff responsible for the operation of the CSCU system. The board establishes terms and conditions of employment of its staff, prescribe their duties and establish the compensation of its professional and technical personnel. Upon recommendation of the system President, the Board of Regents has appointed a Vice-President for the community colleges and a Vice-President for the state universities with such duties that include oversight of academic programs, student support services and institutional support.⁷

In September 2015, the Board of Regents for Higher Education appointed Mark E. Ojakian as President of the CSCU system. President Ojakian's primary objective is to provide the system with strong leadership resulting in stability across the 17 institutions and to raise awareness of the critical role that the system plays not only related to student success but to the vitality of Connecticut's economy and businesses.

Plan to Preserve Missions

The BOR is required by statute to develop and implement a plan for maintaining the distinct missions of the state universities, the community colleges, and Charter Oak State College.⁸ This plan was approved in December 2011⁹ and carried out during 2012-13, with the Board adopting mission statements for the community colleges, the state universities, and Charter Oak State College on June 20, 2013.¹⁰ The plan included the BOR staff providing a compilation of existing mission statements and a matrix of common issues raised across statements to the Councils of Presidents, the Student Advisory Committee and the Faculty Advisory Committee. Significant

⁷ CGS 10a-1b. http://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_185.htm#sec_10a-1b.

⁸ CGS 10a-1a. http://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_185.htm#sec_10a-1a.

⁹ Board of Regents minutes, Dec. 20, 2011. http://www.ct.edu/images/uploads/BOR_Minutes_122011_w_Attch_A.pdf#page=10

¹⁰ Board of Regents agenda, Jun. 20, 2013. <http://www.ct.edu/images/uploads/BOR-Agenda-06-20-2013.pdf>.

drafting, consultation and revisions were provided by all three groups, including some meetings with regents during 2012-13. Final mission statements are:

Connecticut Community Colleges

As part of the Connecticut State Colleges & Universities (CSCU) system, the twelve Connecticut Community Colleges share a mission to make excellent higher education and lifelong learning affordable and accessible. Through unique and comprehensive degree and certificate programs, non-credit life-long learning opportunities and job skills training programs, they advance student aspirations to earn career-oriented degrees and certificates and to pursue their further education. The Colleges nurture student learning and success to transform students and equip them to contribute to the economic, intellectual, civic, cultural and social well-being of their communities. In doing so, the Colleges support the state, its businesses and other enterprises and its citizens with a skilled, well-trained and educated workforce.

Charter Oak State College

As part of the Connecticut State Colleges & Universities (CSCU) system, Charter Oak State College, the state's only public, online, degree-granting institution, provides affordable, diverse and alternative opportunities for adults to earn undergraduate and graduate degrees and certificates. The College's mission is to validate learning acquired through traditional and non-traditional experiences, including its own courses. The college rigorously upholds standards of high quality and seeks to inspire adults with the self-enrichment potential of non-traditional higher education.

Connecticut State Universities

As part of the Connecticut State Colleges & Universities (CSCU) system, the four Connecticut State Universities offer exemplary and affordable undergraduate and graduate instruction leading to degrees in the liberal arts, sciences, fine arts, applied fields, and professional disciplines. They advance and extend knowledge, research, learning and culture while preparing students to enter the workforce and to contribute to the civic life of Connecticut's communities. Through a variety of living and learning environments, the Universities ensure access and diversity to meet the needs of a broad range of students. They support an atmosphere of inter-campus learning, the exploration of technological and global influences and the application of knowledge to promote economic growth and social justice.

Strategic Plan

The Board adopted elements of a strategic plan on September 25, 2012 that included a Vision for Connecticut, a Vision for the Connecticut State Colleges & Universities (CSCU), a Mission for CSCU, and five goal statements.¹¹ This strategic plan was intentionally closely aligned to the State's Accountability Framework adopted by the Higher Education Coordinating Council. A broadly representative working group to consider metrics met three times during 2012-13 and issued a report in April 2013. Following a review plan outlined by the working group, the group's recommendations were to adopt 23 metrics and gather feedback from a broad range of

¹¹ Board of Regents minutes, Sept. 25, 2012. http://www.ct.edu/images/uploads/BOR_092512_MINUTES.pdf.

campus stakeholders.¹² The metrics group's recommended metrics plus these three additional metrics added by the BOR Strategic Planning Committee were forwarded to 159 individuals in the following groups for comment: the Student Advisory Committee, the Faculty Advisory Committee, faculty and college senate leaders, campus presidents, campus academic officers, campus student affairs officers, campus finance officers, and central office executive staff. Feedback from these reviewers was integrated into a final set of metrics that were considered by the Strategic Planning Committee and then adopted by the Board on June 20, 2013.¹³

Routine Board Responsibilities and Duties

Since the Board of Regents assumed governance of the CSCU institutions, various policies and procedures have been adopted and executed for the consideration and approval of academic programs; campus budgets; centers and institutes; faculty tenure, honors and awards; system-wide academic policies; personnel policies; reports from independent, state, and internal auditors; student conduct policies; and other routine matters of business. All policies of prior boards remain in effect until rescinded or modified by the current BOR, and an effort is ongoing to consolidate all policies into a single policy manual, with review from campus, faculty and student stakeholders as appropriate. Separate policies for various sectors will be maintained as needed, but a single authoritative source for policies will be placed online.

The Board maintains a regular and consistent schedule for actions related to academic programs for the CSCU's 17 institutions. The Board also, under their Academic Program Review policy, has a schedule of comprehensive review of all academic programs for each institution.

In large scale initiatives, such as the redirection of consolidation savings to campuses, adoption and implementation of a system-wide Transfer and Articulation Policy (TAP), and implementation of Public Act 12-40 to redesign the delivery of developmental education, the Board works through its committee structure to gather pertinent information in support of current policies or to modify them. Through the Academic and Student Affairs Committee of the BOR, the full Board receives periodic progress reports. For example, with TAP, the BOR readjusted its implementation time table to ensure that each campus had sufficient time to move the pathways through its campus governance structure. As a result, all of the initial pathways were approved. With PA 1240, the BOR received annual progress reports and in 2016-17 is scheduled to receive recommendations on best practices. In both of these examples, system-wide faculty committees were involved. When Charter Oak administered the "Go Back to Get Ahead" program (GBTGA) for the system, the College had to provide updates to the BOR, the other sixteen colleges, and to the legislature.

Appraisal

As any examination of the public record on Connecticut's efforts to merge 17 of its public institutions would reveal, Charter Oak's merger into the new BOR has not been without its challenges. For the purposes of this Self-Study, the current CSCU System Office and the BOR have become better organized, more predictable, and less subject to efforts to undo it. It still needs to gain traction around strategic efforts to improve collaboration, student services, student

¹² Report of the Strategic Plan Metrics Work Group. (April 2013). Retrieved from <http://www.ct.edu/images/uploads/SPC-Agenda-04-11-2013.pdf#page=3>

¹³ Board of Regents agenda, Jun. 20, 2013. <http://www.ct.edu/images/uploads/BOR-Agenda-06-20-2013.pdf>.

success, and cost containment. Most importantly, it needs to improve the financial support delivered by the state to all the colleges and universities. Charter Oak is financially solvent. However, it needs to continue to focus on the bottom-line. It needs to strengthen its ability to know the cost of educating one student (direct and indirect) so it can determine enrollment and retention targets and tuition and fees to ensure that it remains solvent by increasing enrollment and retention and by analyzing what it costs to educate each student so it can accurately predict what it needs in the way of tuition and fee increases. As will be detailed later, Charter Oak created and managed the BOR's most significant collaborative activity in GBTGA, and in so doing gave evidence of its willingness and ability to be a good partner.

Description of Charter Oak College

Executive Staff

Charter Oak's Executive Staff includes the President, Provost, Chief Financial and Administrative Officer (CFAO), Chief Information Officer (CIO), and Executive Director for the Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium. The BOR delegates to Charter Oak's Executive Staff responsibility for managing the institution. These individuals report directly to the President and compose the President's Executive Council. Regular Executive Council meetings are held to discuss and make recommendations regarding policy, procedures, and possible programs or services. The Executive Council members also propose items for the BOR agendas. In addition, the Executive Staff meet monthly with members of the Cabinet, consisting of administrators in information technology, admissions, financial aid, registrar, academic affairs, advising, financial aid, and finance, prior to bringing initiatives and policy and fee changes to the BOR or prior to making major procedural changes. The President consults with the Student Association on issues such as fee increases and policies affecting the student body. Additionally, the President meets three times a year with the Academic Council to gain input on and to keep them abreast of system-wide and national issues that impact our faculty, staff, and students.

Offices and Divisions

To accomplish its mission, the College is organized into the following offices and divisions:

Office of the President. The responsibilities of the Office of the President include financial development, institutional planning, overall assessment of institutional effectiveness, policy development, information technology, external relations, public information and legislative affairs. These responsibilities are carried out in conjunction with the other administrative officers. The President reports to the President of the BOR and serves on the BOR's President's committee. Charter Oak's President, as well as all other members of the Executive Team, serve at the pleasure of the BOR. In addition to serving as the President's secretary, the Assistant to the President serves as the College's Development Director and executive director of the Charter Oak State College Foundation. The Director of Marketing reports to the President and is responsible for the College's marketing, branding, and advertising. While the College is seeking a new CFO, the Director of Financial Aid will report to the President.

Academic Affairs Division. The Division of Academic Affairs functions under the direction of the Provost. Major responsibilities include academic counseling, student records,

transcript evaluation, institutional planning, online learning, academic program development, validation services, test development and administration, state authorization for online courses, and faculty relations. The Provost has overall responsibility for the quality and integrity of the academic program in conjunction with the faculty. The Registrar, Director of Institutional Effectiveness, Director of Academic Services, Director of Admissions, Director of Prior Learning Assessment, Undergraduate Program Administrator, Graduation Coordinator, Instructional Design Department, and coordinators for special programs all report to the Provost. In addition, the research needs of the College have grown, so a part-time research associate was hired in the Institutional Effectiveness office to meet its needs.

Finance and Administration. This Division is under the direction of the Chief Financial and Administrative Officer (CFAO). The CFAO has responsibility for financial planning, budgeting, financial records, purchasing, contracts, personnel, affirmative action and financial aid disbursement. Reporting directly to the CFAO are the Director of Finance and Administration, the Associate Manager of Personnel and Business Services, Senior Associate of Purchasing and Business Services, Associate for the Business Office, and the Director of Financial Aid.

Information Technology: This division is under the direction of the Chief Information Officer. The CIO has responsibility for the College hardware, the network, the student information system, and the student portal (ACORN).

CTDLC: CTDLC, under the direction of the Executive Director, provides support services to Charter Oak and to other colleges on a subscription basis, e.g. online tutoring, call center service, course development, and faculty training.

Faculty

The Provost is the academic leader of the College and guides the work of the faculty, which is described more fully in Standard 6. A chart depicting the three faculty groups appears in Standard 6. Core Consulting Faculty are appointed by the Board as independent consultants and are normally selected from persons serving in active status as teachers and/or administrators in Connecticut higher education institutions. Every effort is made to maintain a faculty with appropriate representation from two-year and four-year colleges and universities and balanced in terms of academic scope; racial, ethnic, and gender diversity; and public/private institutional background. Core Consulting Faculty appointments and reappointments are recommended to the President following a search and approval by the Academic Council. The President, with the approval of the Academic Council, appoints a member of the Academic Council as Dean of the Faculty for a two-year term. Another member is appointed as Associate Dean of the Faculty. All academic decisions and academic policies are considered and approved by the academic committees and most are sent to the Academic Council for final approval. For example: all transfer articulation pathways were reviewed by the appropriate subject area committees and then their recommendations were sent to the Academic Council for endorsement before going to the BOR. Similarly, the adoption of the Cornerstone and Capstone Courses, faculty orientation, and two-graded assignments a week policies were discussed in the subject area committees and then to the Academic Council for approval. Through this structure, faculty engage in planning, development and revision of academic policies, and assessment of the academic program. Core Consulting Faculty also are called upon to make decisions on individual students. Some

decisions are delegated to the Provost but are governed by approved policy. These decisions are subject to review through regular graduation audits conducted by the faculty.

Teaching Faculty are selected by the Provost. They are hired based on their educational and practical experience, if applicable, and their knowledge of andragogy and their ability to teach online. Many are full time faculty at regionally accredited institutions, others are full time adjuncts, and others are full time business professionals who enjoy teaching. Their teaching is reviewed by members of the College's faculty-based Distance Learning Committee.

Special assessment faculty are engaged when technical expertise is required for portfolio reviews, special assessments, contract learning or the review of non-collegiate-sponsored instruction. These faculty are commonly members of the core or teaching faculty, and usually selected from faculty teaching in Connecticut colleges and universities. However, in the case of an uncommon field of study, Charter Oak contracts with individuals who are not part of the core or teaching faculty, or who teach at institutions outside Connecticut.

As described in Standard Six, the Core Consulting Faculty, along with the Provost, have responsibility for academic policies and the approval of bachelor's degree concentrations for every student. In conjunction with the academic counselors, the core consulting faculty guide students through their degree programs. These faculty are the academic voice of the College.

During academic year 2015-2016, approximately one-third of the Core Faculty were also members of the Teaching Faculty.

Charter Oak's faculty and non-teaching faculty are represented on the BOR's Faculty Advisory Committee. A faculty member elected by the Academic Council serves, with the Dean of Faculty serves as an alternate member. The non-teaching faculty representative is elected from our staff and is currently represented by the Director of Prior Learning, with the alternate being from our advising staff.

Other Organizations Associated with the College

Student Association. The Student Association is described in Standard Five. The Director of Academic Services is the advisor to the Association. The Association conducts an election every two years to select student representatives to serve on the Student Advisory Committee to the Board of Regents and the Charter Oak State College Foundation Board. The President and Provost meet with the Association periodically to discuss student fees and other matters, such as the Student Code of Conduct. In addition, the needs and opinions of students are regularly solicited through surveys and emails on a broad range of issues, and this input is used to develop, revise, and enhance programs. Students, along with alumni, regularly testify at legislative hearings regarding their Charter Oak experience.

College Governance

Standard 2 describes the College's planning process in detail. Most of the non-curriculum planning is accomplished through committees composed of staff, Cabinet members and the Executive Staff. For example, strategic planning begins with a review of last year's accomplishments by the Cabinet, a review of the proposed budget by the Executive Council, followed by a discussion of both at a college-wide staff meeting. The Cabinet members are then

asked to develop their departmental plan in concert with their proposed departmental budget, and individual departmental staff goals. Their proposed departmental strategic plans are then discussed at the Cabinet. Any new budget items are also discussed. Final decisions on new budget requests rests with the Executive Council and are dependent on strategic planning priority and budget. The Provost then compiles the departmental strategic plans into the College Strategic Plan. The draft of the plan is then shared with staff and with faculty through the faculty committees before it becomes the approved plan.

The College has been developing yearly strategic plans since 2012 when its five-year plan ended. This decision was made by the Executive Council because of the uncertainty surrounding the reorganization. The College recognizes the importance of having a multi-year plan and in Fall of 2016, the College will develop another five year plan.

Although the responsibilities of the Core Faculty, who are all adjunct, do not include college governance, the Executive Staff, relies on them for advice and counsel. The responsibilities of the faculty are:

- To establish requirements for such degrees as the College is authorized to award
- To establish requirements and standards for awarding academic credit and academic assessment
- To advise students
- To validate credits earned at other accredited institutions
- To make original awards of credit
- To make recommendations to the governing board for award of degrees to duly enrolled and qualified candidates
- To teach and develop courses and assess student work.

Appraisal

The internal governance structure of the College works well for the size of the institution. The Executive Staff meets every two weeks. In addition, the President meets with the Provost, CFAO, CIO, and Director of CTDLC weekly. The Provost is housed in the same building with the President so they meet for a short time almost daily. The Cabinet meets monthly. At those meetings, departmental updates are always given. In addition, the President conducts a monthly all-staff meeting. Each department head also has regular staff meetings.

The disadvantage to the College's governance structure also has to do with the size of the institution. The lean staff requires everyone to be involved on multiple committees, especially the members of the Cabinet.

Projection

- The President will explore seeking a closer relationship with the Board, perhaps through its committee structure.

Standard 3: Organization and Governance (Board and Internal Governance)

Please attach to this form:

- 1) A copy of the institution's organization chart(s).
- 2) A copy of the by-laws, enabling legislation, and/or other appropriate documentation to establish the legal authority of the institution to award degrees in accordance with applicable requirements.

If there is a "sponsoring entity," such as a church or religious congregation, a state system, or a corporation, describe and document the relationship with the accredited institution.

Name of the sponsoring entity	CT Board of Regents for Higher Education
Website location of documentation of relationship	www.ct.edu/regents

Governing Board

By-laws	Website location
Board members' names and affiliations	http://www.ct.edu/regents/bylaws
	http://www.ct.edu/regents/members

Board committees *

?	Website location or document name for meeting minutes
a. Academic and Student Affairs	http://www.ct.edu/regents/minutes
b. Audit	http://www.ct.edu/regents/minutes
c. Finance and Infrastructure	http://www.ct.edu/regents/minutes
d. Human Resources and Administration	http://www.ct.edu/regents/minutes
e. Executive	http://www.ct.edu/regents/minutes
f. Special Committee on Collective Bargaining	http://www.ct.edu/regents/minutes

Major institutional faculty committees or governance groups*

Website location or document name for meeting minutes	
Academic Council	With Provost
Faculty Committee Meetings	With Provost

Major institutional student committees or governance groups*

Website location or document name for meeting minutes	
Student Association	http://www.charteroak.edu/current/services/studentassociation.cfm

Other major institutional committees or governance groups*

Website location or document name for meeting minutes	
President's Cabinet	With Provost

*Insert additional rows as appropriate.

Standard 3: Organization and Governance (Locations and Modalities)

Campuses, Branches and Locations Currently in Operation (See definitions in comment boxes)

(Insert additional rows as appropriate.)

		Enrollment*				
		Location (City, State/Country)	Date Initiated	2 years prior	1 year prior	Current year
				(FY2014)	(FY 2015)	(FY 2016)
?						
?	Main campus	New Britain, CT	1973	2,489	2,915	2,507
?	Other principal campuses					
?	Branch campuses (US)					
?	Other instructional locations (US)					
?	Branch campuses (overseas)					
?	Other instructional locations (overseas)					

Educational modalities

		Enrollment*				
		Number of programs	Date First Initiated	2 years prior	1 year prior	Current year
				(FY2014)	(FY 2015)	(FY 2016)
	Distance Learning Programs					
	Programs 50-99% on-line	0				
	Programs 100% on-line	31	2005	2,489	2,915	2,507
?	Correspondence Education	0				
	Low-Residency Programs	0				
	Competency-based Programs	0				
	Dual Enrollment Programs	0				
	Contractual Arrangements involving the award of credit	0				

*Enter the annual unduplicated headcount for each of the years specified below.

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

Enrollment comes from IPEDS 12-Month Enrollment Survey.

State Statute Authorizing Charter Oak State College to Award Degrees

General Statutes of Connecticut

Title 10a, State System of Higher Education

Chapter 185b, Constituent Units

Sec. 10a-143. (Formerly Sec. 10-330a). New methods of awarding degrees and credits. Charter Oak State College. Operating fund. Reports. (a) The Board of Regents for Higher Education, in concert with the state's institutions of higher education, shall study, develop and coordinate the implementation of new methods of awarding undergraduate degrees and college credits including but not limited to: (1) External degrees awarded on the basis of acceptable performance in an educational field whether or not the necessary education was obtained by the candidate at an institution of higher education, and (2) examinations and methods other than classroom instruction for determining qualifications. On or before July 1, 1993, each constituent unit of the state system of higher education shall establish procedures to award college credits pursuant to this subsection and subsection (e) of this section.

(b) The Board of Regents for Higher Education shall promulgate regulations to authorize accredited institutions of higher education to award degrees by such new procedures.

(c) Charter Oak State College shall be an independent constituent unit of the state system of higher education with authority to grant undergraduate and graduate credits and degrees on the basis of (1) examinations, (2) courses offered by Charter Oak State College, and (3) other forms of evaluation and validation of learning including transfer of credit. Said college is authorized to use the term "Charter Oak State College" on diplomas and other documents and utterances to affirm the status of the college as a degree-granting institution of higher education. It shall be the responsibility of the college to serve the interest of all Connecticut residents by providing open access to academic credentials which are based on a consensus of professional judgment. The purpose of such credentials shall be to identify and give recognition to higher learning acquired by individuals through independent study, work experience and programs of noncollegiate educational activity.

(d) (1) The Board of Regents for Higher Education shall develop and implement programs at Charter Oak State College to improve opportunities in higher education through alternative modes of service, including, but not limited to, guidance and information services, registration and validation services, examination and degree-granting services, technological delivery systems, and projects of research and development. The board may appoint a chief academic and administrative officer and a professional academic staff of Charter Oak State College. The board may appoint and remove executive staff responsible for the operation of Charter Oak State College. The board may determine the size of the academic staff and the duties, terms, and conditions of employment of said director and staff. The board shall establish through appointments on an adjunct basis a faculty of consulting examiners at Charter Oak State College to make recommendations as to requirements and standards of the college's programs and to make recommendations for the award of academic undergraduate and graduate credits and degrees. Persons serving as members of the faculty of consulting examiners shall have appropriate professional qualifications as determined by the board and may hold professional appointments in active status at accredited institutions of postsecondary or higher learning. Within the limit of appropriations, the board shall fix the compensation of persons serving with adjunct appointment as members of the faculty of consulting examiners. The board shall confer such undergraduate and graduate certificates and degrees as are appropriate to programs of postsecondary and higher learning at Charter Oak State College and in accordance with the recommendations of the board's faculty of consulting examiners on the basis of (A) examinations, (B) courses offered by Charter Oak State College, and (C) other forms of validation and evaluation of learning, including transfer of credit. The board shall assist public institutions of higher education in establishing and implementing procedures to award college credits pursuant to subsection (a) of this section.

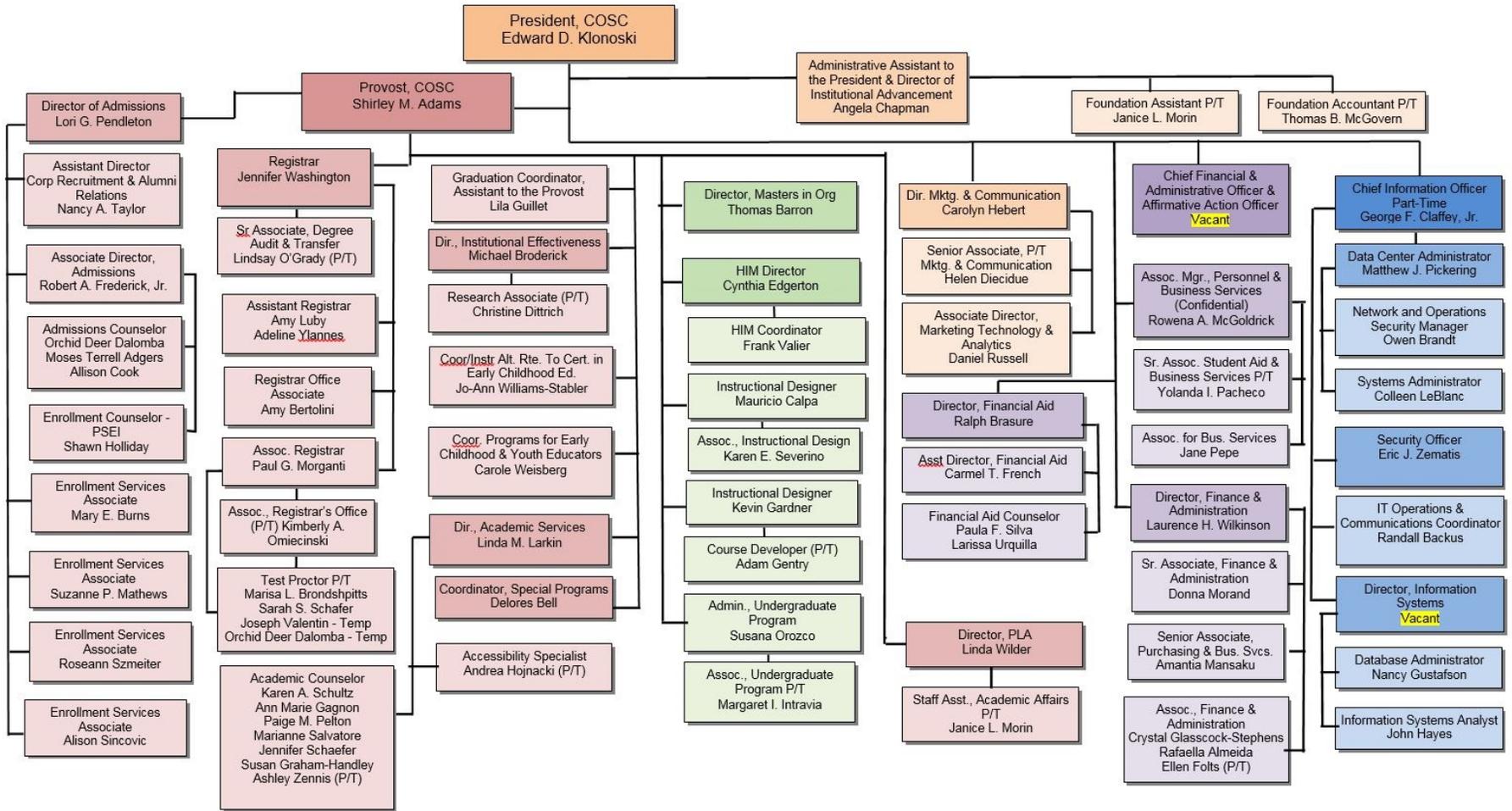
(2) The Board of Regents for Higher Education shall develop a mission statement for Charter Oak State College which shall include, but not be limited to, the following elements: (A) The educational needs of, and constituencies served by said college; (B) the degrees offered by said college; and (C) the role and scope of the programs offered by said college.

(e) The board shall fix fees for examinations and for such other purposes as the board deems necessary on behalf of Charter Oak State College and may make refunds and other disposition of same as provided by law or regulation. The board may make contracts, leases or other agreements in connection with its responsibilities.

(f) The Board of Regents for Higher Education shall establish and administer a fund to be known as the Board of Regents for Higher Education for Charter Oak State College Operating Fund, which shall be a separate account within the General Fund. The operating fund shall be used for the expenses of Charter Oak State College, including personnel expenses and equipment, and for the support of college activities pursuant to this section, including validation and evaluation of learning, guidance and public information services, projects of research and development for the improvement of learning materials and the technology of delivery systems, and for the purchase of such services, materials and equipment as are required for use in connection with said activities. Appropriations from general revenues of the state, all fees and proceeds of the board's activities on behalf of Charter Oak State College, including grants and donations, not required by statute or regulation to be deposited to the credit of the General Fund, shall be credited to and become a part of the resources of said operating fund. Any balance of receipts above expenditures shall remain in said operating fund. Not later than sixty days after the close of each quarter, the Board of Regents for Higher Education shall submit to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to appropriations and the budgets of state agencies, the Office of Higher Education and the Office of Policy and Management a report on the actual expenditures of the Board of Regents for Higher Education for Charter Oak State College Operating Fund.

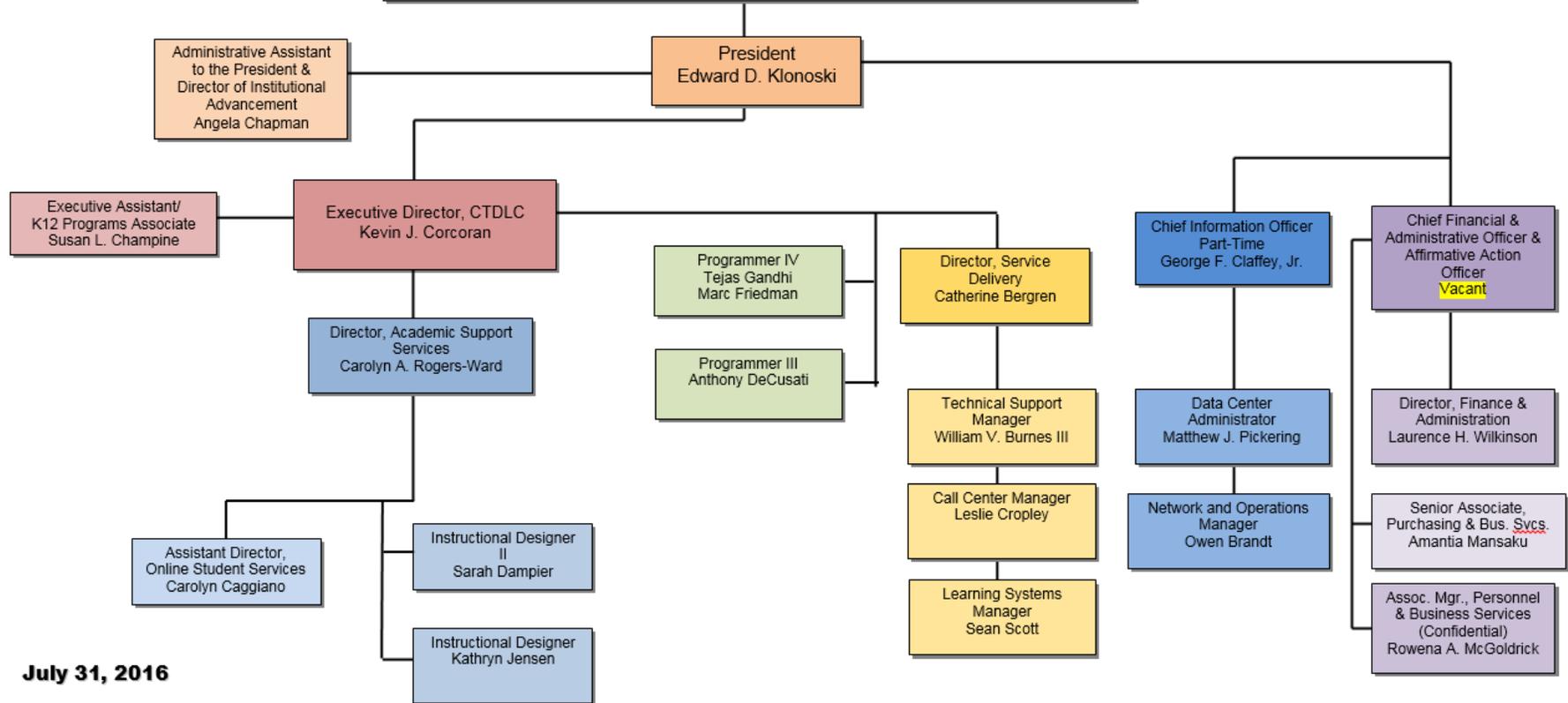
(g) The Board of Regents for Higher Education shall promote fund-raising to assist Charter Oak State College's programs pursuant to this section and shall report to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to higher education by January 1, 1994, and biennially thereafter, on such fund-raising.

Organizational Chart for Charter Oak State College and the Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium



CHARTER OAK STATE COLLEGE

CT Distance Learning Consortium



July 31, 2016

Standard Four: The Academic Program

Description

Charter Oak State College offers Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, Bachelor of Arts, and Bachelor of Science degrees with majors in Business Administration, Cybersecurity, Health Care Administration (HCA), Health Information Management (HIM), Psychology, and General Studies, which includes a number of concentrations. In addition, it offers a Master of Science in Organizational Effectiveness and Leadership.

As an online college, Charter Oak is required to seek authorization from any state from which it enrolls students. The College has received authorization to operate in all 50 states. Each state has its own requirements, which can include copies of course syllabi, data on faculty qualifications, and quality assurances about online courses.

Although Charter Oak now offers over 350 online courses, has a six-credit undergraduate residency requirement, has added majors, and has added a master's degree, it has stayed true to its fundamental belief that college-level learning can be achieved in many different ways. At the undergraduate level, students can continue to take courses at other institutions and use standardized examinations, credit reviews of training programs and credentials, special assessments, and portfolio assessments to earn their degree. At the graduate level, students may transfer in six credits and earn an additional six credits through portfolio assessment.

Charter Oak lists all of its programs, including program outcomes, on its website at www.charteroak.edu/prospective/programs. In addition, all course syllabi, including student learning outcomes, overviews of assignments, and textbooks are available at www.charteroak.edu/syllabus.

As part of its 2014-15 Strategic Plan, Charter Oak set a goal of developing ten programs in ten years. It is already on its way to meeting that goal with the launching of the Master's degree and the redesign of the Criminal Justice concentration into a major (not yet approved). The College has also completed preliminary work on two additional graduate degrees: Health Care Administration and Health Care Informatics. Although these programs are not part of the ten in ten years, the College has developed a HIM certificate, coding certificate, and a number of cybersecurity certificates from the cybersecurity major.

Assuring Academic Quality

Charter Oak has a number of systems in place to assure academic quality. These relate to the faculty structure, course design, program review, requirement that the Cornerstone and Capstone Courses must be taken at Charter Oak, and Board of Regents (BOR) program approval process and transfer articulation process (TAP).

Faculty Structure

Charter Oak's unique faculty structure contributes to ensuring academic quality. It includes three overlapping categories of faculty – core, teaching, and special assessment – each with its own responsibilities. The core faculty serve on four subject area committees: 1) Business, 2) History and Humanities, 3) Social and Behavioral Science, and 4) Math, Science, and Technology. These

are composed of full-time faculty from regionally-accredited colleges in Connecticut. These committees are responsible for program review and policy development related to the academic program.

In addition, there are three other core faculty committees. The Assessment Committee, which is responsible for overall academic program assessment, comprises institutional researchers and faculty from Connecticut's regionally-accredited colleges. The Distance Learning Committee comprises core faculty who teach for Charter Oak and full-time faculty from regionally-accredited colleges in Connecticut. They are responsible for evaluating new course development, monitoring teaching performance, and recommending policy changes related to instruction. Finally, the Academic Council comprises chairs and faculty from the other committees, plus two Charter Oak staff members. It serves as an advisory committee to the College. Any changes to academic policy recommended by the subject area committees, Assessment Committee, or Distance Learning Committee must be approved by the Academic Council prior to implementation. Furthermore, all core faculty committee appointments are approved by the Academic Council. Members of the core committees are evaluated at the time of reappointment by the chair of the respective committee and Provost with input from other staff.

The Teaching Faculty includes lead instructors and instructors. Lead instructors are responsible for keeping their courses up-to-date and ensuring that others who teach the same course are informed of any changes. A lead instructor is usually the person who developed the course.

The Special Assessment Faculty conducts credit reviews and prior learning assessments related to their subject matter. They are experts in their field and may be drawn from the teaching faculty, core faculty, or beyond, depending upon need.

This faculty structure allows Charter Oak to benefit from varied opinions, ideas, experiences, and expertise, while providing an academic bar against which to measure. It also helps to ensure that the degrees offered by Charter Oak are of "equivalent quality and rigor to those earned at other accredited institutions of higher learning" (see Charter Oak's "Role and Scope" statement).

To ensure consistency in faculty-student interaction, all Teaching Faculty are apprised of their roles and responsibilities. These are also discussed with the teaching faculty when hired, outlined in their appointment letter, and included in the Faculty Handbook. Successful completion of the faculty orientation course is required before faculty are allowed to teach. Performance is monitored for all new instructors by a member of the Distance Learning Committee. The Teaching faculty roles and responsibilities are delineated in Standard 6.

As Charter Oak begins offering graduate programs, it will establish a new core faculty committee to help ensure program integrity and quality control. Either a new orientation and faculty handbook will be developed or the current ones will be revised. That decision will be left to the program director.

Course Design

Course design at Charter Oak is shaped by many influences to ensure quality. The instructional design (ID) staff and a number of faculty have completed Quality Matters (QM) training. QM is a non-profit organization dedicated to quality assurance in online education. QM is the "gold standard" for online course development. The training provides best practices for delivery of

high quality online courses. The ID staff employs these practices as they work with faculty to design and redevelop courses.

The ID staff has been working with the College's Accessibility Specialist with the goal of ensuring that all courses are ADA compliant. The ID staff has developed an accessible course template compatible with all screen readers. This template is required for all course designs. Lead instructors and other teaching faculty are being trained on ADA compliance and online accessibility features through workshops and materials in the Faculty Resource Center. As lead instructors develop new courses, they work with the ID staff to ensure course content is accessible. For example, videos include closed captioning and transcripts, web-based images and diagrams contain "alt" attributes (short for "alternative text") to provide brief text descriptions of what is displayed onscreen, and image-based files, such as PDF, are designed with accessibility features or are accompanied by alternative text-based formats, such as HTML or RTF. The ID Department is in the process of updating pre-existing courses to meet current ADA requirements. The goal is to have all courses compliant by Fall 2018.

Finally, in 2008, the Academic Council adopted standards for determining course levels to ensure that the course requirements are in line with the 100-400 course numbering system. These standards are provided to faculty course developers and course reviewers so there is consistency in course expectations.

Program Review

Charter Oak has a long history of regularly scheduled program reviews, including a separate five-year course review cycle. In 2014, Charter Oak revised its program review cycle to align with the BOR's required seven-year cycle. The new cycle also aligns course review with program review (Appendix P).

Charter Oak utilizes its Core Faculty Committee structure to maintain quality. For example for the BOR program review process, it pays its Lead Faculty to begin the review process of assessing their course to make sure they are current and that the student learning outcomes are measurable, at the appropriate course level using Bloom's Taxonomy, and mapped to the concentration, major or general education outcomes, as appropriate. The ID staff also reviews the courses to check on ADA compliancy, to ensure that all links work, and the grade book feature is functioning correctly. The results of these reviews is summarized and presented to the appropriate Core Faculty Committee for their review and input. The report on all of the reviews is presented to the Academic Council and to the Assessment Committee. The final report is sent to the BOR. Deficiencies identified are remedied by the Lead Faculty and/or the ID staff.

The review cycle calendar is a minimum requirement. At any time, a lead instructor, Core Faculty committee, or Charter Oak staff can request that a program or course be reviewed and revised due to changes in the field of study, out-of-print textbooks, or other concerns related to academic quality. Course revisions go through the process outlined in Standard 6. Program changes, such as the addition of new courses or updated outcomes, go to the appropriate core faculty committee for review and approval, including notification to the BOR and NEASC if required. The review process provides predictability by having a calendar of anticipated reviews and allows the College to respond in a timely manner to changes occurring in a program's academic field. As an example, a review of the Criminal Justice concentration identified that the

student learning outcomes needed to be rewritten to be measurable and that additional courses need to be developed to convert the concentration into a major (Appendix Q).

As part of the strategic planning process and in consultation with the Core Faculty committees and Academic Council, the College has developed, and is developing, certain concentrations into majors. New students go directly into the converted majors, while continuing students have the opportunity to complete the concentration they started or move to the major to meet the updated program requirements.

The following table shows the net change in each concentration after its transition.

Academic Program	Count of Concentrations	Majors in Next Semester	Concentrations in Next Sem.	Net Change in Concentrations	Pct. Change in Concentrations
Business Admin.	306 (Spring 2015)	160 (Fall 2015)	127 (Fall 2015)	-179	-58%
Health Care Admin.	146 (Spring 2013)	85 (Fall 2013)	85 (Fall 2013)	-61	-42%
Psychology	139 (Spring 2015)	63 (Fall 2015)	64 (Fall 2015)	-75	-54%

While the program review process suggests that some concentrations should become majors, it also can suggest phasing out certain programs. For example, the computer security certificate was recently phased out as the cybersecurity major was being developed. The review process illustrated that there was too much course overlap between the certificate and major. Furthermore, the certificate courses were becoming outdated. Students working on the computer security certificate were allowed to complete the program before it was phased out entirely, and a number of cybersecurity certificates using subgroupings of the updated courses in the cybersecurity major have been developed.

Information Literacy

Information literacy is taught in English Composition II (ENG 102) and in the Cornerstone (IDS 101) which is required of all students. It is also addressed in many of the online courses since the course assignments are heavily paper-based. The College is developing a video on its online library that will include a section on information literacy. Additionally, information on information literacy will also be added to the resource center for students so faculty can refer students to review the information as they are preparing papers. Plagiarism, which is a part of information literacy, is addressed in the College Policy section of each course, the Student Orientation, and the Catalog. Information literacy involves:

- Finding enough information by using the best search terms (Index searches using the Library of Congress subject headings, keyword searches in library databases, keyword searches on the web)
- Finding varied sources (primary vs. secondary sources, objective vs. subjective, stable or unstable)
- Finding quality sources (When was it published, why journal articles are better than magazine articles, look for often-cited authors, not all books are alike, evaluating online sources)
- Finding books (Understanding call numbers, checking bibliographies, interlibrary loan)

- Working with article databases.
- Using certain types of search engines.
- Using interviews and surveys.
- Varying search terms, searching government documents, searching blogs, searching podcasts, checking out YouTube, and consulting with a reference librarian.

Cornerstone Course

The Cornerstone Course (IDS 101) must be taken by all new students in their first semester. The course requirement was initiated at the request of faculty who noticed a decline in the writing and critical thinking skills of their students. Since students come to Charter Oak from two-year, four-year, public, private, and for-profit institutions and with anywhere from nine to one-hundred plus credits, they also come with different levels of academic readiness. This course is designed to strengthen research writing and critical thinking skills, which students will need in order to be successful in later course work and in an online environment. Because all students are required to take this foundational course from Charter Oak, faculty teaching other courses know what can be expected from students and can build upon the skills taught in the Cornerstone Course. Anecdotal feedback from the faculty is that IDS 101 has been successful in improving students' writing and critical thinking skills. Currently, there is no formal assessment in place to verify the anecdotes.

Capstone Course

Prior to graduating, bachelor's degree students must complete the Capstone Course, which brings together the student learning outcomes of a concentration or major. The course was designed to ensure that students graduating from Charter Oak have bachelors-level writing and critical thinking skills combined with the ability to demonstrate a senior-level understanding of their concentration or major. Students must pass the course with a grade of C or above. As part of the program review process, the Assessment Committee reviews a sample of final Capstone projects to see if the course requirements in different disciplines accomplish the goal of getting students to demonstrate mastery of program outcomes.

BOR Program Approval Process

As a constituent unit of CSCU, Charter Oak is required to undergo a comprehensive review process to gain approval for new programs. The first step in the process involves submitting a concept proposal for any new program the College wishes to offer. It is submitted to the BOR's Academic Council, which consists of deans and provosts from the 17 BOR institutions, plus the CSCU provost. If the Council affirms the concept proposal, then the College may proceed and develop the actual proposal, including a rationale of need for the program, course list, learning outcomes, faculty considerations, enrollment projections, and a budget. It then goes back to the Academic Council for approval and to the CSCU staff for a budget review. Once approved, the proposal goes to the BOR Academic and Student Affairs Committee for review and approval. From there it goes to the full BOR for final approval, usually as a "consent" item. This process allows for faculty at all campuses to provide feedback, either through their deans and provosts or through their faculty representatives (FAC) of the BOR.

In the last five years, Charter Oak has had the following programs approved through this process: bachelor's degree majors in Health Care Administration, Business, Psychology, Health Information Management, and Cybersecurity; certificates in Speech & Language Pathology and Long Term Care for Direct Care Workers; and a master's degree in Organizational Effectiveness and Leadership.

Transfer Program

CSCU has been working on Transfer Articulation Program (TAP) pathways (Appendix R) to ensure that Connecticut community college students who earn an associate degree can transfer seamlessly to one of the four state universities or Charter Oak. The College has had faculty representation on all subject area TAP committees related to concentrations and majors offered by Charter Oak. Through TAP committee discussions, Charter Oak has been developing pathways for its majors and concentrations. Internally, the Provost has presented these pathways to appropriate faculty subject area committees for review and endorsement. The endorsement results are then sent to the CSCU system to be combined with the endorsements from the other sixteen CSCU institutions and then to the BOR for approval. With their endorsement, pathways are then presented to the College's Academic Council for approval.

The TAP process has required that the College review all of the programs involved to determine if any changes are needed. Thus far, the reviews have not resulted in any necessary changes. Once transfer pathways are finalized by the TAP oversight committee, they will be sent to all 17 CSCU institutions. Access to the completed TAP pathways will be available to students, faculty, and academic counselors through the BOR website.

General Education

In 2012, CSCU mandated that all 17 member institutions have similar general education competencies. CSCU formed faculty committees with representatives from each institution to work through an alignment process. Charter Oak had to make only one change to its general education program. Before the CSCU alignment, Charter Oak required one 4-credit lab science or two 3-credit non-lab science courses. Now it requires one 4-credit lab science plus a 3-credit non-lab science course.

Although Charter Oak only had to make a minor adjustment to its requirements, the alignment process provided the College an opportunity to review its general education program and course offerings. The program meets NEASC Standard 4.18, requiring at least 20 general education credits for associate degree programs and 40 credits for bachelor's degree programs. Charter Oak's general education requirements provide students with a breadth of knowledge in communication, information literacy, ethical decision-making, U.S. history, non-U.S. history and culture, global understanding, literature and fine arts, social and behavioral science, mathematics, and natural science.

Liberal Arts

The College requires 60 liberal arts credits in a Bachelor of Science degree; 90 in a Bachelor of Arts degree; 30 in an Associate of Science degree; and 45 in an Associate of Arts degree.

Upper Level Credit

The College requires a minimum of 30 upper level credits. To ensure depth in the concentration or major, most of which are 36 credits, a minimum of 15-18 upper level credits is required.

Graduate Degree Programs

Charter Oak will begin offering its first master's degree (Masters of Science in Organizational Leadership and Effectiveness) in Fall 2016. Offering a master's degree strengthens Charter Oak's mission of serving adult students and its foundational premise that college-level learning can take place in many formats. As a result, Charter Oak has allowed for 6 credits in transfer and an additional 6 credits to be earned through PLA in this degree.

Charter Oak spent a year developing policies and processes to ensure that the program will run smoothly once launched. The program director began June 3, 2016. Three faculty were hired to begin developing the first four courses, which will be available in Fall 2016. They went through the College's hiring process and have successfully completed the new faculty orientation. In addition, the courses went through the College's standard development and evaluation process. A marketing campaign was launched in May 2016, which coincided with the College's ability to begin accepting students. The Director will complete the faculty hires and establish an advisory committee. A Capstone Seminar will be used for program assessment. Enrollment data, retention data, and student surveys will also be used to measure the success of the program.

Integrity of the Award of Academic Credit

As an institution offering a wide range of options for students to earn credits aimed at certificate and degree completion, Charter Oak strives to ensure that it maintains a high level of academic integrity in all areas. These include the areas of credit-based programs, prior learning assessment, credit by examination, and credit by transfer courses. Other processes help ensure academic integrity, as well. These include external evaluation by program accreditors and substantive change oversight by NEASC.

Academic Integrity in Credit Programs

Charter Oak complies with minimum credit thresholds set by NEASC and the State of Connecticut for its degree programs (60 credits for associate degrees, 120 for bachelor's degrees, and 30 for master's degrees). Furthermore, general education composes one-third of undergraduate degrees. The College is clear in its catalog about which academic programs can be completed entirely with Charter Oak courses and which require credits from other sources (www.charteroak.edu/catalog/current/prog_study_degree_requirements/gen_studies_major_concentrations.cfm).

Charter Oak has no established minimum class size requirement, so classes are rarely cancelled. This allows students to graduate on schedule. The College is fortunate to have dedicated teaching faculty who are willing to teach small classes or even one student when the need arises. This is made possible because faculty are paid by the number of students enrolled in their courses.

Charter Oak holds the copyright on all of its courses, with the exception of those in Public Safety Administration and any courses developed in partnership with Big Picture Learning (College

Unbound). In these instances, agreements are in place allowing the College to continue using the courses if the other party elects to terminate its relationship with the institution. In each of these cases, Charter Oak faculty reviewed and approved the curriculum, and all courses in these areas are taught by Charter Oak faculty.

Since online courses are not based on seat time, the College adheres to the federal definition of "credit hour" by relying on faculty to determine if student learning outcomes and work load in its online courses are equivalent to what is expected in traditional courses. Faculty, who are content experts in the subject area that they are evaluating, are provided with course-level expectations, a scoring rubric based on Quality Matters criteria, and the "seat" time expectations as a guide. They review the course syllabus and assignments, which include the course outcomes and grading rubrics.

The College also provides an estimate of the time student should spend on course material dependent on the duration of the term. It is based on the standard "seat time" expectations:

- One semester hour of credit is the equivalent of a lecture course meeting 50 minutes per week for 15 weeks for a total of 750 minutes. In addition, two hours of out-of-class work is expected of students for each 50 minutes of lecture time. For a three-credit course, this equals 150 minutes of lecture and 300 minutes of out-of-class time per week.
- A student enrolled in a three-credit course offered in an 8-week term (half-semester) should expect six 50-minute sessions of lecture (300 minutes) and 12 hours of out-of-class preparation per week.
- A student enrolled in a three-credit course offered in a 5-week term should expect nine 50-minute sessions of lecture (450 minutes) and 18 hours of out-of-class preparation per week.

Information about what students can expect from course levels 100-600 can be found at https://www.charteroak.edu/catalog/current/prog_study_degree_requirements/terminology_degree_requirements.cfm.

Academic Integrity in Prior Learning Assessment

Charter Oak has been awarding undergraduate PLA credit since its inception in 1973. Students can earn their entire undergraduate degree through PLA with the exception of the six credits for the Cornerstone and Capstone Courses. Charter Oak data show that students who earn PLA credit graduate at higher rates than those without PLA credit.

Six-Year Graduation Rates of Bachelor's Degree Students by PLA Status

Cohort Year	With PLA Credits			Without PLA Credits		
	Cohort Size	Six-Year Graduates	Rate	Cohort Size	Six-Year Graduates	Rate
2006	758	560	74%	291	146	50%
2007	307	217	71%	296	164	55%
2008	303	216	71%	314	162	52%
2009	291	207	71%	360	183	51%
2010	322	242	75%	418	184	44%
Total	1,981	1,442	73%	1,679	839	50%

Furthermore, PLA students do slightly better in their Charter Oak courses.

Charter Oak GPAs of Associate and Bachelor's Degree Recipients by PLA Status

FY Conferred	With PLA Credits		Without PLA Credits	
	Count	Average	Count	Average
2011	251	3.56	232	3.47
2012	249	3.58	252	3.49
2013	238	3.57	234	3.52
2014	257	3.61	225	3.48
2015	254	3.58	280	3.51
Grand Total	1249	3.58	1223	3.49

The College will begin awarding graduate-level PLA credit in the Organizational Effectiveness and Leadership master's degree program in Fall 2016. It will assess the effect of PLA participation on graduation rates and Charter Oak GPAs when there is enough data to analyze.

Students have many different avenues to earn PLA credit at Charter Oak. The institution has continually refined its PLA processes over the years based on feedback from students and faculty. The PLA options available to students are described below.

Portfolio Assessment – Students who want to earn credit through portfolio assessment are required to take Prior Learning Portfolio Development (IDS 102). The course itself carries three credits and leads students through exercises to analyze their learning, match it to a college course, and prepare a portfolio to be assessed. At the end of the course, students have 30 days to submit a portfolio for assessment at no additional charge. If a portfolio succeeds, the student earns credit for the course to which the portfolio equates. In most cases, this is normally three credits, so in essence, students can earn six credits for the price of three by successfully working through IDS 102.

Over a three year period (AY 2013 to AY 2015), a total of 87 students took IDS 102. The pass rate was 84% (73 students). From the group of 73, a total of 35 (48%) earned portfolio credit in the year they passed IDS 102 or the year after. The median number of credits earned was 3.

Students who have successfully completed IDS 102 can submit additional portfolios afterwards. Students pay an assessment fee for each portfolio regardless of the results. Charter Oak uses a course equivalency approach and does not grant block credit for portfolios. Each portfolio is course specific and must demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes for the course being challenged. Thus, portfolios tend to yield three credits (or possibly four if a student demonstrates lab knowledge for a science course).

A member of the faculty teaches IDS 102 and special assessment faculty with expertise in courses being challenged perform the portfolio reviews. More information about the portfolio process can be found at www.charteroak.edu/current/programs/portfolio/process.cfm.

Connecticut Credit Assessment Program (CCAP) – Charter Oak's CCAP is a distinctive program through which faculty review courses, programs, and credentials offered by non-collegiate organizations to determine if they qualify for college-level credit (Appendix S). The CCAP involves a team of faculty with subject area expertise and a member of the core faculty to serve

as the quality controller. Reviews are conducted in a manner similar to program visits by accrediting agencies. Organizations seeking CCAP approval must submit an application packet to the CCAP team, including program outcomes, course materials, assessments, assurances of financial stability, instructor qualifications, and information about how student records are kept and where they will be maintained if the organization folds. During the review process, the CCAP team visits the site where students receive their training.

Once the review is complete, the PLA administrator prepares a report, which is vetted by the CCAP team and sent to the organization seeking CCAP approval for any factual corrections. The report is then finalized with the results posted on Charter Oak's website. CCAP reviews are good for five years. As the expiration date approaches, another review is conducted. Minor changes during the five year period do not require an updated review, but major changes do. Organizations are contacted each year to ascertain if any changes were made. The list of organizations through which students can earn CCAP credit is posted at www.charteroak.edu/prospective/programs/ccap-institutions.cfm.

Charter Oak is working with external partners to build upon what is accomplished through the CCAP. The College has entered into a partnership with its peer institutions (Thomas Edison State University, Excelsior College, SUNY Empire State College, Community College of Vermont, and Granite State College) to form the Consortium for the Assessment of College Equivalency (CACE). Working together, CACE established standards for non-collegiate program credit review and acceptance of credit review results among the institutions, which are laid out in a document entitled the *Standards for the Assessment of Non-Collegiate Instruction* (see Appendix T). The CACE partnership enhances Charter Oak's CCAP and expands PLA credit options for students. The agreement has made college-level credit available to students who have earned non-collegiate credentials or gone through any of hundreds of non-collegiate programs.

Charter Oak was written into a number of state-wide initiatives, most recently a Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) grant for the Health and Life Sciences Career Initiative. As part of the grant, Charter Oak conducted credit reviews of 58 programs and credentials, which resulted in 723 credits available that can serve as pathways to degree programs at Connecticut community colleges (Appendix U).

Credential Assessment – If students have earned a professional credential that is not covered by the CCAP, they can request a credential assessment. Two faculty with expertise in the subject matter conduct the evaluation to determine what students needed to do to earn the credential. A credit recommendation is made after the evaluation. If the faculty disagree on the recommendation, the PLA coordinator brings them together to discuss the areas of disagreement. If the two reviewers cannot resolve the disagreement, then the credential is sent to a third reviewer to break the tie.

Credit by Examination

Charter Oak serves as a testing center for CLEP, DSST, Thomas Edison State University exams (TECEP), Excelsior College exams (UExcel), and exams developed by Charter Oak itself. An average of 1,225 people take exams at Charter Oak every year. No data is available on the number who are Charter Oak students. The College ensures the integrity of the testing process by

proctoring all exams, requiring advanced registration, and checking photo IDs on exam day. Charter Oak students or people using the College's credit registry service must have exam results sent directly to the Registrar's Office from the testing company before exam credits will be recorded on a Charter Oak transcript.

Charter Oak developed five exams in early childhood education (ECE). These were originally developed at the request of the early childhood community in Connecticut to meet workforce needs. All test development was funded through grants from state agencies. Psychometric consultants were hired to lead a team of ECE faculty and practitioners in the test development. The ECE tests are updated regularly to keep abreast of changes in the field.

The pass rates on the ECE exams are as follows:

Metrics	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014	FY2015	FY2016
Exams given	434	241	271	268	310	151
Exams passed	306	195	217	208	200	105
Pass rate	71%	81%	80%	78%	65%	70%

At the request of students, the College developed a three-credit exam in medical terminology to validate the learning gained by health practitioners enrolled in Charter Oak's HIM and HCA programs. The exam was developed by the HIM program director and "normed" using students in the Medical Terminology course (HCA 105), not taught by the HIM director, and by practicing health care professionals who have already taken the course. The exam became available in Summer 2016.

Academic Integrity in Transfer Credit

Charter Oak has transfer articulation agreements with numerous two-year colleges. The agreements are listed on the website at www.charteroak.edu/community-college. The transfer credit policy is posted at http://www.charteroak.edu/catalog/current/academic_policies_regulations/course_transfer_policy.cfm.

As part of Charter Oak's program development process, the College reaches out to two-year colleges with programs that would articulate. For example, Charter Oak has been working on agreements with Gateway Community College's Data Security Specialist certificate, Naugatuck Valley Community College's associate degree in Cybersecurity, Capital Community College's associate degree in Computer Networking with a Cybersecurity option, and Norwalk Community College's associate degree in Computer Security. Another example is the College's participation in a Department of Higher Education and Department of Public Health grant that resulted in the development of certificates and associate degrees in Health Information Technology or HIM at Capital Community College, Northwestern Community College, and Norwalk Community College and the bachelor's degree in HIM at Charter Oak. Charter Oak is also involved in developing CSCU's TAP pathway agreements.

Academic Integrity of the Degree

Continuation, termination, readmission, and graduation policies are clearly stated in the online catalog at www.charteroak.edu/catalog/current. Grade appeal and academic dismissal policies

are also explained in the online catalog. Members of Charter Oak's core faculty review 20% of student transcripts before students are approved for graduation. This serves as a "second set of eyes" for the Registrar's Office, while reinforcing faculty understanding of our students.

Another check on equivalency comes from the fact that Charter Oak courses are reviewed by faculty who teach these courses at their home institutions.

Other assurances of the academic integrity of Charter Oak degrees are that:

- Students must complete a plan of study that is approved by core faculty with subject area expertise. Plans must be approved before students can register for a second term (Appendix V).
- Students must complete the required Cornerstone Course, which emphasizes writing and critical thinking skills, with a grade of C or above.
- Students must complete English Composition with a grade of C or above.
- Students must meet the state and NEASC general education requirements.
- Students must complete 30 upper-level credits, at least half of which come from their concentration or major.
- Students must complete the Capstone Course and all courses in their concentration or major with a grade of C or above.
- The College uses technological and human-based systems to monitor class participation (Starfish, advisors, and faculty), authenticate student identities (Acxiom and the Registrar's Office), and detect plagiarism (Turnitin, faculty, and the Provost).

Academic Integrity in Non-Credit Programs

Charter Oak offers a limited number of non-credit programs. Only one is approved by the Connecticut Office of Higher Education (OHE) and State Department of Education (SDE). That program is the Alternate Route to Certification (ARC) in Early Childhood Education (ECE). The program was originally designed by ECE professionals from seven four-year colleges in 2007. (Eastern Connecticut State University, Southern Connecticut State University, University of Saint Joseph, Mitchell College, University of Connecticut, University of Hartford, and Fairfield University). ARC has an active advisory committee consisting of ECE practitioners and faculty from the aforementioned colleges and universities. The program was initially approved for a two-year period, January 2008 through September 30, 2010. In 2010, it was granted approval through September 30, 2015. The last review was in 2015 which resulted in the program being put on probationary status. The College, as described later in the appraisal section of this standard, is ahead of schedule in meeting the mandates to be removed from probation.

Other Sources Supporting Academic Integrity

External Validation – Charter Oak has two credit programs that have external evaluators. The HIM program was accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management (CAHIIM) in 2015, and the Child Studies was accredited by the BOR and SDE in 2012, which allows graduates to receive SDE's Early Childhood Teaching Credential. Both programs required a substantial application and approval process, which benefited both of them.

Substantive Change – NEASC's substantive change process also helps to ensure academic quality. In the last five years, Charter Oak submitted substantive change proposals for its HIM, College Unbound, Cybersecurity, and Master's Degree in Organizational Effectiveness and Leadership programs. NEASC staff and program reviewers provide an additional layer of quality control for academic programs by reviewing drafts of substantive change proposals, performing site visits, and providing written feedback about their findings.

Charter Oak's Cybersecurity program, which is undergoing a substantive change review as part of the 10 year review, is an example of a program that went through the concept and approval process. Since the program's curriculum was purchased, it went through additional quality control steps. Before the curriculum was purchased from InfoSec, the College contracted with faculty experts in Cybersecurity to review the courses and embedded simulations. The College's Business Office worked with InfoSec to develop an agreement that required approval from the Connecticut Attorney General's Office. From there, it went through the BOR program approval process. Since InfoSec no longer has a reseller agreement with Jones and Bartlett Learning (JBL), the content provider, the agreement is no longer valid. Charter Oak now works directly with JBL as it does with any textbook provider. There is no longer a sharing of revenue. The transition was seamless for students because Charter Oak had already been working with JBL on credit course updates and new credit course development. This new arrangement actually benefits students since the access code to the simulations will now be included with the textbook and will not have to be sent out electronically by instructors.

Appraisal

Through its strategic planning process, the College is aware that it needs to increase its array of programs if it is going to increase enrollment. It is carefully selecting program options that complement existing programs at the institution. The selection process is being informed by demographic and marketing studies conducted by outside agencies such as Melior Group and Aslanian Market Research.

Enrollment in new programs is monitored by the BOR. The College must provide enrollment projections to the BOR during the program proposal stage, then report on the projections and explain any shortfalls. This process requires the College to assess whether new programs are sustainable. Charter Oak had six new programs that have recently been implemented: majors in Health Care Administration, Health Information Management, and Cybersecurity and certificates in Land Surveying, Speech Language Pathology, and Leadership in Health Care Administration. Health Care Administration did not meet its enrollment goals in year one, but exceeded its goals in year two and three. Health Information Management and Cybersecurity did not reach their enrollment projections in year one because both programs started a year late due to courses not being ready. However, they have now met their enrollment goals and are financially stable. The other three programs will not meet enrollment projections. The Land Surveying Certificate was developed at the request of the Land Surveyors Association. It only has one course taught by Charter Oak, which was developed at no cost to the College. The Speech Language Pathology Certificate courses were developed at the request of the Capitol Region Education Council and they paid for the course development. The courses in the Health Care Administration Certificate were developed at the request of Aetna when the College had an agreement with them to provide educational programs. That agreement is no longer in place; however, the courses fall within the Health Care Administration major so there was no additional cost for course development. The

College will monitor enrollments in the certificates that did not meet enrollment projections to determine if they will be continued. In the case of the Land Surveying and Speech Pathology certificates, no decision would be made to discontinue the programs without the approval of the funding agency.

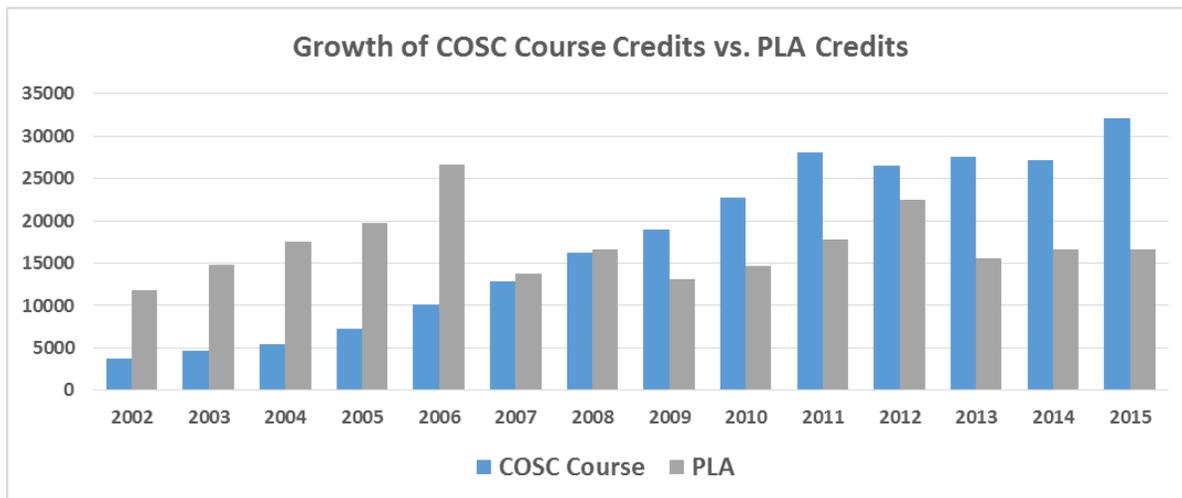
The program approval process, the TAP, general education requirements, and the 60/120 credit limits have had a positive impact on the College because it has strengthened the College's program review and development processes. To meet the legislative requirement that no Associate degrees can be over 60 credits and no Bachelor's degrees can be over 120 credits the BOR required the colleges to review their programs to see if they were in compliance. Charter Oak has only one program, Health Information Management, over the 120 credit limit due to a four-credit science course. Therefore, the College was considered to be in compliance. The TAP process required the College to review how community college programs transferred. The College had no difficulties developing seamless transfer pathways because of its flexible transfer policy. The general education review validated the College's general education requirements and allows for a seamless transfer of general education courses from the community colleges. In addition, these reviews provided the College an opportunity to evaluate its programs against other CSCU schools noting duplication and potential for program growth.

Charter Oak's faculty structure is both an advantage and disadvantage to its program development, quality, and integrity process. Having faculty from numerous colleges reviewing and assisting in the development helps to ensure that new programs are of quality. However, the absence of full-time faculty means that the College must hire faculty to develop new programs, which adds to the upfront cost of program development. As part of the development process and program approval process, the College examines how long it will take to recoup development costs. Overall, the College's faculty structure has been beneficial to the College's need for flexibility and agility and to the bottom-line

At each of the Core Faculty meetings in 2015, the faculty was asked to assess its role with the College. Overall, the responses were very positive. Faculty understood their role and verbalized that they are responsible for making sure the College's programs are of high quality and equal to programs offered by other institutions in Connecticut. They supported increased interaction with the students.

The pass rate (C or above) for the Capstone Course has increased from 92% to 95% over the past five years. A high pass rate is to be expected since the Capstone Course comes at the end of a student's academic career. However, the Assessment Committee has not been totally satisfied with the scoring rubric they developed to assess the effectiveness of the Capstone Course. See Standard 8 for more discussion about the rubric and its redevelopment.

As the College strategically grew its course offerings, the online program began overshadowing PLA, which is a foundational part of the College's mission. This was recognized by the Core Faculty as well as by staff members. As a result, the College has recommitted itself to PLA as part of the strategic planning process.



The College received a Breakthrough Models Incubator grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to assist with its recommitment to PLA. The grant afforded the College the opportunity to review its PLA programs and strengthen them. Initiatives toward that end include the development of an online audit tool to help students self-assess their potential for PLA (which will become available at <http://coscpla.mypriorlearning.org>), updates to the College website (www.charteroak.edu/pla), more internal and external marketing of PLA, a revision of the portfolio development course, a revision of the CCAP and credential review processes, and a pilot scholarship program to help students pay for PLA.

Charter Oak's work for the Health and Life Sciences Career Initiative TAACCCT grant included the development of an educational video about PLA to foster increased awareness and understanding of PLA. The video can be found at www.charteroak.edu/ct-health-life-sciences-career-initiative.

The non-credit ARC in ECE program has had an unstable enrollment history. Initial enrollment was strong during the first two years when the program was subsidized by the State of Connecticut. Enrollment greatly declined as the State struggled legislatively with whether to keep SDE Endorsement 112 (Integrated Early Childhood/Special Education, Birth–Kindergarten), which is required to teach in public, federally-funded birth-to-kindergarten programs. At the same time, the College had to raise tuition to make the program self-supporting. In 2010, Charter Oak reduced the ARC Coordinator's position from full-time to part-time in response to these challenges.

In 2012, the Coordinator redeveloped the ARC program to make it more student-friendly. The curriculum was revised to create more distinct courses and the program was restructured to include two start dates per year and the program was lengthened from six months to one-year to better meet the life-demands on both the students and the faculty.. In 2013, the State also decided to maintain Endorsement 112. As a result, enrollment has increased and staffing has returned to a full-time Coordinator.

During its reaccreditation review in 2015, the ARC program was placed on probation due to weak documentation of assessment. The College has already taken steps to address the issue and is on target to be reaccredited in one year. It hired a consultant to assist the Coordinator in

responding to the deficiencies cited. All "key assessments" from courses have been placed in Blackboard's grade book so faculty can easily assess students and the Coordinator can easily collect and analyze the data. Furthermore, the Coordinator set up individual online student folders for storing student work, making it easier for the final assessment to be conducted by outside evaluators.

Projections

- The College will develop ten programs in ten years (starting 2014-15). This task has been assigned to the Provost who will seek input from the Directors of Academic Services, Admissions, Institutional Effectiveness, and Marketing.
- All courses will meet ADA requirements by Fall 2018, including the integration of Kaltura. This is assigned to the Provost and ID staff, supported by the Accessibility Specialist and faculty.
- TAP will be fully implemented by Fall 2017. This is assigned to the Registrar's Office, Academic Affairs, and core faculty.
- The Director of Prior Learning Assessment, working with the Director of Institutional Effectiveness, will monitor the use of the PLA audit tool and scholarship awards to see if PLA usage increases. The PLA director will also be working with recipients of TAACCCT grants to measure the use of PLA at their campuses.
- The College will successfully complete its ARC/ECE probation and regain full accreditation by Fall 2016. This is assigned to the ARC program coordinator.

Standard 4: The Academic Program
(Summary - Degree-Seeking Enrollment and Degrees)

Fall 2015

Fall Enrollment* by location and modality, as of Census Date

Degree Level/ Location & Modality	Associate's	Bachelor's	Master's	Clinical doctorates (e.g., Pharm.D., DPT, DNP)	Professional doctorates (e.g., Ed.D., Psy.D., D.B.A.)	M.D., J.D., DDS	Ph.D.	Total Degree-Seeking
Main Campus FT	17	312						329
Main Campus PT	126	1,152						1,278
Unduplicated Headcount Total	143	1,464	0	0	0	0	0	1,607
Total FTE	59	696						755
Enter FTE definition:	FT + PT / 3	FT + PT / 3						FT + PT / 3
Degrees Awarded, Most Recent Year - FY16	99	508						607

Notes:

- 1) Enrollment numbers should include all students in the named categories, including students in continuing education and students enrolled through any contractual relationship.
- 2) Each student should be recorded in only one category, e.g., students enrolled in low-residency programs housed on the main campus should be recorded only in the category "low-residency programs."
- 3) Please refer to form 3.2, "Locations and Modalities," for definitions of locations and instructional modalities.

* For programs not taught in the fall, report an analogous term's enrollment as of its Census Date.

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

Fall 2015 also had 754 non-registered matriculants. These students may have stopped out or may be working on PLA credits, but cannot be classified as FT/PT.

Standard 4: The Academic Program
(Summary - Non-degree seeking Enrollment and Awards)

Fall 2015

Fall Enrollment* by location and modality, as of Census Date

Degree Level/ Location & Modality	Title IV-Eligible Certificates: Students Seeking Certificates	Non-Matriculated Students	Visiting Students	Total Non-degree-Seeking	Total degree-seeking (from previous page)	Grand total
Main Campus FT	0	0		0	329	329
Main Campus PT	27	101		128	1,278	1,406
Unduplicated Headcount Total	27	101	0	128	1,607	1,735
Total FTE	9	34		43	755	798
Enter FTE definition:	FT + PT / 3	FT + PT / 3	FT + PT / 3	FT + PT / 3	FT + PT / 3	FT + PT / 3
Certificates Awarded, Most Recent Year - FY16	72					

Notes:

- 1) Enrollment numbers should include all students in the named categories, including students in continuing education and students enrolled through any contractual relationship.
- 2) Each student should be recorded in only one category, e.g., students enrolled in low-residency programs housed on the main campus should be recorded only in the category "low-residency programs."
- 3) Please refer to form 3.2, "Locations and Modalities," for definitions of locations and instructional modalities.

* For programs not taught in the fall, report an analogous term's enrollment as of its Census Date.

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

Certificates listed above are not Title IV eligible, but this is the best column to list these students.

**Standard 4: The Academic Program
(Headcount by UNDERGRADUATE Major)**

		Number of Credits for Program	3 Years Prior (Fall 2013)	2 Years Prior (Fall 2014)	1 Year Prior (Fall 2015)	Budgeted Year (Fall 2016)	Next Year Goal (Fall 2017)
?	For Fall Term, as of Census Date						
	Certificate (add more rows as needed)						
?	Project Management	9	10	11	7	7	7
	LTC Cert for Drct Care Wrkrs-Elder Care	12	1	0	1	1	1
	LTC Certificate for Direct Care Workers	12	0	1	0	0	0
	Infant/Toddler Care	12	0	0	1	1	1
	Credential in After School Education	15	2	1	0	0	0
	Paraprofessional Educator	15	0	2	0	0	0
	Computer Security	18	2	0	0	0	0
	Health Insurance Customer Service	18	2	0	0	0	0
	Leadership in Health Care Administration	18	3	3	1	1	1
	Public Safety Administration Lvl 1	18	0	0	0	0	0
	Speech & Language Pathology Studies	21	0	1	4	4	4
	Paralegal	24	0	3	4	4	4
	Land Surveying	25	0	0	0	0	0
	CT Director's Credential-Initial	Various requirements	0	7	6	6	6
	CT Director's Credential-Standard	Various requirements	0	2	2	2	2
	CT Parenting Educator Credential	Various requirements	0	0	1	1	1
	ARC Teacher Certification	Various requirements	1	0	0	0	0
	Non-registered certificate students		47	95	79	79	79
	Total		68	126	106	106	106
Associate (add more rows as needed)							
?	AA in General Studies	60	25	36	25	25	26
	AS in General Studies	60	121	127	118	118	120
	Non-registered associate degree students		87	78	68	68	69
	Total		233	241	211	211	215
Baccalaureate (add more rows as needed)							
?	BA in General Studies	120	173	201	166	166	169
	BS in General Studies	120	1,048	1,209	863	863	880
	BS in Psychology	120	0	0	57	57	58
	BS in Business Administration	120	0	0	139	139	142
	BS in Cybersecurity	120	0	7	46	46	47
	BS in Health Care Administration	120	54	135	130	130	133
	BS in Health Information Management	121	30	53	63	63	64
	Non-registered bachelor's degree students		610	468	583	583	595
	Registered non-matriculated students		109	130	101	101	103
	Total		2,024	2,203	2,148	2,148	2,191
Total Undergraduate			2,325	2,570	2,465	2,465	2,512



**Standard 4: The Academic Program
(Credit Hours Generated and Information Literacy)**

Credit Hours Generated By Department or Comparable Academic Unit

?	3 Years Prior (FY 2013)	2 Years Prior (FY2014)	1 Year Prior (FY 2015)	Current Year (FY 2016)	Next Year Forward (goal) (FY 2017)
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Undergraduate (add more rows as needed)

?	Accounting	300	366	388	378	378
	After School Education	147	163	100	111	111
	American Studies			12	12	12
	Anthropology	42	48	15		
	Art	18	6	3	3	3
	Biology	791	974	1,456	1,154	1,154
	Business	192	129	150	636	636
	Chemistry	54	47	52	52	52
	Communication	867	888	1,057	855	855
	Computer Sci./Cybersecurity	9	3	90	255	255
	Criminal Justice	249	207	207	219	219
	Early Childhood	1,104	1,155	1,722	1,641	1,641
	Earth Science	92	60	100	83	83
	Economics	354	297	285	261	261
	Education	33	54	63	30	30
	Education Technology	12	6			
	Engineering Studies	42	6	18	3	3
	English	2,217	1,945	2,030	1,627	1,627
	Finance	153	141	165	129	129
	Fine Arts	201	312	285	252	252
	Foreign Language	9		3	3	3
	Geography	72	39	60	33	33
	Geology		6			
	Health Care Administration	2,004	2,337	2,286	2,295	2,295
	Health Information Management	6	132	276	489	489
	Health Studies	336	267	180	132	132
	History	924	966	1,110	849	849
	Human Resource Mgt	396	357	594	549	549
	Human Services	33	21	12	36	36
	Indiv. Stud.: Mat/Sci/Tech Cap	36	37	35	20	20
	Indiv. Studies: Business Cap	91	35	69	68	68
	Indiv. Studies: Soc/Behav Cap	121	153	161	186	186
	Information Technology	1,220	1,170	1,128	1,047	1,047
	Interdisciplinary	3,156	3,081	4,023	2,784	2,784
	Interior Design Mgt	3				
	Judaic Studies	63	81	69	87	87
	Leadership	90	108	72	78	78
	Liberal Studies: Hist/Hum Cap	26	17	14	23	23
	Liberal Studies: Math/Sci Cap	12		3		
	Liberal Studies: Soc/Behav Cap	34	29	49	50	50
	Management	2,412	2,340	2,298	2,193	2,193

Standard Five: Students

Description

Charter Oak is an open-admission, adult-serving institution that offers degree completion options to anyone who might benefit from them. The College enrolls a student body with a few specific subpopulations. These include students with military experience, students in the College Unbound program, and students in the Women in Transition (WIT) and Connecticut Workforce Advancement Grants for Education (CT-WAGE) programs.

Charter Oak enrolls both veterans and active service members. It is designated as a Servicemembers Opportunity College and a Navy College Program Distance Learning Partner. Charter Oak has been voted one of the Top Military Friendly Colleges among its peers for the unparalleled services it provides to military service members, their spouses and veterans seeking to complete their bachelor's degrees. All prospective military students work with the Associate Director of Admissions to ensure a smooth transition into the College.

Charter Oak continues to reach out to economically disadvantaged populations through the WIT and CT-WAGE programs. WIT was established by the College in 1999 to help single mothers earn an associate or bachelor's degree, while CT-WAGE was enacted by the Connecticut Legislature in 2008 to assist single or married parents in low-income jobs do the same. Both programs assist students financially, including the loan of a laptop computer, reimbursement for Internet service, and free textbooks for Charter Oak courses. WIT is funded by donations and grants. Originally, CT-WAGE was funded by a line item in the state budget, but since 2010, it has been funded through Charter Oak's state allocation.

In 2014, Charter Oak entered into an agreement with Big Picture Learning/College Unbound, from Rhode Island, to provide educational programs to adults (Appendix W). The mission of College Unbound has many similarities with Charter Oak's mission (see www.collegeunbound.org). When College Unbound approached Charter Oak to consider an agreement, the College quickly recognized that students enrolling through this agreement would be compatible with its mission and student profile.

The following table shows how the subpopulations noted above compared to the total population in Fall 2015.

Student Characteristic	Total Enrollment	Military Students	College Unbound	WIT and CT-WAGE
Count	2,489	179	84	73
Pct. Registered in Courses	70%	70%	81%	79%
Pct. Female	66%	17%	73%	90%
Pct. White	58%	59%	24%	15%
Pct. Black	16%	16%	29%	51%
Pct. Hispanic/Latino	12%	13%	29%	25%
Pct. Unknown	9%	7%	1%	7%
Pct. Other Race/Ethnicity	5%	5%	17%	2%
Pct. from Connecticut	78%	61%	1%	100%
Average Age	39	39	37	38
Average Creds. at Entry for Matrics.	65	76	47	52

Over the past decade, the College has seen changes in its student profile. Students are younger, have fewer credits upon entry, and have more financial need.

Student Characteristic	FY 2006	FY 2016
Average age of new matriculants	36.6	35.0
Average transfer and PLA credits at entry for new matriculants	95	65
Average federal expected family contribution of registered matriculants (excluded are students who did not submit FAFSA)	\$6,985 (FY 2008)	\$6,338
Percent of registered matriculants with federal Pell eligibility	18% (FY 2008)	39%

Reporting about graduate students will commence when the College begins enrolling them in Summer 2016.

Admissions

Charter Oak markets to attract adult students, focusing its efforts on programs that will help graduates be workforce-ready for employment in areas like business, technology, and health care. The College has a limited marketing budget and must be selective in its recruitment initiatives, paying attention to current trends in job growth and placing emphasis on the College's strong programs; programs where the College yields a high ratio of matriculated students to applicants, such as HCA, HIM, Business, Psychology, and Early Childhood Studies. This approach conforms with the College's tag line: *A dynamic community of online learners advancing the nation's workforce one graduate at a time.*

Since race cannot be a mandated item on the application form, the College has little control over the racial make-up of its student body. However, the Office of Admissions makes a concerted effort to enroll a diverse population. It uses Latino/a Alumni Ambassadors at recruiting events and conducts outreach to corporate, community, religious, and civic organizations with substantial black and Hispanic populations. The Marketing Department ensures that promotional materials and paid advertising reflect images of diverse populations. These efforts have contributed to Charter Oak's enrollment having a larger percentage of minority students than the State of Connecticut overall. Charter Oak's minority enrollment is 33%, while Connecticut is 30% according to 2014 estimates from the American Community Survey.

Charter Oak clearly conveys that it is an online, degree-completion college in all of its marketing efforts. This is true for print, radio, television, and online advertising. The College website and catalog discloses all institutional policies, including admission requirements, the residency requirement, degree completion options, course offerings, cost of attendance, and policies regarding transfer credit, refunds, and financial aid.

As part of its identity as a degree-completion college, Charter Oak attracts students from Connecticut's twelve community colleges, particularly students who started there but did not complete an associate degree. The College also participates in the ACE Alternative Credit Project and has agreements with StraighterLine, edX, Sophia Learning, and EdAssist. These affiliations situate Charter Oak in the prior learning assessment (PLA) community and affirm the College's institutional philosophy, which asserts that "college level learning can be acquired anywhere, anytime, and in many different ways."

Since Charter Oak offers undergraduate concentrations in some subject areas where it does not offer all of the courses, the website and catalog clearly indicate to prospective students which concentrations can be completed entirely with Charter Oak courses and which require credits earned from other sources. Additionally, students can view course syllabi, program outcomes, general education requirements, and graduation requirements at any time.

Other sources of information for prospective students include the FAQ about admissions (www.charteroak.edu/prospective/admissions/faq.cfm), FAQ about online courses (www.charteroak.edu/prospective/online/faq.cfm), Higher Education Opportunity Act Disclosures (www.charteroak.edu/aboutus/disclosures.cfm), Institutional Profile (www.charteroak.edu/aboutus/profile.cfm), and Academic Honesty Policy (www.charteroak.edu/catalog/current/student_rights_responsibilities/academic_honesty_policy.cfm). These webpages contain an assortment of useful information, including demographic and enrollment data, retention and graduation rates, employment data, textbook information, FERPA and privacy policies, financial aid information, and policy and procedure relating to plagiarism and other academic honesty matters. The Data First forms for Standard 9 provide URLs for college policies and consumer information.

Once prospective students inquire about the College, they become part of a comprehensive communication flow (phone and email) that guides them through admission, registration, and matriculation. In addition, prospects can use the live-chat feature on the website, sit in on the weekly webcast admission chat, or attend an open house.

Applicants can make an appointment to speak with an admissions counselor in person or by phone. During the appointment, admissions counselors review policies with applicants, explore degree options with them, discuss PLA and other methods for earning credit, and tell them about the free online orientation course and tutoring services that are available.

In order to matriculate at Charter Oak, undergraduate applicants must demonstrate that they have the potential to do college-level work. Applicants must be at least 16 years of age and must have earned a minimum of nine college-level credits from a regionally accredited institution of higher education, standardized college-level proficiency exams, or verifiable prior learning, such as a military or other training program evaluated by the American Council on Education (ACE) or National College Credit Recommendation Service (NCCRS).

Admitted students can be matriculated on a probationary basis. In this case, they enter with a transfer and overall GPA of less than 2.0. Probationary students are told how long they can be on probation and what grades they must earn to be removed from probation. Academic Counseling is informed about which students are probationary matriculants. In addition, a student's probationary status is indicated on the student's advising worksheet.

Students are automatically enrolled into the non-credit orientation course once they are accepted, though they are not required to work through it. All students, including the probationary admits, take the Cornerstone Course as their first course unless they have not successfully completed English Composition I, so the College can quickly determine who needs extra support to succeed.

All policies regarding undergraduate admission and matriculation are posted on the College website and in the College catalog. Admission policies and procedures for the graduate program are complete, and the College has begun accepting applications for its first master's program. A new application for admission and communication flow was developed specifically for graduate students. In addition, the student information system has been configured to handle graduate students.

Student Services and Co-Curricular Experiences

After students matriculate, the College provides an array of services aimed at helping them persist to degree completion.

Academic Counseling

The most important service provided to students is academic counseling. A strong Academic Counseling Department is key to providing excellent student support services and aiding in retention efforts. All of the College's academic counselors are professionals with at least a master's degree. Collectively, they have expertise in academic planning, personal counseling, marriage and family therapy, career development, and school psychology.

Academic counselors work with all students based on their individual needs. The core service they provide is to help students discern the correct program of study based on degree goals, time-to-completion, credits already earned, credit-earning preferences, life and family circumstances, funding sources, and career considerations. Discussions about program selection are informed by an audit of students' transfer credits and an advising worksheet that acts as a road map to guide students to successful degree completion. Counselors further assist students with revising and refining their plans in response to changing circumstances, such as shifting career goals, failing a course, or coping with health issues.

Academic counselors reiterate information given to students during the admissions process. Students are informed a second time about the online orientation course and tutoring services. Counselors commonly serve as ombudspersons, cheerleaders, and confidantes. They are usually the first person a matriculated student contacts, regardless of the issue. Academic counseling persists throughout a student's time at the College.

Coordinated Administrative Services

In addition to working with the Academic Counseling Department, students also receive communications from the Financial Aid Office, Business Office, and Registrar's Office. These offices have worked together to streamline general communications and avoid duplication as much as possible. They have made their respective webpages informative and instructive so students can find answers to routine questions. Students can initiate contact with these offices for more specific or complicated questions. When necessary, the Financial Aid Office, Business Office, or Registrar's Office will contact students directly to resolve an issue, such as needing additional documentation or problems with payment.

The Financial Aid Office communicates with students via email before borrowing. Students are directed to links on Acorn that communicate the College's financial aid policies and procedures. They are also directed on how to do entrance counseling online at www.studentloans.gov.

Financial aid staff are available to speak with students via phone or in person. The Financial Aid Office uses help desk services provided by the CTDLC to answer routine calls, while calls requiring specific details from a student's account are forwarded to the Financial Aid Office.

Accessibility Services

Students can request services by submitting a form to the Office of Accessibility Services (Appendix X). The form requires that students indicate the nature of their disability, how their disability affects their academic work, and which accessibility technologies they use. Students are also required to provide supporting documentation. All information submitted by students is kept in strict confidence.

Tutoring Services

Charter Oak offers free tutoring services via eTutoring.org, which is a website developed by CTDLC. Tutoring is available in accounting, anatomy and physiology, biology, chemistry, information literacy/research methods, mathematics, radiologic technology, psychology, respiratory therapy, sociology, statistics, western civilization, and writing. Tutoring is available synchronously via live-chat at scheduled times or asynchronously by submitting questions, which are answered within 48 hours. For assistance with writing, students can submit a draft paper, ask for specific feedback, and receive comments within 24-48 hours.

Career Services

Academic Counseling has had a strategic goal of expanding career services for a number of years. The College is now fortunate to have an academic counselor who worked at the Connecticut Department of Labor and is a Certified Professional Résumé Writer, so that goal is being realized. The College is now able to offer students instruction on résumé writing, interview skills, LinkedIn account setup, and networking. In addition, a career services page has been added to the College's website at www.charteroak.edu/career-services. These new career services just began in 2016, so the College does not have any usage data to report at this time. Services will be monitored and refined as they mature.

Cornerstone Course and Student Orientation

As an open-admission college, Charter Oak continues to provide an opportunity for “second chance” learners who need a fresh start. The College does not offer placement exams or remedial courses. Since students had to earn nine college credits prior to matriculating, the College assumes that applicants can successfully complete college-level work. However, this pre-requisite does not always guarantee success; therefore, the College instituted the Cornerstone Course.

Around 2008-09, the faculty noted that students' writing ability varied considerably, despite the fact that many students had taken an English composition course or two prior to coming to Charter Oak. Further, they reported that many students did not possess the technical skills needed to navigate an online course. At the same time, the Academic Counseling Department was eager to find a way to orient students to the College in a more efficient way than by doing so individually.

To address these issues, the College developed a Cornerstone Course that was first offered in 2010. The first iteration of the course blended research and writing skill development with an orientation to the College and online learning. In 2012-13, the orientation section was deleted from the Cornerstone Course because faculty and students felt that the course was trying to accomplish too much. A revised, self-paced orientation was rolled out in 2014. The new orientation lies outside of the Cornerstone Course and is optional for students.

As noted earlier, new students usually take the Cornerstone Course as their first course. The orientation is available to students once they are accepted. Embedded within the orientation is a confidence survey, which allows students to assess their ability to do online learning. Students who score low on any aspect of this assessment are referred to Academic Counseling for assistance.

Starfish

The College has been using Starfish Retention Solutions to track attendance in courses since 2010. Starfish tracks student logins to Blackboard, but has greater potential as a retention tool. Starfish alerts the Registrar's Office and Academic Counseling of students who are not attending their courses. The alert prompts Academic Counseling to contact students to identify problems and offer support.

Students who do not attend a course by the close of the first week or who fail to maintain active participation in a course for two consecutive weeks are administratively withdrawn from the course. When the Registrar's Office receives an alert about a student, a staff member is able to use that information to determine the last date of academic activity, which is not necessarily the same as the last time a student logged into Blackboard. The last date of academic activity is considered the last date of attendance for financial aid purposes.

In addition to the assistance Starfish automatically provides for retention, faculty are required to "raise a flag" when students are at risk of failing. This generates an email to the student and the student's academic counselor to alert them of a problem.

Associate Degree Support Pilot Project

In 2014, with the knowledge that associate degree students may be among the most vulnerable for dropping out, the Academic Counseling Department began a pilot program to see if "intrusive advising" would have a positive effect. An academic counselor was chosen to administer the program. In addition to the usual communications that occur between academic counselors and students, there were proactive ("intrusive") points of contact made at critical times during the semester (the first week of classes, the week before midterm, and two weeks before final exams). The purpose of these email and telephone communications was to encourage students, identify problems, and inform them about support services.

Other Retention Services

Charter Oak offers students an option to earn credit through PLA, which has been a part of the College's identity since its inception in 1973. Standard 4 discusses PLA in detail, but it is mentioned here because PLA plays an important role in degree completion for some students. As indicated in Standard 4, students with PLA credits graduate at higher rates and have slightly

higher GPAs. PLA also makes completing a college degree more affordable because earning PLA credits is less expensive than paying tuition for courses.

Another effort to improve retention comes in the form of a pilot project the College is running using the SmarterMeasure Learning Readiness Indicator (LRI). In 2015-16, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness collected LRI data from students for a study on what effect non-cognitive factors, such as self-motivation, persistence, grit, and time management, have on student success. Students who completed the LRI received a summary of their own results, which showed areas of strength and weakness. In addition, the summary directed them to online resources that discuss areas that might need improvement and how to pursue those.

A body of research is beginning to develop showing that non-cognitive factors can play a role in different aspects of life, so the College will begin data analysis in Fall 2016 to see if this is true for Charter Oak students. The results of the research will inform retention efforts moving forward.

Co-Curricular Activities

Even though Charter Oak is an online college, it still provides students the opportunity to participate in student activities and take on leadership roles. Requests for volunteers and announcements of activities are placed in the student newsletter and on the website. Almost all activities are webcast live or recorded so students can access them at a later date via Acorn, the student portal.

The College's conference rooms have been outfitted with advanced technology so staff can orchestrate quality webcasts with excellent sound and video production. This enables students at a distance to participate fully in student activities. Students have the opportunity to evaluate activities in which they have participated. The evaluations have shown that the College's co-curricular offerings are of quality.

Student Activities – The responsibility for setting up student activities rests primarily with the Academic Counseling Department, which has offered a variety of activities over time. The department has offered workshops on how to network and how to write term papers. Other activities include stress management and "Appy Hour," which was a light-hearted activity where participants shared which applications they had on their smart phones and what they liked about them. Events featuring faculty are also offered so the students have an opportunity to meet faculty and strengthen their connection to the College community.

Occasionally the College holds focus groups to gather input from students about how to improve services. This gives students the opportunity to interact with staff and have their voices heard. When the College recently reorganized the student portal, feedback from a student focus group informed the process of relocating some material and improving navigation.

The College has an active Alumni Association that sponsors events throughout the year and participates in fundraising.

Leadership Opportunities – The College's Student Association is led by student volunteers, some of whom have held leadership roles from quite a distance. The current treasurer resides on a US Air Force base in Louisiana, and a former council member lived in Japan. Student

Association responsibilities include making decisions about student events, setting the association budget, hosting the graduation day brunch, and assisting in funding and administering the President's Crisis Fund.

Charter Oak students also have a representative on the BOR Student Advisory Committee (SAC). Committee members advise the chair and vice chair of SAC regarding issues affecting students. The chair and vice chair are voting members of the BOR, so SAC is an important line of communication by which the BOR learns about student concerns that might be put to a vote for resolution. Charter Oak's representative was the secretary for three years and was just elected to vice chair this year.

Charter Oak seeks local volunteers each year to testify in front of the Legislative Appropriations Committee. Students have provided written and verbal testimony. This year their presentations were published in *Update*, the student newsletter.

Appraisal

As the student body has changed, the College has adapted to meet new student needs. Student interest in taking more courses at Charter Oak instead of using other methods for earning credit has resulted in the College offering over 350 courses. It also resulted in the development of additional courses to complete some of the academic concentrations and the creation of new majors (including all of their required courses) to attract new students and meet workforce needs. Examples are Health Information Management and Cybersecurity.

On November 18, 2014, *Inside Higher Ed* published that the National Student Clearinghouse released data showing that "[m]ore first-time students enrolled in college in 2008, as the recession was beginning, than in previous years. But a smaller percentage of this group made it to graduation [within six years]" (www.insidehighered.com/news/2014/11/18/enrollment-numbers-grew-during-recession-graduation-rates-slipped). This same pattern occurred at Charter Oak at the same time for the adult returning student.

The report from the National Student Clearinghouse showed that the national Fall 2008 cohort was 12% larger than the Fall 2007 cohort (see <https://nscresearchcenter.org/signaturereport8>). Charter Oak's 2008-09 cohort (651 students) was 5.5% greater than the 2007-08 cohort (617 students). Six-year graduation rates show a similar pattern. Nationally, the graduation rate fell 1.1%, from 56.1% for the Fall 2007 cohort to 55.0% for the Fall 2008 cohort. Charter Oak's six-year rate dropped 1.4%, from 61.3% for the 2007-08 cohort to 59.9% for the 2008-09 cohort. At the same time, the percent receiving Pell grants in Charter Oak's cohorts increased by 2.9%, from 55.1% to 58.0%.

The College does not have a reliable method for tracking active-duty service members, veterans, and their families. A number of custom fields are currently used to capture this information in Jenzabar, resulting in redundancies and occasionally contradictory information. This has caused difficulties in reporting data that could be useful in developing services for military students. Jenzabar has since developed a screen specifically for tracking data about military students, and the College has plans to transition to using this screen in 2016-17.

While Charter Oak has been recognized as a military-friendly college by Victory Media, the College does not offer any student services specifically for military students. However, the

College does have one person in the Admissions Office who is assigned to work with military students and serve as the liaison to military installations and the Veteran's Association. The College has agreements with other CSCU institutions allowing military students and veterans to use services provided by their Veteran Centers.

Since the inception of WIT in 1999 and CT-WAGE in 2008, 305 students have been served and 172 students have earned degrees (as of July 2015). The WIT/CT-WAGE program continues to be successful in retaining and graduating low-income students. The Standard 8 Data First Form about undergraduate retention and graduation rates shows that over the past four years WIT/CT-WAGE students tend to have higher rates than the overall student population.

The main challenge WIT and CT-WAGE face is funding. The programs are set up to fill the gap between a student's Pell award and the cost of attendance. It is ideal when Pell covers most of the cost because that leaves more money available to fund more students. The programs try not to cover more than 50% of the cost of attendance, but there are rare exceptions made in cases where a student is very close to graduating. As more students spend down their Pell money to the point of not being able to cover 50%, it begins getting difficult to grow the program with limited funding.

In 2015, the College underwent a substantive change review with NEASC regarding the College Unbound program. A few minor suggestions were made and implemented. College Unbound continues to send students to Charter Oak. However, College Unbound is seeking regional accreditation of its own, so the agreement with them will probably end within a few years.

The Office of Admissions has further refined its communication plan to provide more streamlined information to prospective students in all stages of the admissions funnel. This was done to gain efficiencies as the office is pressed to scale-up its operation without adding staff. Furthermore, there was a need to incorporate more discipline-specific information for students interested in Health Care Administration, Health Information Management, and Cybersecurity.

In 2015-16, a multi-departmental team formed to pilot a project to assist students with the transition from admittance to enrollment at the College. The Office of Admissions noticed that some students were getting "stuck" after being admitted and before matriculating. This was due to a number of perceived obstacles that students felt unprepared to navigate. Issues ranged from concerns about financial aid and course registration to technology and transcripts.

The College recognized that a coordinated effort was necessary to assist these students, particularly because different students had different needs. For the month prior to the start of each new term, staff from the Registrar's Office, Admissions, Financial Aid, and Academic Counseling met weekly to work through student issues. Accepted applicants who had not registered for courses, completed their paperwork for financial aid, or fulfilled other matriculation requirements were identified and assigned to an appropriate staff member who would serve as a guide to help students along. The results of this pilot are not yet available.

As detailed in Standard 2, both Academic Counseling and Financial Aid underwent self-studies and external review in 2014-15. The external reviewers made key suggestions aimed at improving service to students and enabling these offices to fulfill their core duties.

Academic Counseling was advised to move tasks it had acquired, such as calling students who owe money, to more appropriate departments. It was also suggested that advising loads be reduced or made more efficient to increase outreach to students as appropriate. Financial Aid was advised to have better cross-training in the department, review all system configurations in PowerFAIDS, automate processes as much as possible to gain efficiencies, and hire a full-time associate director.

Based on these suggestions, Academic Counseling has had several tasks re-assigned to other departments, including calling students who owe money. Additional work still needs to be done to find counselor caseload efficiencies. Financial Aid has hired a new director who is working to cross-train staff and streamline awarding processes by using PowerFAIDS more adeptly.

One efficiency already gained by the Financial Aid Office is the use of the CTDLC call center. The call center permits expanded service to callers from outside the Eastern Time Zone and on weekends. During FY 2015, the call center handled 5,706 inquiries. It resolved 88% of them and passed the remaining 12% of more complex calls to the Financial Aid Office.

While acting as the contact person for student accessibility issues, the Director of Academic Services observed an increase in the number of students needing services. To address this increase, the College hired a part-time Accessibility Specialist in 2015. Many of the responsibilities formerly handled by the Director have been taken on by the Accessibility Specialist. The increase in staffing has allowed the College to provide additional learning support for students struggling in their courses due to learning or English language deficits. In addition, the Accessibility Specialist has been an invaluable resource for the instructional design staff and web developer, both of whom share responsibility for ensuring that the course management system, institutional website, and student portal have accessibility functions for those who need them. Feedback about the increased staffing from students, faculty, and staff has been positive. People have expressed appreciation for having a specialist to contact.

Students who avail themselves of tutoring services are asked to rate the experience. The 31 students who took the opportunity to rate the experience during 2015 rated “overall helpfulness” a 3.81 on a scale of 1-4. Scores ranged from 3-4.

While the tutoring services provided by eTutoring.org are helpful, especially for writing, there is a need for more focused services for Charter Oak students in key courses. Since tutors are not necessarily from Charter Oak, but can be from other consortia institutions as well, the responses that students receive are sometimes too general.

The College is looking at ways to augment what eTutoring.org provides, such as requiring faculty to hold virtual office hours using BlueJeans or hiring its own tutors. Some faculty are doing this on their own, and the reaction from students has been positive.

Something else the College discovered about tutoring occurred in the Cornerstone Course. Usage dropped from 1,569 sessions in 2012 to 567 in 2013 (-64%). At that time, tutoring became an optional part of the Cornerstone Course when before it was mandatory. However, there was no indication of a negative impact on student performance in the course.

Since 2012, several iterations of the new student orientation have been developed and offered to students. In 2012, completion of the online orientation was required for accepted students prior

to matriculation. Admissions immediately noticed a reduction in the speed at which students were moving from accepted to matriculated. It appeared that students did not want to spend time engaged in the orientation course until just before courses were about to start. The College quickly reversed its decision to require the orientation prior to matriculation and averted potential harm to the enrollment.

The current online orientation covers important information about how to take an online course and provides useful tips about resources available to students. It is available to students throughout their academic career at Charter Oak. Students are enrolled in this self-paced course as soon as they are accepted, but participation is not required for matriculation.

Data show that even if students do not complete the orientation, the simple act of logging into the course is a predictor of success in the Cornerstone Course. This result is likely not related to the orientation itself. Rather, logging in voluntarily is probably a proxy measure of student initiative, resourcefulness, diligence, grit, or something similar. Out of a sample of 2,227 students, 62% logged into the orientation (Appendix Y).

The College is not completely satisfied with Starfish because it only determines the last time a student logged into Blackboard, not the last time work was completed, which is required for financial aid calculations. After the Registrar's Office receives a Starfish alert about a student being absent for too long, a staff member must manually go into the student's course shell to determine the last date of academic activity and process the administrative withdrawal (AW) from the course. This must be done each and every time an AW is processed. To put this in perspective, the Registrar's Office processed 144 AWs in Fall 2015. Logging into Blackboard and searching for the last date of academic activity takes approximately five minutes per AW, which equates to twelve hours spent processing AWs over the course of the semester. This is an inefficient process, so the College is reviewing new features of Starfish and other retention products to determine if there is a more efficient solution.

At the end of the pilot project on supporting associate degree students, the retention rates for this group were compared to previous rates. Unfortunately, no difference was found. Programmatically, intrusive advising did not appear to make a difference. However, most students were very receptive and surprised that the contact in an online environment was so personal.

PLA is not as widely used as Charter Oak believes it should be. More detailed discussions of PLA and what the College has done to encourage wider use can be found in Standards 2 and 4.

Projections

- The College will continue to track admission and enrollment patterns as it adds new programs and converts more undergraduate concentrations to majors.
- For 2016-17, the Admissions Office is looking at purchasing data analytics software to help them more efficiently process applications. In addition, the office is being reorganized to more efficiently handle inquiries, and the undergraduate application and communication flow is being changed to make them more functional and easier to analyze.

- For 2016-17, the Associate Director of Admissions will work with the IT staff, Registrar, and Financial Aid staff to develop a new process for tracking military students and veterans. They will migrate existing data into Jenzabar's new military tracking screen and implement a method to capture new data into the new fields.
- As part of the strategic planning process, the Academic Counseling Department, in conjunction with the Cabinet, will develop a plan for improving student support service efficiencies while dealing with tight budgets and the need to grow the student body.
- For 2016-17 and ongoing, the Provost and Director of Academic Services will work with the faculty to expand academic support for students, with the goal of increasing retention.
- For 2016-17, the Executive Staff will consider moving the Accessibility Specialist from part-time to full-time in response to the increase of matriculants with accessibility issues.
- For 2016-17, the Provost and her staff will gather information about different retention products.

Standard 5: Students

(Admissions, Fiscal Year)

Complete this form for each distinct student body identified by the institution (see Standard 5.1)

?

Credit Seeking Students Only - Including Continuing Education

	3 Years Prior (FY2013)	2 Years Prior (FY2014)	1 Year Prior (FY2015)	Current Year (FY2016)	Goal (specify year) (FY 2017)
Transfers - Undergraduate	?				
Applications Started	2083	2056	2104	1685	2000
Applications Completed/Accepted	1720	1769	1825	1337	1600
Applications Enrolled	1027	1143	1160	821	1001
% Accepted of Applied	82.6%	86.0%	86.7%	79.3%	80.0%
% Enrolled of Accepted	59.7%	64.6%	63.6%	61.4%	62.6%
Master's Degree	?				
Completed Applications	NA	NA	NA	NA	120
Applications Accepted	NA	NA	NA	NA	90
Applications Enrolled	NA	NA	NA	NA	80
% Accepted of Applied	NA	NA	NA	NA	75.0%
% Enrolled of Accepted	NA	NA	NA	NA	88.9%

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

Charter Oak is an open admissions institution. Admission is guaranteed if an applicant is at least 16 years of age and has at least 9 college credits from a regionally accredited institution or from PLA, such as exams or military training.

Charter Oak tracks applicants who begin an application and works to get them completed. Application completion rates are provided.

Transfers - Military	?				
Applications Started	227	222	236	204	220
Applications Completed/Accepted	177	177	189	155	176
Applications Enrolled	99	99	104	82	96
% Accepted of Applied	78.0%	79.7%	80.1%	76.0%	80.0%
% Enrolled of Accepted	55.9%	55.9%	55.0%	52.9%	54.5%

Transfers - College Unbound	?				
Applications Started	1	105	49	48	30
Applications Completed/Accepted	1	96	40	41	26
Applications Enrolled	1	80	24	31	20
% Accepted of Applied	100.0%	91.4%	81.6%	85.4%	86.7%
% Enrolled of Accepted	100.0%	83.3%	60.0%	75.6%	77.0%

Transfers - WIT/CTWAGE	?				
Applications Started	15	8	21	16	20
Applications Completed/Accepted	15	8	21	16	20
Applications Enrolled	14	6	21	15	20
% Accepted of Applied	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
% Enrolled of Accepted	93.3%	75.0%	100.0%	93.8%	100.0%

**Standard 5: Students
(Enrollment, Fall Term)**

Complete this form for each distinct student body identified by the institution (see Standard 5.1)

?

Credit-Seeking Students Only - Including Continuing Education

	3 Years Prior Fall 2013	2 Years Prior Fall 2014	1 Year Prior Fall 2015	Budgeted Year Fall 2016	Goal (specify year) (Fall 2017)
UNDERGRADUATE	?				
First Year Full-Time Headcount	16	21	9	9	9
Part-Time Headcount	72	96	78	78	80
Total Headcount	88	117	87	87	89
Total FTE	? 37	52	33	33	34
Second Year Full-Time Headcount	47	56	38	38	39
Part-Time Headcount	160	185	155	155	158
Total Headcount	207	241	193	193	197
Total FTE	98	120	88	88	90
Third Year Full-Time Headcount	94	115	108	108	110
Part-Time Headcount	322	406	363	363	370
Total Headcount	416	521	471	471	480
Total FTE	200	256	232	232	237
Fourth Year Full-Time Headcount	141	190	174	174	177
Part-Time Headcount	620	730	709	709	723
Total Headcount	761	920	883	883	900
Total FTE	353	449	432	432	441
Unclassified Full-Time Headcount	? 3	4			0
Part-Time Headcount	105	126	101	101	103
Total Headcount	108	130	101	101	103
Total FTE	30	34	25	25	26
Total Undergraduate Students					
Full-Time Headcount	301	386	329	329	335
Part-Time Headcount	1,279	1,543	1,406	1,406	1,434
Total Headcount	1,580	1,929	1,735	1,735	1,769
Total FTE	717	911	812	812	828
% Change FTE Undergraduate	na	27.0%	-10.9%	0.0%	+2.0%
GRADUATE	?				
Full-Time Headcount	?			0	0
Part-Time Headcount	?			50	51
Total Headcount	0	0	0	50	51
Total FTE	?			34	35
% Change FTE Graduate	na	-	-	-	2.9%
GRAND TOTAL					
Grand Total Headcount	1,580	1,929	1,735	1,785	1,820
Grand Total FTE	717	911	812	846	863
% Change Grand Total FTE	na	27.0%	-10.9%	4.2%	2.0%

Standard 5: Students (Financial Aid, Debt, Developmental Courses)

? Where does the institution describe the students it seeks to serve?

<https://www.charteroak.edu/catalog/current/general-information/>

? **Three-year Cohort Default Rate**

? **Three-year Loan repayment rate
(from College Scorecard)**

(FY 2010)	(FY 2011)	(FY2012)
7.3%	7.2%	4.3%

3 Years Prior	2 Years Prior	Most Recently Completed Year	Current Year	Goal (specify year)
(FY2013)	(FY2014)	(FY2015)	(FY2016)	(FY2017)

? **Student Financial Aid**

Total Federal Aid

Grants

Loans

Work Study

Total State Aid

Total Institutional Aid

Grants

Loans

Total Private/Other Aid

Grants

Loans

\$9,298	\$8,651	\$10,632	\$9,561	\$8,533
\$1,586	\$1,740	\$2,228	\$2,001	\$1800
\$7,712	\$6,911	\$8,404	\$7,560	\$6,733
\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
\$89	\$148	\$861	\$365	\$383
\$124	\$179	\$260	\$152	\$111
\$124	\$179	\$260	\$152	\$111
\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
\$398	\$617	\$546	\$383	\$370
\$381	\$578	\$508	\$378	\$350
\$17	\$39	\$38	\$5	\$26

Student Debt

Percent of students with debt (include all students who graduated in this calculation)

Percent of bachelor's degree graduates with debt

Percent of associate degree graduates with debt

Percent of drop-outs with debt

42%	42%	47%	46%	46%
36%	25%	42%	46%	46%
30%	34%	30%	32%	32%

For students with debt:

Average amount of debt for students leaving the institution with a degree

Bachelor's Degree

Associate Degree

\$16,690	\$18,660	\$19,796	\$19,177	\$19,177
\$12,176	\$13,584	\$15,581	\$14,470	\$14,470

Average amount of debt for students leaving the institution without a degree

Undergraduates

\$8,281	\$8,910	\$9,216	\$10,518	\$10,500
---------	---------	---------	----------	----------

Percent of First-year students in Developmental Courses (courses for which no credit toward a degree is granted)

English as a Second/Other Language

English (reading, writing, communication skills)

Math

Other

0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

For the period FY13-FY16, students were counted only once. Priority was given to completed bachelor's degrees, followed by completed associate degrees and non-completion. Debt from an unsuccessful bachelor's degree after a successful associate degree is included. Debt beyond a successful bachelor's degree is not included.

**Standard 5: Students
(Student Diversity, FY2016)**

Complete this form for each distinct student body identified by the institution (see Standard 5.1)

For each type of diversity important to your institution (e.g., gender, race/ethnicity, first generation status, Pell eligibility), provide information on student admissions and enrollment below. Use current year data.

Undergraduate Admissions information				Applications Started	Applications Completed/ Accepted	Applicants Enrolled		
? Category of Students (e.g., male/female); add more rows as needed								
Male				642	498	231		
Female				1,044	815	426		
White				874	717	362		
Black				318	224	113		
Hispanic				260	196	97		
Other Non-White				127	93	44		
Unknown R/E				107	83	41		
Graduate Admissions information				Applications Started	Applications Completed/ Accepted	Applicants Enrolled		
? Category of Students (e.g., male/female); add more rows as needed								
Undergraduate Enrollment information				Full-time Students	Part-time Students	Total Headcount	FTE (30 credits)	Headcount Goal
? Category of Students (e.g., male/female); add more rows as needed								
Male				94	711	805	298.07	None
Female				215	1,487	1,702	651.90	None
White				180	1,145	1,325	533.83	None
Black				64	323	387	167.77	None
Hispanic				38	273	311	131.03	None
Other Non-White				18	102	120	47.30	None
Unknown R/E				9	355	364	70.03	None
						0		
Graduate Enrollment information				Full-time Students	Part-time Students	Total Headcount	FTE	Headcount Goal (specify year)
? Category of Students (e.g., male/female); add more rows as needed								
						0		
						0		

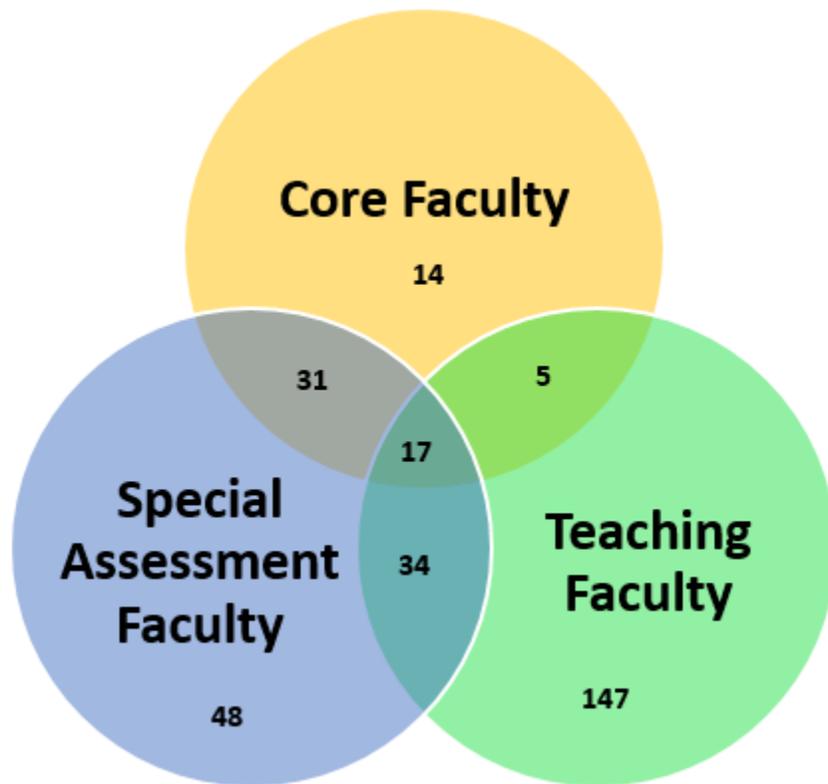
Standard Six: Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship

Description

Faculty and Academic Staff

Charter Oak employs three categories of faculty: Core Faculty, Special Assessment Faculty, and Teaching Faculty. All are part-time and can act as one, two, or all three of the faculty types. Their roles are defined in Section 4 of the College Bylaws (Appendix Z).

Faculty Counts for 2015-16



There are seven Core Faculty committees. Four are subject area committees: 1) Business, 2) History & Humanities, 3) Social & Behavioral Science, and 4) Math, Science, and Technology. The committees are primarily composed of full-time faculty from regionally-accredited institutions in Connecticut. They are responsible for program review and policy development as it relates to the academic program. The fifth is the Distance Learning Committee, which is composed of members of the Teaching Faculty and some members of the subject area committees. The Distance Learning Committee is responsible for evaluating new course development, monitoring teaching performance, and recommending policy changes related to instruction. The sixth is the Assessment Committee, which comprises faculty with expertise in assessment and assessment directors at other Connecticut colleges. The Assessment Committee consults with and advises the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (IE) on academic assessment. The seventh committee is the Academic Council. Its members are the chairs of the other committees, additional Core Faculty, and two members of the Charter Oak staff. It oversees the

work of the other committees and makes recommendations to the College regarding academic issues. The Dean of the Faculty, who is also an adjunct, chairs the Academic Council.

Special Assessment Faculty are academic content experts with experience in educational assessment. They are usually full-time faculty at regionally-accredited institutions who are recruited by the Office of Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) to evaluate professional credentials, assess portfolios, and serve on Connecticut Credit Assessment Program (CCAP) teams to review non-collegiate programs. The services provided by Special Assessment Faculty lead to credit recommendations that get documented on student transcripts. Information sheets concerning credit recommendations are available from the PLA office.

Teaching Faculty are employed to teach and develop courses. The online nature of the College allows the College to attract faculty from across the United States. As a course developer, Teaching Faculty take on the role of lead instructor. Lead instructors are responsible for initially developing course content, working with the Office of Instructional Design (ID) to deliver the content in Blackboard, teaching the course for the first time, and keeping the course up-to-date. Other responsibilities include involvement in related assessment activities and supporting other teaching faculty hired to offer additional sections of a course.

The responsibilities of Teaching Faculty are communicated in the Teaching Faculty Handbook (Appendix AA), discussed with new faculty when they are hired, and included in faculty appointment letters. The Teaching Faculty Handbook, which is available in the online Faculty Resource Center (FRC) includes information about faculty categories, policies and procedures, recruitment and hiring processes, faculty roles and responsibilities, and the faculty evaluation process.

New Teaching Faculty are required to participate in a faculty orientation when they receive a teaching appointment. The orientation was designed in Blackboard with the same template used for course development. This provides new faculty with exposure to the learning management system (LMS) that is similar to the student-experience.

In addition to faculty, Charter Oak employs an array of education and administrative professionals to support students and the academic enterprise. Included are instructional designers, an accessibility specialist, academic counselors, and undergraduate program support staff. Charter Oak has neither a librarian nor a physical library. However, the College is part of a consortium that provides access to online databases and an "Ask a librarian" live-chat feature staffed by reference librarians in the consortium.

The ID Office is staffed with two full-time instructional designers who report directly to the Provost, a full-time instructional design associate, and a half-time course developer. The staff has years of experience supporting faculty at all stages of the teaching and learning process. The ID Office has the following responsibilities:

- Tracking the progress of online courses under development
- Troubleshooting problems encountered in the delivery of online courses
- Coaching faculty in the use of Blackboard and other academic technologies
- Imparting best practices in online course development and delivery;
- Creating learning resources for a diverse population of online students and faculty

- Leading the College's ADA initiatives relating to online course development and collaborating with the accessibility specialist to manage student accessibility issues
- Maintaining the quality and integrity of online course shells

The Accessibility Specialist advises students, faculty, and the ID staff on accessibility issues. She recently developed a presentation for the annual faculty meeting in Spring 2016. In addition, she provides one-on-one assistance to students and is working with the ID staff to create more accessible courses for students with disabilities.

The Academic Counseling staff is central to the success of Charter Oak students. There are seven full time academic counselors, each with a master's degree or higher. Two are licensed professional counselors, one is a marriage and family therapist, one is a career development facilitator, one has a master's degree in school psychology, and one has an Ed.D. In addition, there are four staff members who have advising as part of their responsibilities. One is a marriage and family therapist and three have master's degrees or higher in their fields of expertise. The Academic Counseling staff offers a full range of support services for students and facilitate contact between students and faculty. The Director of Academic Services attends all faculty events and all Core Faculty committee meetings to strengthen this connection. In addition, the Director relies on Teaching Faculty to offer workshops for students. A more complete discussion of the role of academic counselors is included in Standard 5.

The undergraduate program staff is responsible for the systematic process of hiring faculty, including recruitment, interviewing, and checking references. The staff is also responsible for the faculty monitoring process, scheduling course development processes, course scheduling, managing the library databases, and ordering textbooks. The undergraduate program staff consists of one full-time undergraduate program administrator and a part-time academic associate.

Appraisal

Teaching Faculty are recruited from advertisements and unsolicited inquiries. Applicants at the undergraduate level must have a master's degree or the equivalent in experience. Applicants at the graduate level must have a doctorate or a master's plus the equivalent in experience. All faculty need teaching experience and appropriate professional qualifications in their field. Applicants must submit a cover letter, resume, names of two references who can speak to the applicant's teaching experience, and an official transcript for their highest degree. They must also complete an interview, reference check, and background check. Charter Oak is an equal opportunity employer. The hiring process adheres to the standards of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

In Fall 2015, Charter Oak had 175 instructors teaching courses. This is a decrease of 4 compared to Fall 2014 and an increase of 9 compared to Fall 2013 (see Data First Forms). The racial/ethnic make-up of the faculty is 80% white, 11% black, 4% Latino, and 5% other groups. Compared to the student body, the faculty is over-represented by white instructors and under-represented by minority instructors. Black faculty come closest to representing the student body (11% black faculty compared to 16% black students). In terms of gender, the faculty is 58% female compared to 68% in the student body. The number of faculty fluctuate depending on the number of courses and sections being taught. The number was also impacted by the GBTGA program

and the reduced teaching load mandate of 8 credits. The hiring process is race blind. Since race is not included on the application form and since interviews are conducted via telephone, the College does not know the race of the applicants.

In Fall 2014, the BOR established an eight-credit semester teaching load limit for adjunct faculty. This limit was unattainable for the College when it became effective in Fall 2014. It occurred at the time the College was receiving an influx of students from the "Go Back to Get Ahead" program (GBTGA), which necessitated additional sections of numerous courses. In addition, senior Teaching Faculty did not understand why they could no longer teach as many sections as they had before. It took a year to work through the challenges created by the eight-credit limit to both have a sufficient number of qualified faculty and to help the faculty gain acceptance of the eight-credit requirement. The College does not count contracts, where a faculty member is teaching only one or two students, as part of their teaching load.

Charter Oak's Teaching Faculty compensation structure, which is a pay-per-student model, allows the College maximum flexibility in serving students. It also allows the College to offer courses with low enrollments, thus helping to ensure students can progress through their academic programs with minimal delays related to course cancellations. This compensation structure has worked well for Charter Oak. The College is able to attract highly qualified instructors to teach students. Charter Oak has an adequate number of faculty to teach its courses. The adjunct faculty structure also allows the College to be nimble and flexible in meeting changing student, workforce, and programmatic needs. The downside to the model is that there is a cost for every student in the course. Adding students to a course section does not increase financial efficiency as it does at most colleges. However, the College believes the positives of the model outweigh the negatives.

The evaluation of Teaching Faculty is a three-pronged process designed to ensure the quality and integrity of Charter Oak's online courses. Evaluation begins by placing a monitor into any course being offered for the first time or any course where there is a new instructor. Course monitors are experienced faculty members who serve on the Distance Learning Committee. Monitors provide feedback to instructors to help improve their pedagogy and update the Provost regarding instructor performance in monitored courses. Since most of the Teaching Faculty are seasoned instructors, few problems arise.

The second prong of the evaluation process requires the ID team to run faculty activity reports in Starfish, which is tracking software integrated within Blackboard. Reports are run throughout the semester to determine whether faculty are actively engaged with students. Reports are reviewed by the Provost who takes action to remediate any deficiencies. Remediation may mean putting an instructor on probation while continuing to monitor performance for improvement. In instances where no improvement is made, the College can opt not to renew teaching contracts. If improvements are made, the faculty member is hired for the next term.

The third prong is the student evaluation of faculty, which occurs in every course every term. Overall, the Teaching Faculty receive high ratings by students in course evaluations. A more detailed discussion of course evaluations and teacher ratings is available in Standard 8.

While the Provost deals with the limited number of individual instances of remediation, the College seeks to limit the need for remediation as much as possible. The new faculty orientation

and professional development opportunities provided by Charter Oak help limit the need for remediation by giving faculty access to information and experiences aimed at improving their skills.

To date, 86 new faculty members registered for the online orientation and 71 (83%) completed it successfully. Those who failed to complete it were not hired. The College uses the orientation to help ensure the quality of instruction and faculty understanding of the College policies.

After the orientation, faculty are given the opportunity to share their thoughts in an orientation evaluation survey (Appendix BB). Thus far, the new faculty orientation has resulted in fewer questions being asked about how to handle student issues and about policies and procedures. Input from these surveys has resulted in changing the time of access to course shells, being more transparent about the time it takes to complete the orientation, access to a "sandbox" so they can play with teaching technologies, and revisions to the assessment module in the orientation.

The College has a small faculty development budget used to offer free or low-cost professional development opportunities. Faculty are required to participate in one development activity per year, though they do not need to be Charter Oak activities.

Charter Oak's professional development offerings are conducted in person and virtually using web conferencing software. Two faculty workshops are organized per year. The fall workshop focuses on new policies and procedures at the College. The Annual Faculty Meeting occurs in the spring. The last two annual meetings had over 100 virtual attendees and over 20 participants on site.

The topic for the 2014 meeting was open educational resources (OER), which are free, open-license materials that faculty and students can use to supplement or replace traditional textbooks and other copyrighted or proprietary materials. The meeting gave faculty an opportunity to learn about OER, discuss how OER could be used in their courses, and explore the opportunities and pitfalls of using OER materials. In addition, there was a discussion on selecting textbooks with both cost and quality in mind. This led to a project to assist faculty in identifying low-cost or free course materials, which resulted in a 30% savings on textbooks for certain courses. Another project was conducted to redesign three courses around OER materials. These courses were piloted in Summer 2016.

Another resource Charter Oak provides for faculty development is access to the Quality Matters (QM) website. QM is a non-profit organization dedicated to quality assurance in online education. QM resources are available to the faculty through the FRC, and the College has paid for QM training for a number of faculty members.

In addition to professional development provided by Charter Oak, faculty can seek out other opportunities to learn and grow. A large percent of the Teaching Faculty are employed full-time at other institutions in the CSCU system, so they can use trainings or activities from their home institutions to meet the professional development requirement. In addition, Teaching Faculty can attend the annual CSCU faculty conference, sponsored by the BOR.

The requirement for faculty to do one professional development activity is a "soft" requirement. Tracking compliance is incomplete since it relies on faculty to report their activities via an online form. The response rate is about 40%, though the College knows from informal conversations

with faculty that actual compliance is likely much higher. Since professional development can be in the area of teaching or in one's academic discipline, most faculty are likely engaged in activities at their home institutions or in their professional associations that could be counted as professional development. Getting faculty to report their professional development activities is an ongoing process. The new streamlined reporting process outlined at the Spring 2016 faculty meeting should make the process easier and increase the number reporting.

The College has been successful in developing *esprit de corps* among its Core Faculty as evidenced by the fact that some Core Faculty have served the College for 25 years or more. The committee structure helps to build the Charter Oak community. Bringing the Core Faculty together to gain input for decision-making and policy formation, having them review student plans of study, inviting them to College activities, having them participate on system-wide committees, and having them conduct presentations for students are just a few ways the College tries to build faculty pride and ownership in the College. To test whether the College has been successful in building this Charter Oak community, the Provost led a discussion this spring with all Core Faculty committees to discuss how they view their roles at the College. Overall, they view themselves as outlined in the College Bylaws. Where they would like to be more involved is in strategic planning and student interaction.

The Core Faculty also present themselves as Charter Oak faculty when giving presentations at conferences and participating in system-wide events. They are also transparent about when they are representing Charter Oak and when they are representing their home institution.

The faculty committee structure works well for integrating Core Faculty, but integrating the Teaching Faculty is more challenging. In the past, the College would solicit input from the Teaching Faculty via email, but it was not a formalized process. Therefore, in addition to strengthening the orientation for teaching faculty and holding two workshops a year for the Teaching Faculty, a communication strategy was implemented to encourage Teaching Faculty to become more active and participate in institutional decision-making.

The communication process begins by emailing the faculty about relevant policy considerations to obtain their feedback. Faculty responses are submitted to the appropriate Core Faculty committee for discussion and policy development. For example, feedback was gathered about policies regarding plagiarism and faculty course participation in threaded Blackboard discussions, which was sent to the Distance Learning Committee for discussion before being sent to the Academic Council for final approval.

Another way broad faculty input is gathered is through surveys. Occasionally the BOR wants faculty input about the CSCU system. Surveys are a useful way to get a lot of feedback in a short amount of time from faculty who are separated by distance. For example, Charter Oak surveyed its faculty concerning the BOR's Transform CSCU 2020 initiative that was implemented under CSCU President Gregory Gray.

Compared to faculty who are geographically dispersed, it is much easier to oversee and involve the academic staff. The Provost supervises the Director of Academic Services, ID staff, and undergraduate program support staff, while the Director of Academic Services supervises the Accessibility Specialist and Academic Counselors. All of these people work in the same building and interact frequently in-person.

Annual evaluations of academic staff members indicate that employees are meeting or exceeding their job requirements. At a programmatic level, the Academic Counseling Department receives positive ratings in the new student survey and thankful comments from students in the graduation survey.

The review of the Academic Counseling Department raised a concern that the number of students assigned to academic counselors is too high. Overall caseloads run as high as 275-300 students per counselor. However, the actual number of students served by counselors in a given semester is less than the assigned number because 25-30% of enrolled students are not actively taking Charter Oak courses. They may be taking courses elsewhere, preparing for exams, or pursuing other PLA options. The College has compared its academic counseling staffing with its peer colleges and our ratio is lower. However, responsibilities are not identical so it is not a straight comparison. A new advising module in Jenzabar, redesigns of the website and student portal, and changing some of the advising protocols will reduce some of the workload. In addition, the College is exploring what other technologies can be used to ease workload issues while remaining “high touch.”

Projection

- As part of the Fall 2016 strategic planning process, the Academic Counseling Department, Provost, and faculty committees will continue to assess the role each plays in student advising and retention.
- Based on faculty input, the Provost will create more opportunities for the faculty to be involved in the Fall 2016 strategic planning process, and the Director of Academic Services will work to involve faculty in student activities. In addition, the Provost will highlight faculty activities and successes in the college newsletter and on the website.
- In Fall 2016, the new Director of Graduate Programming will continue to develop processes for advising graduate students, communicating with graduate faculty, and reviewing academic policies.

Description

Teaching and Learning

Charter Oak courses adhere to QM standards, as well as to best practices adopted by the regional accrediting agencies. All ID staff and a number of faculty are trained in QM. To ensure quality and consistency, the form used during the course development process follows QM standards.

To map the curriculum, crosswalks have been developed that link courses and course outcomes to program outcomes (Appendix CC). Course outcomes are clearly articulated in course syllabi.

As mentioned earlier, Charter Oak uses Blackboard as its LMS. Orientations for using Blackboard are provided to students and faculty. Courses are designed using a common template so students get used to working in a familiar environment to help them navigate the LMS. Grading rubrics are provided in the courses so they understand how threaded discussions, papers, and projects will be graded. Grading policies are also included in each course.

Charter Oak uses its program review, course monitoring, course approval, and course evaluation processes to improve the quality of courses and instruction. Feedback from all of these processes is given to individual faculty and aggregated data is presented to appropriate Core Faculty Committees. In addition, the Health Information Management (HIM) program has an external accreditor to ensure the program offers quality courses and instruction. The HIM program was accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management (CAHIIM) in 2015. It underwent its first post-accreditation review in April 2016.

The teaching limit of eight credits per semester guarantees that Charter Oak students interact with a number of instructors both in their concentration or major and in their general education courses. In addition, the College has a limit on the number of different courses faculty can teach, which ensures that faculty are not spread too thin in terms of expertise and that students experience different learning/teaching styles and viewpoints.

Certain concentrations and majors, such as Psychology, require students to conduct research. All Capstone Courses require a research paper or project. The College's Assessment Committee acts as the Institutional Review Board (IRB) in the rare instances where human subjects research is undertaken.

To help ensure that students can succeed at Charter Oak, the institution developed the Cornerstone Course (IDS 101). The purpose of this course is to ensure that students have the prerequisite skills of writing, reading, and critical thinking to be successful in an online college course environment. IDS 101 was developed by a faculty committee with input from subject-area core faculty committees, the Academic Council, and Distance Learning Committee. All students are required to take this at Charter Oak as either the first or second course upon matriculation. If a student has not had English Composition, the student must take it first, followed by IDS 101 the next term.

Appraisal

Student ratings of both courses and instructors are high. Students like the structure of the courses and feedback from faculty. They find the uniform navigation helpful and report that courses are sufficiently rigorous, faculty are supportive, and course content matches the learning goals stated in syllabi. See Standard 8 for more information about course and instructor evaluations and Appendix DD for a full course evaluation report.

Although course and faculty evaluations are positive, one concern students have raised is wanting more interaction with faculty, particularly in the threaded discussions. As a result of that feedback, the Academic Dean led a conversation with faculty about how frequently faculty should respond to students in the discussion boards. This resulted in a new policy that was then approved by the Academic Council. The policy states that "faculty are required to maintain a presence in the [online] discussion forum" by responding to students "on any of the four days per week the faculty member is required to be present" in the course and by "not be[ing] absent ... for more than two (2) consecutive days" (see the Faculty Handbook in Appendix AA).

The responses from the faculty who monitor new courses and instructors are effective in providing the necessary information to judge the quality of courses and to assist course developers in making any necessary changes.

When the Cornerstone Course was developed, it was designed to refresh research writing skills and orient students to Charter Oak and Blackboard. The Cornerstone Course is intended to help students succeed and persist in their academic programs. After the course was implemented in Fall 2010, feedback from students and faculty indicated that there was too much orientation material and not enough emphasis on writing. There was also a high failure rate of about 25%. "Failure" for this course is anything less than C.

In 2013, the course was redesigned by a group of faculty. They eliminated the orientation material and focused on developing writing and critical thinking skills. Since Fall 2013, the failure rate has been below 15% and generally declining. At the same time, the withdrawal rate began climbing. It was 9% in Fall 2013 and rose to 15% by Fall 2015.

The College speculates that the withdrawal rate has increased due to the increased rigor and focus on writing and critical thinking. Perhaps students are withdrawing rather than completing the course with less than a C. On a positive note, the Academic Dean and Academic Counselors have noticed a reduction in the number of complaints from students about having to take the course.

Academic Affairs continues to work with the faculty to improve the pass rate by:

- Providing professional development activities to help faculty increase their understanding of the needs of adult students, particularly as they relate to writing
- Encouraging the use of best practices for writing instruction in an online environment
- Continuing to emphasize the importance of this course in helping students succeed and persist in their studies.

Projection

- The Provost, with assistance from the Director of IE, Assessment Committee, and teaching faculty, will continue to monitor and evaluate the Cornerstone Course to see if the pass rate can be improved without compromising the integrity of the course.
- The Provost will work with the faculty and ID staff to make all courses ADA compliant by Fall 2018.
- In Fall 2016, Academic Counseling, the Director of IE, and the Assessment Committee will analyze the data from the Smarter Measurer pilot to determine its impact on retention and make a recommendation on adopting the tool
- Academic Counseling will implement efficiency measures beginning Fall 2016 to allow more time to help those students most in need of assistance. This process will undergo both formative and summative evaluation. With the summative evaluation taking place in Fall 2017.

Standard 6: Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship
(Faculty by Category and Rank; Academic Staff by Category, Fall Term)

3 Years Prior (Fall 2013)	2 Years Prior (Fall 2014)	1 Year Prior (Fall 2015)	Budgeted Year (Fall 2016)
---	---	--	---

? Number of Faculty by category

Full-time	0	0	0	0
Part-time	0	0	0	0
Adjunct (Teaching)	166	179	175	175
Clinical	0	0	0	0
Research	0	0	0	0
Visiting	0	0	0	0
Other; specify below:				
Total	166	179	175	175

Percentage of Courses taught by full-time faculty

0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
-------	-------	-------	-------

? Number of Faculty by rank, if applicable

Professor	NA	NA	NA	NA
Associate	NA	NA	NA	NA
Assistant	NA	NA	NA	NA
Instructor	NA	NA	NA	NA
Other; specify below:				
Total	0	0	0	0

? Number of Academic Staff by category

Librarians	0	0	0	0
Advisors	6	7	8	8
Instructional Designers	4	2	4	4
Other; specify below:				
Total	10	9	12	12

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

Counts of faculty are for adjuncts teaching in each fall semester. Counts include Charter Oak staff who also teach as adjuncts.

**Standard 6: Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship
(Highest Degrees, Fall Term)**

?

3 Years Prior	2 Years Prior	1 Year Prior	Budgeted Year
(Fall 2013)	(Fall 2014)	(Fall 2015)	(Fall 2016)

Highest Degree Earned: Doctorate

Faculty				
	Professor			
	Associate			
	Assistant			
	Instructor			
	No rank	80	81	83
	Total	80	81	83

Academic Staff				
	Librarians			
	Advisors	1	1	1
	Inst. Designers			

Highest Degree Earned: Master's

Faculty				
	Professor			
	Associate			
	Assistant			
	Instructor			
	No rank	84	94	90
	Total	84	94	90

Academic Staff				
	Librarians			
	Advisors	4	5	7
	Inst. Designers	3	1	3

Highest Degree Earned: Bachelor's

Faculty				
	Professor			
	Associate			
	Assistant			
	Instructor			
	No rank	2	4	2
	Total	2	4	2

Academic Staff				
	Librarians			
	Advisors	1	1	0
	Inst. Designers			

Highest Degree Earned: Associate Degree

Faculty				
	Professor			
	Associate			
	Assistant			
	Instructor			
	Total	0	0	0

Academic Staff				
	Librarians	0	0	0
	Advisors			
	Inst. Designers	1	1	1

**Standard 6: Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship
(Appointments, Tenure, Departures, Retirements, Teaching Load Full Academic Year)**

3 Years Prior		2 Years Prior		1 Year Prior		Current Year	
(FY 2013)		(FY 2014)		(FY 2015)		(FY 2016)	
FT	PT	FT	PT	FT	PT	FT	PT

? Number of Faculty Appointed

Professor	NA							
Associate	NA							
Assistant	NA							
No rank	NA							
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

? Number of Faculty in Tenured Positions

Professor	NA							
Associate	NA							
Assistant	NA							
No rank	NA							
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

? Number of Faculty Departing

Professor	NA							
Associate	NA							
Assistant	NA							
No rank	NA							
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

? Number of Faculty Retiring

Professor	NA							
Associate	NA							
Assistant	NA							
No rank	NA							
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Fall Teaching Load, in credit hours

Professor	Maximum							
	Median							
Associate	Maximum							
	Median							
Assistant	Maximum							
	Median							
Instructor	Maximum							
	Median							
No rank	Maximum	0.00	402.00	0.00	234.00	0.00	327.00	0.00
	Median	0.00	45.00	0.00	54.00	0.00	60.00	0.00

Explanation of teaching load if not measured in credit hours

All faculty are adjuncts on short-term contract. Teaching contracts are one semester long. Special assessment faculty are contracted as needed for projects of limited duration. Core faculty are contracted to serve on committees with a length outlined in the College By-Laws.

**Standard 6: Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship
(Number of Faculty by Department or Comparable Unit, Fall Term)**

3 Years Prior		2 Years Prior		1 Years Prior		Budgeted Year	
Fall 2013		Fall 2014		Fall 2015		Fall 2016	
FT	PT	FT	PT	FT	PT	FT	PT

Number of Faculty by Department (or comparable academic unit); insert additional rows as needed

?	Business	0	37	0	35	0	38	0	38
	History and Humanities	0	48	0	60	0	50	0	50
	Math, Science, and Technology	0	25	0	30	0	27	0	27
	Social and Behavioral Science	0	56	0	54	0	60	0	60
	Total	0	166	0	179	0	175	0	175

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

Standard 6: Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship (Faculty and Academic Staff Diversity)

For each type of diversity important to your institution (e.g., gender, race/ethnicity, other), provide information on faculty and academic staff below. Use current year data.

Faculty	Full-time	Part-time	Total Headcount	Headcount Goal (specify year)
---------	-----------	-----------	-----------------	-------------------------------

? Category of Faculty (e.g., male/female, ethnicity categories); add more rows as needed

No specific faculty goals			0	
			0	
			0	
			0	
			0	
			0	
			0	
			0	
Academic Staff	Full-time	Part-time	Total Headcount	Headcount Goal (specify year)

? Category of Academic Staff (e.g., male/female, ethnicity categories); add more rows as needed

No specific academic staff goals			0	
			0	
			0	
			0	
			0	
			0	
			0	

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

Standard Seven: Institutional Resources

Description

Human Resources

As of March 1, 2016, Charter Oak State College employed 385 faculty and staff members. Part-time faculty make up the majority of employees and total 255. Charter Oak has no full-time faculty. Eighty-three (83) full-time and 27 part-time staff support institutional operations, including the operations of CTDLC. Eighty-one (81) members of the full and part-time staff are unionized, while 11 management employees are not unionized. All collective bargaining agreements expired on June 30, 2016. A new agreement was not completed to become effective on July 1, 2016, so union members are currently working without a contract in place.

Human resource policies originate from a number of different sources. The State of Connecticut has a number of personnel policies that impact all state employees. The institution's collective bargaining agreement also has policies agreed upon by union members and management. Any BOR policies apply to all 17 institutions in the C SCU system. Lastly, the College still sustains policies that were developed by its former board of directors. Any policies under Charter Oak's control are reviewed and updated as necessary.

Recruitment for employees results in many applications. The number of qualified candidates who apply for each position suggests that the compensation the College offers is appropriate for the advertised positions. The application process generally requires the review of 70 or 80 resumes and the selection of 4-6 candidates for interviewing. All new hires are provided with a written appointment letter that includes the position description (Appendix EE).

New employees are evaluated at the end of a six-month probationary period. This appraisal involves the employee and supervisor crafting a draft appraisal to share and discuss, then the supervisor writes a final appraisal based on the conversation. Once new employees pass the probationary period, job performance appraisals occur yearly.

The yearly review is similar to that for new employees insofar as the employee and supervisor draft an appraisal to review and discuss. After the discussion, the supervisor writes a final appraisal, which includes goals for the employee to pursue for the upcoming year. Employees sign the final performance appraisal to indicate that they have read and understood it.

Grievance policies and procedures are outlined in the collective bargaining agreements (Appendix FF). Basically, an employee may file a grievance at step 1. If denied, the employee may submit a step 2 grievance to the college president. If denied at step 2, the employee can request arbitration through the union. Policy and procedures for grievances about potential discrimination are outlined in the Affirmative Action Plan (Appendix GG).

Professional development for employees is supported by two funding sources: the collective bargaining contract and department funds. Normally, collective bargaining funds are utilized before institutional funds. Since 2010, the funds from the collective bargaining agreement have totaled \$8,000 per year, with a cap of \$850 per employee. In addition, the College hosts workshops for the entire staff on such topics as customer service, security, active shooter scenarios, information security, and technology updates.

The need for new staff is governed by three major factors: the development of a rationale, the presentation of the rationale to the Executive Committee, and the availability of long-term resources to support a new hire. Requests can be made any time during the year, but more commonly occur during the budget development process.

These combination of factors have led to the hiring of four new employees in FY 2015 and one employee in FY 2016. Three of the four hires in FY 2015 were in IT and a Technology Fee was created, to support the salaries of these three new workers.

The policies for hiring the part time faculty (teaching, core, and special assessment) and funds for faculty development is outlined in Standard 6.

Appraisal

The new fee that was established to cover the cost of the new IT hires was not sufficient, as a result the fee was increased for 2016-17 from \$52 to \$60 per semester.

Sufficient staffing resources exist to operate the college. These resources are reviewed whenever there is a vacancy and additional resources are approved based on a comprehensive approval process. However, the College has a very lean staff which makes it difficult to launch new initiatives since most new programs do not return the investment until the second year. Therefore, the staff has to absorb all of the upfront work and the College has to absorb all of the upfront costs. For example, the existing staff have absorbed all of the work needed to launching the master's degree, which included developing the SIS infrastructure from inquiry to graduation and all of the policies.

Each year the staff development money is depleted before all applications are submitted.

Projection

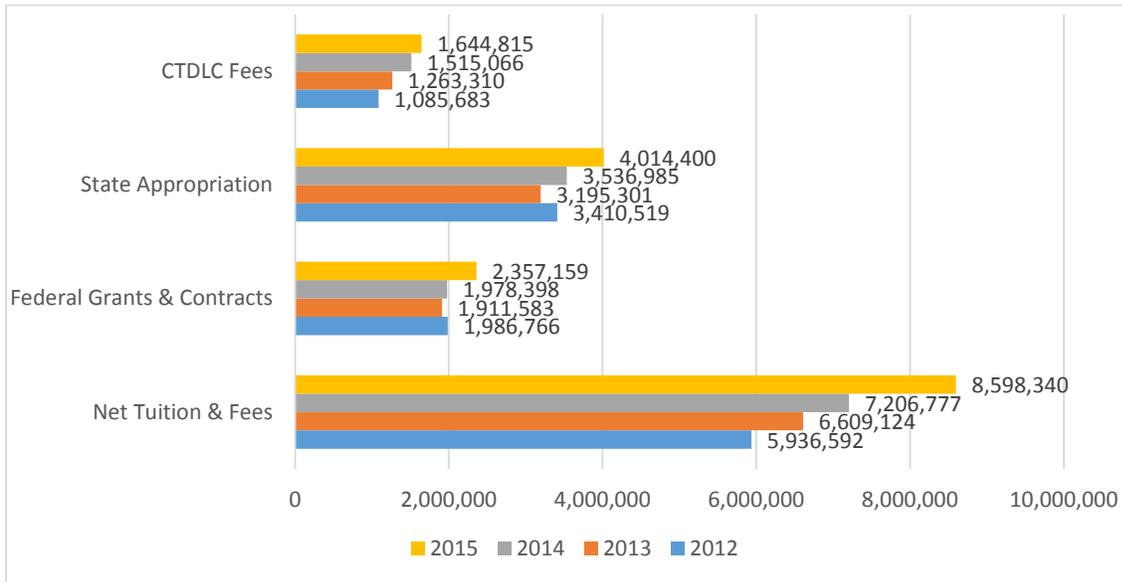
- The Executive team will analyze revenue and expenditures to continue to provide a balanced budget.
- As part of the Fall 2016 strategic planning process, the Executive team working with the Cabinet, will review staffing, programs, and services to see where additional efficiencies can be gained.

Description

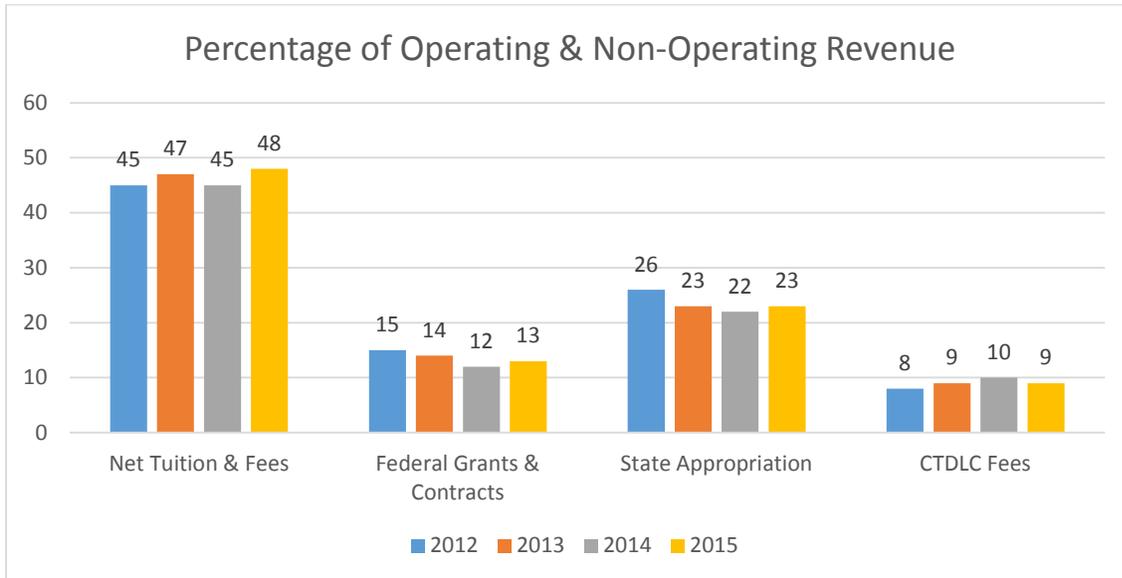
Financial Resources

Currently the financial resources of the College are adequate for the continued operation of the enterprise. Total operating and non-operating revenues in FY 2015 equaled \$17,760,161. Ninety-four (94) percent of this revenue is derived from four sources: net tuition & fees; federal grants and contracts; state appropriation (inclusive of fringe benefits); and fees generated by the CT Distance Learning Consortium. From 2012 to 2015, the average operating and non-operating revenues from these four revenue streams equaled 92%.

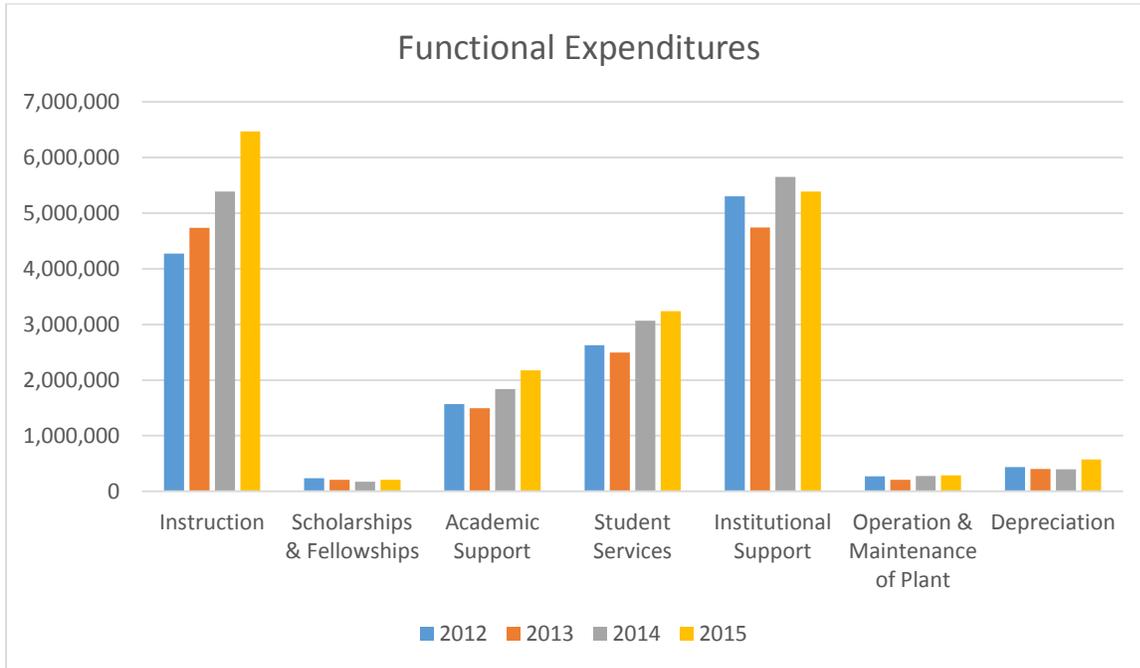
A review of these revenue sources for 2012 through 2015 follows:



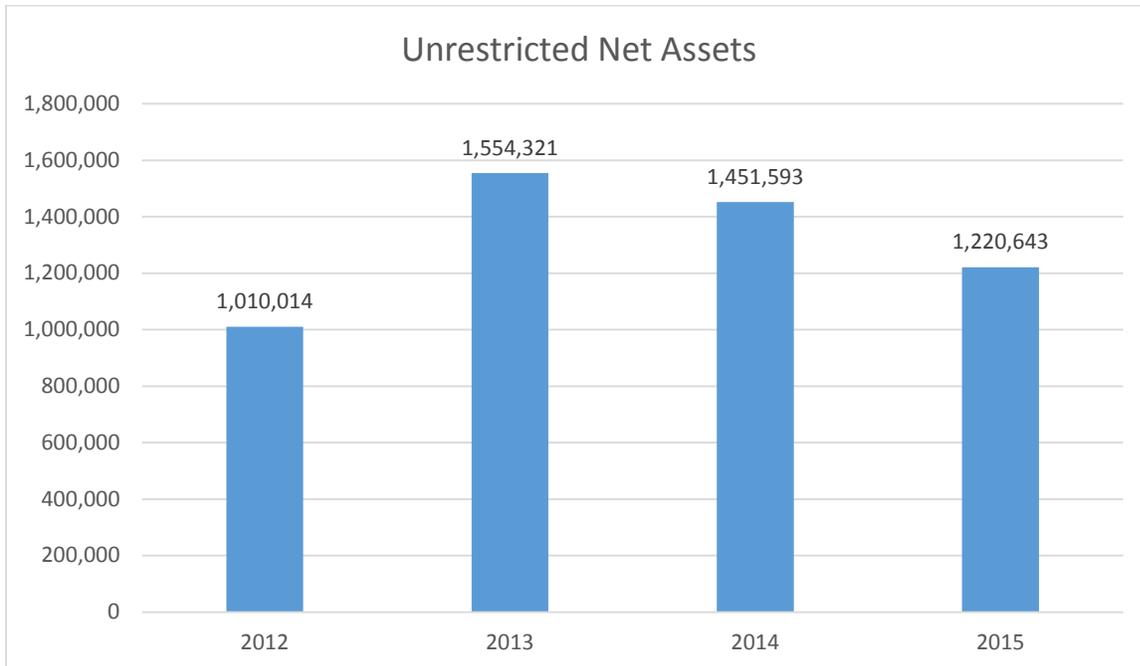
Over the last four years, the four major sources of operating and non-operating revenue have made up different percentages of the total operating and non-operating revenue. A review of the percentages is as follows:



Expenditures, which are entirely made to support the mission of the College, are represented as follows:



Unrestricted net assets for the College are as follows:



The College’s budgeting process begins in March/April once the BOR establishes the allowable percentage increase for tuition and fees. Charter Oak’s Executive Committee reviews the budget, which includes revenues and expenditure calculations, and makes adjustments to align with the approved tuition and fees. The College presents their proposed budget to the BOR Finance

Committee. The presented budget must be balanced or include a special request to utilize reserve funds. The Committee then votes to accept or reject the budget. If accepted, it is then presented to the full BOR for adoption in June.

The internal budget process begins with a meeting of the finance staff with all budget managers in March or April to give an explanation of the budget climate, an overview of revenue and expenditures, and an estimate of the resources available for departmental budgets. Budget development worksheets, including personnel costs, are distributed to the managers and an appointment is made for each manager to meet with the finance staff to discuss his/her budget request.

The Executive Committee reviews the budgets and makes adjustments based on the available resources and alignment of expenditures to the strategic plan. Budget managers are notified in June or July regarding their budget allocations.

Budget progress is monitored by the BOR and internally. The BOR requires a mid-year update and an end-of-the-year report. The College produces monthly budget update reports for internal review and corrections are made as needed.

The Executive Committee and Cabinet look for new revenue sources as part of its strategic planning and budgeting process. Since the only resources the College has are its courses and its staff, the College looks to market or create partnerships that will bring in revenue from these avenues. For example, the College partnered with College Unbound, which brought new students and revenue in the form of tuition. The College entered into a shared financial partnership with InfoSec so it could offer a robust Cybersecurity program without up-front development costs. In 2015-16, The College entered into pilot with edX to determine if students who complete edX courses are interested in using Charter Oak's credit banking program.

Annually, the College undergoes a financial audit. The results have been positive. The most recent audit for FY2015 found that the College's financial statements "present fairly, in all material respects, the net position of the Combining Unit ... and the respective changes in net position and cash flows ... [are] in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America" (Appendix B, p. 2).

Charter Oak's Financial Aid Office (FAO) reports to the President. The financial aid staff has consistently carried out its responsibilities in an environment that has become more complex and increasingly regulatory in nature. Over the past five years, the number of awards offered by the FAO has increased by 61%, from a total of 1,123 (AY 2010-11) to 1,869 (AY 2014-15). The FAO has continuously worked with students during the economic downturn by reviewing special circumstances and adjusting income and asset data for unemployed students and family members. Unfortunately, the economic outlook for Connecticut remains difficult and institutional funding levels are expected to be flat. On a positive note, funding from the Governor's Scholarship Program (state program) increased in AY 2015-16 to \$168,055 from a total of \$119,886 received in AY 14-15. This increase in funding, allocated to the College by the State, represents a boost in enrollment from the success of the "Go Back to Get Ahead" program (GBTGA). Charter Oak's financial aid policies are clearly delineated on its web site. Charter Oak has consistently had a low default rate. For 2015-16, it is 4.3 per cent.

The Charter Oak State College Foundation, established in 1977, is a vital part of the College. It is dedicated to assisting students in meeting their educational goals by making college more financially accessible. In 1995, the Foundation's Endowment was \$30,000. Today it is over \$1.6 million thanks to an aggressive campaign. The Foundation recently developed a strategic plan to guide its fund raising activities (Appendix HH).

In the last five fiscal years, the Foundation allocated over \$297,000 in grants, scholarships and program services for disadvantaged students. In addition, the Foundation received over \$235,000 in grant support for its WIT program

In 2011, the Foundation implemented the President's Discretionary Fund to provide small gifts to students for unforeseen academic expenses that could prevent students from successfully completing their degree. This fund has grown to over \$5000 the last five years and was recently renamed the Student Crisis Fund.

The Foundation created technology grants in 2012 to assist online students with the purchase of technology items that support online learning and in 2015 the Foundation implemented a Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) Scholarship fund to encourage students with knowledge equivalent to college-level learning to pursue credit via established PLA pathways; thus reducing the cost of their education and their time to graduation.

Over the last five years, the Foundation hosted three Shea Lectures supported by an endowment established in 1987 upon the retirement of Bernard D. Shea, Charter Oak's first President. The endowment enables the College to sponsor programs which further the College's mission to engage students, its faculty, and the community in lifelong learning.

The maximum utilization has been reached for the College's physical resources and the institution is no longer able to house staff hired due to growth. Charter Oak utilizes two buildings for its staff. One is State space located in New Britain, while the other is leased space located in Newington. Combined the college has 31,315 GSF. A space study was conducted in 2007 that recommended a 50,876 GSF facility. In 2011, 2.5 million dollars in bonding was awarded to the college to design a new building to be located on Central CT State University land. Planning on the three story building has not taken place due to absence of \$28.7 million in bonding for construction. The construction costs were included in the 2016-2017 biennial budget request, but the dollars were not approved by the Governor due to the pressure on state bonding. The BOR is now looking to house the College in space already owned by the State in New Britain.

Appraisal

The financial resources are managed by the CFO and other qualified business office staff. The budget is monitored monthly by the staff and revisions regarding expenditures takes place when necessary. The institution has been audited every year since 2012 by an independent auditor. The audits are presented to the Audit Committee of the BOR, and after acceptance, the full Board takes action on the audit. All Charter Oak audits have received an opinion that the combined financial statements have been presented fairly and accurately reflect the net position of the institution. Any items identified in the management letter were resolved prior to the next audit.

Fiscal resources, while adequate for current operations, will be challenged due to increased operational costs, implementation of new programs, and other strategic initiatives. The FY 16

budget has adequate resources for operations, but few dollars for new initiatives. This trend will continue unless enrollment increases steadily every year and Charter Oak is resourced like the other 16 institutions of the Board of Regents.

Regarding the latter, Charter Oak has the lowest percentage of state appropriation compared to total revenues. The College receives 16% while the CT State Universities and the Community Colleges receive 22% and 35% respectively. Tuition represents 55% of total revenue for Charter Oak while it is only 25% for the CT State Universities and 28% for the Community Colleges. The percentage of the state appropriation to personal services costs are 27% for Charter Oak compared to 50% and 63% for the CT State Universities and the Community Colleges. A significant expenditure that receives no funding from the state is instruction. This funding approach puts a lot of pressure on tuition to fund the institution and requires steady enrollment growth to support the expenditures of the College.

Tuition and fees increases are approved annually by the BOR. This year, for the first time, the BOR approved differentiated tuition and fee increases for the universities, community colleges, and Charter Oak.

From the agreement with College Unbound, the College has netted \$453,086.88, revenue the College may not have netted otherwise. The agreement with InfoSec has been dissolved since they are no longer a reseller of the content. It is too early to predict the amount of revenue the College will receive through the agreement with edX since it is a pilot involving only two courses.

Space availability continues to be an issue for the College. Even though two departments were moved to off-site leased space in Newington in 2009 and a third in 2016, no surplus space remains in either building for employee growth. In FY 16, a construction project to reconfigure space was completed that netted three new workstations. Additional space will be required to accommodate the potential growth of staff to increase academic programming and general institutional support generated by the strategic plan.

Due to expanded regulatory requirements that govern the administration of financial aid programs, the College conducted an analysis of its financial aid operations to review the effectiveness of its financial aid policies and practices in advancing the College's mission. In May of 2015, Attain, LLC was engaged to conduct the review. Following are Attain's findings and recommendations:

- Attain indicated that the financial aid team exhibited key traits for successful operations and student service; was very knowledgeable in specific areas of responsibility but there was a lack of cross-training within the office; and there was a lack of collaboration between the financial aid office, admissions, and registrar's office. Attain recommended that the office begin to facilitate school-wide discussions to enhance understanding about Title IV requirements and associated compliance issues that impact other areas of the school; that the staff have additional Jenzabar and PowerFAIDS training; and that the staff undertake a thorough review of current system setups and utilize automated processes more efficiently.

- Attain recommended that a full-time Associate Director be added to the Office, who would be would be tasked with stepping into the role of Director when needed and managing/coordinating daily tasks.

Many of the suggestions brought forward by Attain are being addressed by the FAO. This includes cross-training staff and hiring a consultant to assist with system setup and the assessment of policies and procedures. Work is ongoing, but has already resulted in procedural changes to streamline processing and update policies to align with expanded federal regulations.

As financial aid has increasingly become an important component of a student’s decision to attend Charter Oak, the FAO is receiving more phone calls. To ensure timely student service, the FAO relies on the CTDL Call Center to provide “first line” support to financial aid students. In 2014-15, 5706 calls were handled by the Help Desk, an increase of 24% over 2013-14. Additionally, the office implemented the federally mandated Financial Aid Shopping Sheet to help students and their families easily compare financial aid packages offered at different institutions of higher education.

The Foundation continues to grow its endowment. As budgets become tighter and students become more financially needy, the Foundation will need to play an even larger role. The strategic plan developed by the Foundation will serve as a guide for future fundraising activities.

Projection

- The President and CFO will continue efforts to outline the discrepancy in state funding for Charter Oak in comparison to their peers in the CSCU system.
- The President and CFO will continue to advocate for a fee increase process that will take in account actual institutional expenditure increases and the allowance of differential tuition and fee rates for the State Universities, Community Colleges, and Charter Oak.
- The President and CFO will continue to advocate for additional space for Charter Oak.

Description

Technology

Academic Technology

Ensuring that students have a robust set of tools for online learning is critical to the college. The principle academic technology, the Blackboard learning management system, is complemented with add-ons including the Starfish Early Alert system and Shared Content Object Reference Model (SCORM) Cloud.

In 2014-15 Charter Oak migrated from an individual instance of Blackboard to the CSCU instance of Blackboard. The move had mixed results based on the user perspective. This migration resulted in some loss of individuality, as the multi-tenant model requires more uniformity of 3rd party applications within the multi-tenant structure. From a price and performance standpoint, the migration provided increased uptime and greater performance than the previous model. In addition, the multi-tenant CSCU instance provides dedicated premium-level technical support and a dedicated Blackboard customer relationship manager, designed to help provide increased support and a dedicated point of contact.

In 2013, to meet the needs of nontraditional, non-matriculated course takers, Charter Oak implemented a product called SCORMCloud. This product allows for the creation and hosting of self-paced adaptive courseware and provides the College a low cost tool for one time or micro learning needs.

In 2011, Charter Oak was one of the first customers to purchase and implement Starfish, an early alert early warning system. This tool was designed to identify students who are at risk either for attendance or for low grades. The tool can also track faculty participation in their online courses. The College uses both of these features. As part of the beta user group and a first-time generation client, initially there were some performance and product configuration issues. Those issues were addressed successfully. In 2015, when CSCU migrated all Blackboard servers to a single CSCU instance, issues arose. These challenges, which relate to how the Starfish tool works in a multi-institution environment where not all schools own Starfish, are still being addressed.

At the end of 2011, Charter Oak introduced, Acxiom, an identity verification tool. During various times of the school year when students log into their courses, students are presented a series of questions that are designed to authenticate their identity based on a public record dataset. The answers to the questions are designed to be known only by the student. If a student correctly answers the questions access is granted to the online class. Incorrect answers require a personal touchpoint between student and Charter Oak's Registrar. The Registrar, on a yearly basis, verifies last known address of each student using the US Postal Service database.

Charter Oak has a virtual library of databases and an "ask the librarian" feature. The library resources that are available to students and faculty consist of hundreds of online databases and thousands of publications. Connecticut students can use the libraries at the other state colleges.

Charter Oak also participates in CTDLC's e-tutoring program which provides free tutoring primarily in the areas of writing and math.

Administrative Technology

Charter Oak uses Jenzabar EX as its Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system. Jenzabar is a comprehensive administrative platform designed specifically for higher education. Jenzabar has a Microsoft SQL database backend that provides access to InfoMaker for institutional reporting and PowerFAIDS for financial aid. Jenzabar EX serves as the "system of record" for the College and most academic or administrative enterprise technologies and academic technologies such as Blackboard (online learning) or PowerFAIDS (financial aid) integrate data with Jenzabar. Jenzabar also provides a student portal (aptly named ACORN for Charter Oak) which allows 24/7 access for student to registration, advising, and payment.

In 2009, Charter Oak implemented Jenzabar's EX advising module. This tool allowed the College to create electronic degree plans for all students mapping degree requirements to a dynamic advising worksheet that reflects students' academic progress. Advisors and students utilize this degree audit tool to ensure successful degree completion.

In 2012, Charter Oak implemented the OnBase document imaging system. The OnBase system provided a combination of electronic imaging and electronic process workflow. Between 2012 and 2014 the College mapped, automated, and fine-tuned a series of workflows associated with the admissions inquiry, enrollment, and transcript evaluation processes. In many areas the

College saw an increase in performance by moving from serial process where a file would travel from office to office to a parallel-stream workflow where files could be simultaneously accessed and reviewed by multiple offices. As part of this project, the College began scanning its existing paper transcript archives imaging more than 20,000 sheets of paper.

In 2015-16 Charter Oak implemented the Parchment electronic transcription software. This software has provided a significant improvement in the transmission of electronic transcripts, both in sending and receiving. Between September 2015 and March 24, 2016, Charter Oak has issued over 2500 transcripts using Parchment and has received over 350.

Infrastructure

Beginning in 2012, the College made significant improvements to its core student, faculty, and staff facing technology infrastructure. In 2012, the College replaced its Avaya phone system with the Cisco Unified Communication VOIP system. This new system provided significantly greater functionality to the College. Improvements included dedicated phone system branding, enterprise chat, call routing, call conferencing, a suite of reporting tools, remote phone support for distance workers, and access to Call-Center Express, Cisco's enterprise helpdesk and call-center system. In addition to the above features, Charter Oak also licensed Cisco's web meeting tool WebEx. The combination of these tools provided Charter Oak a platform for voice and video calls for local and remote workers. Similar to the legacy system it replaced, Charter Oak outsourced the maintenance and management of the phone system to a third-party provider. Different from the previous provider which provided 5x10 support, the new system is managed through a network operation center (NOC), which monitors and provides support for systems 24x7x365.

In 2015, Charter Oak piloted the CSCU's new telepresence videoconference tool from BlueJeans Network. Because this tool provided much of the same functionality as WebEx with a significantly decreased cost and increased capabilities, Charter Oak has moved to using BlueJeans.

In 2015, the college implemented part of the CSCU's 21st-century classroom project. As part of this initiative, Charter Oak renovated its Fleet Conference Room creating a state-of-the-art multipurpose room capable of multiple configurations for recording and broadcasting events in high definition. The high tech conference room allows the College to provide a greater number of high-quality live events for its students, faculty, and staff. This room is a model for other technology-enhanced rooms throughout CSCU.

In 2016, Charter Oak migrated all student, faculty, and staff email to Office 365. This Microsoft-hosted system replaced the College's on-site Microsoft Exchange (email) infrastructure. In addition to offering increased cloud stability, the Office 365 platform included additional security, spam filtering, and litigation hold functionality to meet increasing audit and compliance requirements.

Since the construction of its first data center, Charter Oak relied on individual servers to power its infrastructure computer needs. In 2013, Charter Oak removed 90% of its individual server based data center and replaced it with a "blade-based" server infrastructure. The blade-based infrastructure offered many benefits over the legacy model, most notably allowing greater virtualization of hardware within the data center environment. Ultimately the blade-based

technology provides greater flexibility and expandability compared to the previous model. The model Charter Oak selected, known as a Cisco FlexPod, combines hardware, software, and networking into a single computer pool which can be used to serve college operations. In 2016, the FlexPod architecture provides hardware resources for more than 100 virtual servers on the VMware platform. In addition to implementing FlexPod, Charter Oak also contracted with ePlus Technologies, a national Cisco Platinum partner, for the ongoing support of this environment. Similar to the phone system, Charter Oak increased the maintenance management and visibility of this infrastructure by outsourcing monitoring to the EPlus network operations.

In 2014, Charter Oak completed the grid of all of its edge switches and wireless controllers. As part of this upgrade, Charter Oak increased the wireline speed to all laptops and desktops to 1 Gb and tripled the number of wireless access points in its buildings. In addition, this initiative increased wireless conductivity for the College and created dedicated guest wireless networks which are fully segmented from the production faculty staff network.

In 2011, Charter Oak implemented the emergency alert and notification system e2campus. This system provides emergency alerts and inclement weather information to faculty and staff. In 2014, as part of a CSCU initiative, Charter Oak replaced the e2Campus system with the CSCU mandated Everbridge emergency alert and notification suite. The Everbridge tool provides increased geolocation and user segmentation, allowing the College to send alerts with greater accuracy relative to a person's location at any given time.

Organization, Support, and Training

Charter Oak has made significant investments in information technology training for its employees. In 2012, Charter Oak became a member of the Microsoft IT Academy. This membership provided both academic courseware for use in classes and online training materials for faculty students and staff. These materials range from basic personal productivity guides for Microsoft Word and Excel to advanced systems training in Microsoft Exchange server.

In 2015, the College implemented an internal committee called the Change Advisory Board (CAB). The CAB reviews and approves all major technology changes. The result has been greater documentation, shared knowledge, and increased governance around how technology is identified and implemented. In association with the creation of the CAB, Charter Oak has implemented a new modular service desk system called Change Gear. This system is designed to integrate the traditional helpdesk ticket, IT problems, plan changes, and inventory. The College began a process of implementation in 2015 and set July 2016 for the formal launch of the new service desk system, knowledge base, and training videos to support technology for all students, faculty, and staff.

In 2015, Charter Oak hired an IT operations and communications support person. This position was created to increase the training of and provide better communication to faculty and staff on new technologies and to help manage technology projects. Since the start date of the position more than a dozen in-person workshops have been run to help support faculty and staff training.

Information and Cybersecurity

As an online academic institution and a member of the CSCU system, Charter Oak continually works to ensure the availability, integrity and confidentiality of its information and systems in

accordance with Federal and State laws and the policies of the BOR and the system office. In 2013, CSCU established an Information Security program based on National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) with rigorous controls (based on SANS 20) and assurance functions designed to protect students' interests. Because of the work load demands around security, in 2014, Charter Oak established the position of Information Security Officer and promoted a senior director to assume that position. The College has focused on changing internal processes by implementing rigorous change control, service catalog, Configuration Management Data Base (CMDB) and other Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) processes. The College has implemented data classification and achieved 100% compliance with general security for all staff and comprehensive technology staff training which is provided by IT and managed through the HR onboarding function.

In 2015, Charter Oak replaced its Check Point firewalls with a pair of high availability Palo Alto firewalls. These firewalls conform to the new CSCU standard and have management and monitoring outsourced to "Foresight" firewall services. While the implementation is reasonably new, the Palo Alto's firewalls represent "next-generation" application and packet inspection and the College is hopeful that they will be the foundation of our cybersecurity defense.

Appraisal

It is difficult to benchmark Charter Oak IT operations with peer groups. Charter Oak is the only school known which combines a fully online college with an applications service provider (ASP) similar to the CTDLC. In total, Charter Oak's server count, firewall size, etc. quadruple many of its Carnegie and FTE peers. This robust technology infrastructure allows the CTDLC to provide services to clients and provides Charter Oak's information technology backbone capacity.

The CSCU merger created a set of unexpected changes in the information technology department. Charter Oak previously identified its own information technology tools, vendors, and support systems that were "purpose fit" to what the institution needed. Today, Charter Oak is one of seven representatives on a Chief Information Officers (CIO) council that selects and governs tool selection for 17 institutions and the system office. Individuality of technology and specific institutional needs are still allowed but interoperability of technology among system schools is often a priority. Overall, the equipment decisions have had a moderate impact on technology operations. For example, in 2014 Charter Oak replaced its legacy Check Point firewalls with new Check Point "NG" firewalls (next generation). In 2015-16, it replaced the Check Point NG firewalls with Palo Alto firewalls to conform with a system standard of exclusively running Palo Alto firewalls. While both firewalls provided the core protection needed, the most recent changeover was required to align and co-term all firewalls more than it was to replace outdated equipment. Changes like this have had the challenge of absorbing more staff time resources associated with coming into conformance than institutional performance.

Similar to many merger and acquisitions, Charter Oak has spent the last two years integrating, replacing, and revising its information technology plan with the global CSCU plan.

In addition to CSCU technology changes, the audit and compliance initiatives have increased dramatically. Information Technology now participates in three separate audit activities, local and system driven. In 2015, Charter Oak created the position of Information Security Officer specifically to head up increasing cybersecurity and compliance issues.

In 2015, Charter Oak implemented a formal Change Advisory Board (CAB). The Mission of the CAB is to help guide the implementation of changes made to Charter Oak information technology services in support of the educational mission of the College. The CAB ensures that standardized methods and procedures are used for efficient and prompt handling of all changes associated with Information Technology (IT) services.

Charter Oak's greatest information technology need has been to increase the personnel associated with information technology management. Since 2011, three people have been added to information technology. In 2015, after more of the IT aspects of the CSU merger were known, Charter Oak reorganized the Information Technology team to include a dedicated Information Security Officer, a dedicated Academic Technologist, and a third Systems Administrator. These personnel changes created depth at core areas associated with security, teaching and learning, while deepening support for the 24x7 environment that the information technology environment is being asked to support.

One of the largest challenges of any information technology organization is the rate of change of technology. Charter Oak's position is unique. Its distance learning students in concert with the increasing consumerization of technology has played a significant impact in both connectivity to online learning and support required for these systems. Based on feedback from faculty and staff, Charter Oak made a decision to migrate to a new dedicated helpdesk tool. This was in direct response to feedback from students that they were confused and found the existing system to be difficult to navigate. It was recognized that while the tool was deficient, additional resources were required to provide greater staff and faculty training in addition to supporting a wider assortment of student devices.

In 2014, a new position of Academic Technologist was created, which was designed specifically to aid faculty and staff in academic training. In total, over 350 units of training have been consumed by faculty and staff through the creation of this position. This includes in-person attendance at on-ground events, desk side coaching, and the development of training collateral.

Charter Oak hired a consultant to review its library holdings to ensure that there is proper support for the College's academic programs, including the new master's degree. The final report was completed on August 15, 2016 (see Appendix II). It found that the current library databases are "adequate" or "strong" at meeting the needs of different academic areas. Some suggestions were made for improvement. The Provost will review the suggestions and work to implement them as appropriate.

Charter Oak also actively participates in the CSU library consortium, which aims at linking all of the libraries together, providing Charter Oak students and faculty with additional resources.

Projection

- As Charter Oak enters the second half of 2016, it will explore other options for using the helpdesk system.
- As the CSU Information Technology department begins a larger strategic plan in Fall 2016, Charter Oak will use it to help guide strategic and operational goals of its own IT department.

Standard 7: Institutional Resources
(Headcount of Employees by Occupational Category)

For each of the occupational categories below, enter the data reported on the IPEDS Human Resources Survey (Parts B and D1) for each of the years listed.

If your institution does not submit IPEDS, visit this link for information about how to complete this form:

https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/IPEDS/Downloads/Forms/package_1_43.pdf

	3 Years Prior			2 Years Prior			1 Year Prior			Budgeted Year		
	(Fall 2013)			(Fall 2014)			(Fall 2015)			(Fall 2016)		
	FT	PT	Total	FT	PT	Total	FT	PT	Total	FT	PT	Total
Instructional Staff	0	169	169	0	190	190	0	186	186	0	186	186
Research Staff	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Public Service Staff	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Librarians	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Library Technicians	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Archivists, Curators, Museum staff	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Student and Academic Affairs	9	121	130	7	76	83	6	66	72	6	66	72
Management Occupations	14	0	14	15	0	15	15	0	15	15	0	15
Business and Financial Operations	8	3	11	7	4	11	8	3	11	8	3	11
Computer, Engineering and Science	6	1	7	6	1	7	11	1	12	11	1	12
Community, Social Service, Legal, Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	19	3	22	23	5	28	21	4	25	21	4	25
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Service Occupations	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sales and Related Occupations	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Office and Administrative Support	8	0	8	6	0	6	6	0	6	6	0	6
Natural Resources, Construction, Maintenance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Production, Transportation, Material Moving	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	64	297	361	64	276	340	67	260	327	67	260	327

Standard 7: Institutional Resources
(Statement of Financial Position/Statement of Net Assets)

Fiscal Year ends - month & day: (6/30)	2 Years Prior (FY 2014)	1 Year Prior (FY 2015)	Most Recent Year (FY2016)	Percent Change	
				2 yrs 1 yr prior	1 yr most recent
ASSETS					
? Cash and Short Term Investments	\$16,477	\$15,248	\$9,575	-7.5%	-37.2%
? Cash held by State Treasurer	\$2,594,672	\$2,915,077	\$2,067,246	12.3%	-29.1%
? Deposits held by State Treasurer				-	-
? Accounts Receivable, Net	\$906,891	\$569,411	\$517,494	-37.2%	-9.1%
? Contributions Receivable, Net				-	-
? Inventory and Prepaid Expenses	\$232,481	\$123,614	\$822,399	-46.8%	565.3%
? Long-Term Investments	\$1,769,757	\$1,805,470	\$1,841,579	2.0%	2.0%
? Loans to Students				-	-
? Funds held under bond agreement				-	-
? Property, plants, and equipment, net	\$2,486,270	\$2,908,743	\$2,484,476	17.0%	-14.6%
? Other Assets	\$1,139	\$2,101,444	\$2,090,323	184399.0%	-0.5%
Total Assets	\$8,007,687	\$10,439,007	\$9,833,092	30.4%	-5.8%
LIABILITIES					
? Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$1,252,873	\$1,280,770	\$1,423,202	2.2%	11.1%
? Deferred revenue & refundable advances	\$592,603	\$744,940	\$583,772	25.7%	-21.6%
? Due to state				-	-
? Due to affiliates				-	-
? Annuity and life income obligations				-	-
? Amounts held on behalf of others				-	-
? Long-term investments				-	-
? Refundable government advances				-	-
? Other long-term liabilities	\$427,659	\$8,032,816	\$8,013,001	1778.3%	-0.2%
Total Liabilities	\$2,273,135	\$10,058,526	\$10,019,975	342.5%	-0.4%
NET ASSETS					
Unrestricted net assets					
Institutional	\$3,716,494	(\$1,900,868)	(\$2,304,406)	-151.1%	21.2%
? Foundation	\$54,993	\$52,252	\$52,971	-5.0%	1.4%
Total	\$3,771,487	(\$1,848,616)	(\$2,251,435)	-149.0%	21.8%
Temporarily restricted net assets					
Institutional	\$248,820	\$464,758	\$275,944	86.8%	-40.6%

?	Foundation	\$684,447	\$713,131	\$722,940	4.2%	1.4%
	Total	\$933,267	\$1,177,889	\$998,884	26.2%	-15.2%
	Permanently restricted net assets					
	Institutional				-	-
?	Foundation	\$1,029,798	\$1,051,208	\$1,065,668	2.1%	1.4%
	Total	\$1,029,798	\$1,051,208	\$1,065,668	2.1%	1.4%
	Total Net Assets	\$5,734,552	\$380,481	(\$186,883)	-93.4%	-149.1%
	TOTAL LIABILITIES and NET ASSETS	\$8,007,687	\$10,439,007	\$9,833,092	30.4%	-5.8%

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

FY 15 includes pension entries related to initial reporting for GASB 68. In Other Assets, Other Long term liabilities and Unrestricted Net Assets

NON OPERATING REVENUES						
?	State appropriations (net)	\$2,703,214	\$3,063,410	\$3,373,937	\$3,172,240	\$3,150,000
?	Investment return	\$3,998	\$2,988	\$3,335	\$3,500	\$3,500
?	Interest expense (public institutions)					
	Gifts, bequests and contributions not used in operations	\$12,000	\$15,000		\$3,000	
?	Other (specify):	\$19,516				
	Other (specify):	-\$19,753		-\$7,511		
	Other (specify):			-\$66,128		
	Net non-operating revenues	\$2,718,975	\$3,081,398	\$3,303,633	\$3,178,740	\$3,153,500
	Income before other revenues, expenses, gains, or losses	-\$551,917	-\$349,334	-\$2,213,928	\$0	-\$338,386
?	Capital appropriations (public institutions)	\$760,800	\$570,762	\$1,621,808		
?	Other (specify):					
	TOTAL INCREASE/DECREASE IN NET ASSETS	\$208,883	\$221,428	-\$592,120	\$0	-\$338,386

**Standard 7: Institutional Resources
(Statement of Debt)**

FISCAL YEAR ENDS month & day (6/30)		3 Years Prior (FY2014)	2 Years Prior (FY2015)	Most Recently Completed Year (FY 2016)	Current Year (FY 2)	Next Year Forward (FY 2)
	Debt					
	Beginning balance					
	Additions					
	? Reductions					
	Ending balance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Interest paid during fiscal year					
	Current Portion					
	Bond Rating					

Debt Covenants: (1) Describe interest rate, schedule, and structure of payments; and (2) indicate whether the debt covenants are being met.

Line(s) of Credit: List the institutions line(s) of credit and their uses.

Future borrowing plans (please describe)

**Standard 7: Institutional Resources
(Supplemental Data)**

FISCAL YEAR ENDS month & day (6/30)		3 Years Prior (FY2014)	2 Years Prior (FY2015)	Most Recently Completed Year (FY2016 unaudited)	Budget Current Year (FY 2017)	Next Year Forward (FY 2018)
NET ASSETS						
	Net assets beginning of year	\$3,756,431	\$3,965,314	(\$1,707,123)	(\$2,299,243)	(\$2,299,243)
	Total increase/decrease in net assets	\$208,883	(\$5,672,437)	(\$592,120)	\$0	(\$338,386)
	Net assets end of year	\$3,965,314	(\$1,707,123)	(\$2,299,243)	(\$2,299,243)	(\$2,637,629)
FINANCIAL AID						
	Source of funds					
	Unrestricted institutional					
	Federal, state and private grants					
	Restricted funds					
	Total	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	% Discount of tuition and fees					
?	% Unrestricted discount					
?	FEDERAL FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY COMPOSITE SCORE					
Please indicate your institution's endowment spending policy:						
FY 15 impacted by the inclusion of pension liability per GASB 68						

**Standard 7: Institutional Resources
(Information Resources)**

3 Years Prior	2 Years Prior	Most Recently Completed Year	Current Year	Next Year Forward (goal)
(FY2014)	(FY2015)	(FY2016)	(FY2017)	(FY2018)

Total Expenditures

Materials	\$28,900	\$30,048	\$31,658	\$40,668	\$41,481
Salaries & wages (permanent staff)	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$7,000	\$2,500	\$2,550
Salaries & wages (student employees)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Other operating expenses	\$0	\$0	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,040

Expenditures/FTE student

Materials	\$32	\$28	\$33	\$33	\$33
Salaries & wages (permanent staff)	\$3	\$2	\$7	\$7	\$7
Salaries & wages (student employees)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Other operating expenses	\$0	\$0	\$2	\$2	\$2

Collections

Percent available physically	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Percent available electronically	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Number of digital repositories	32	32	27	27	27

Personnel (FTE)

Librarians - main campus	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Librarians - branch /other locations	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Other library personnel - main campus	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Other library personnel - branch/other locations	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

Availability/attendance

? Hours of operation/week main campus	24	24	24	24	24
Hours of operation/week branch/other locations	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

? **Consortia/Partnerships**

ICONN (State of CT)
WALDO
NERCOMP
InfoTech

URL of most recent library annual report:

[NA](#)

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

Charter Oak has a virtual library. Students can request assistance from librarians via an online form at <https://www.charteroak.edu/library>. The \$7000 cost was for a library consultant and "Ask a Librarian" service. The "other expenses" are for EzProxy external hosting.

**Standard 7: Institutional Resources
(Technological Resources)**

				?
3 Years Prior	2 Years Prior	Most Recently Completed Year	Current Year	Next Year Forward (goal)
(FY2014)	(FY2015)	(FY 2016)	(FY 2017)	(FY 2018)

? Course management system

Blackboard - all courses are online

Number of classes using the system

883	1,005	935	935	935
-----	-------	-----	-----	-----

Bandwidth

On-campus network

1000	1000	1000	1000	1000
------	------	------	------	------

Off-campus access

? commodity internet (Mbps)

15	15	15	15	15
----	----	----	----	----

? high-performance networks (Mbps)

--	--	--	--	--

? Wireless protocol(s)

A/B/G	A/B/G	A/B/G/N	A/B/G/N	A/B/G/N
-------	-------	---------	---------	---------

Typical classroom technology

Main campus

Cisco SX Series "Telepresence"

Branch/other locations

Cisco SX Series "Telepresence"

Software systems and versions

Students

Jenzabar EX and Blackboard

Finances

CORE-CT

Human Resources

CORE-CT

Advancement

eTapestry

Library

EZProxy

Website Management

OUCampus

Portfolio Management

Interactive Video Conferencing

WebEX, Blue Jeans, and Skype for Business

Digital Object Management

Website locations of technology policies/plans

Integrity and security of data

http://www.ct.edu/files/it/BOR_IT-003.pdf

Privacy of individuals

http://www.ct.edu/files/it/BOR_IT-002.pdf

Appropriate use

http://www.ct.edu/files/it/BOR_IT-001.pdf

Disaster and recovery plan

Located on Sharepoint intranet site

Technology replacement

Offline budget planning documents with CIO & CFO

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

Standard 7: Institutional Resources
(Physical Resources)

Campus location	Serviceable Buildings	Assignable Square Feet (000)
Main campus	1	13,850
Other U.S. locations	1	5,000
International locations		

	3 Years Prior	2 Years Prior	1 Year Prior	Current Year	Next Year Forward (goal)
	(FY2014)	(FY 2015)	(FY2016)	(FY2017)	(FY2018)
Revenue					
Capital appropriations (public institutions)	\$760,800	\$570,762	\$1,621,808	\$337,225	\$250,000
Operating budget	\$168,095	\$167,388	\$171,737	\$174,358	\$180,000
Gifts and grants					
Debt					
Total	\$928,895	\$738,150	\$1,793,545	\$511,583	\$430,000
Expenditures					
New Construction					
Renovations, maintenance and equipment	\$177,611	\$193,797	\$351,674	\$179,538	\$180,000
Technology	\$506,680	\$874,947	\$1,697,001	\$332,045	\$250,000
Total	\$684,291	\$1,068,744	\$2,048,675	\$511,583	\$430,000

Assignable square feet (000)	Main campus	Off-campus	Total
Classroom			0
Laboratory			0
Office	18,850		18,850
Study			0
Special			0
General			0
Support			0
Residential			0
Other			0

Major new buildings, past 10 years (add rows as needed)

Building name	Purpose(s)	Assignable Square Feet (000)	Cost (000)	Year

New buildings, planned for next 5 years (add rows as needed)

Building name	Purpose(s)	Assignable Square Feet	Cost (000)	Year

Major Renovations, past 10 years (add rows as needed)

The list below includes renovations costing or more

Building name	Purpose(s)	Assignable Square Feet	Cost (000)	Year
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Renovations planned for next 5 years (add rows as needed)

The list below includes renovations costing or more

Building name	Purpose(s)	Assignable Square Feet	Cost (000)	Year
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

Standard Eight: Educational Effectiveness

Description

Charter Oak State College has a comprehensive research program to assess its educational effectiveness. Outcomes research occurs throughout the time students attend Charter Oak and after they graduate or leave the institution. Expectations about what students should gain through their education are publicly available on the college website.

Quantitative and qualitative methods employing direct and indirect measures provide an understanding of what students have gained as a result of their education. Examples of quantitative data are counts, percentages, rates, and research statistics, while qualitative data come primarily from student comments on surveys. Commonly used direct measures are assignments in class, course grades, pass rates, and results from student proficiency assessments, while indirect measures come mostly from student perception data obtained from surveys. Benchmarking and peer comparison data are utilized when available, though they are often not entirely comparable for Charter Oak. Examples of this include the IPEDS retention and graduation rates, which rely on cohorts of first-time degree-seeking students. The new Outcome Measures survey that IPEDS introduced this year might give us more comparable data moving forward.

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness (IE), Office of the Provost, President's Cabinet, and a number of faculty committees work together to support assessment activities. Different constituencies receive reports on assessment activities as appropriate. These groups include the Assessment Committee, Distance Learning Committee, Academic Council, and four academic faculty committees.

Each of the aforementioned groups meets at least three times per year. In addition to Charter Oak staff, they include faculty and institutional researchers from regionally accredited colleges and universities. Part of their responsibility is to review assessment research, make suggestions for improvement, and provide external perspectives on assessment-related matters. This oversight structure ensures that appropriate attention is given to the assessment of student learning and success. The engagement of such diverse groups of higher education professionals pushes assessment at Charter Oak to become more valid and useful for helping improve educational outcomes. Feedback regarding research questions, data collection, methods, analysis, and the presentation of findings is accepted on a continual basis and incorporated as much as possible.

Assessment begins when students matriculate and take the Cornerstone Course (IDS 101). Cohorts are established based on entry dates so persistence can be tracked over time.

As students advance through their programs of study, they have the opportunity every semester to rate their classes and instructors. CoursEval is the online survey system used to collect student responses. Faculty receive the results after the term has ended so they can use the student feedback to improve their courses and teaching. The Provost addresses any problems that students report about individual instructors or the curriculum.

All courses have clear student learning outcomes listed in the syllabi (www.charteroak.edu/syllabus). Course instructors use readings, threaded discussions, and other assignments to guide student learning. Faculty assess discussions and assignments (i.e., artifacts

that demonstrate learning), and assign grades according to the extent to which students meet the learning outcomes.

Courses are the building blocks for degree and certificate programs. Student learning outcomes are attached to all majors, concentrations, and certificate programs. All learning outcomes are clearly listed in the college catalog. Students complete their programs of study only when they complete all course requirements, meet the learning outcomes of their program, and fulfill the institution's general education requirements. A degree audit performed by the Registrar's Office and validated by members of the Core Faculty ensures that all students have fulfilled their program and general education requirements before receiving a degree or certificate. In the case of bachelor's degrees specifically, students must complete the Capstone Course, which includes a major project, and pass the Capstone Course and all of the courses in their major/concentration with a grade of C or above.

Prior to commencement, students complete a graduation survey to provide information about their experiences and satisfaction with their education. They self-assess gains they have made in general education competencies and inform us about plans for the future.

Post-graduation outcomes are collected several ways. One is through the alumni survey, which is sent to program completers who finished their program 1-2 years prior. Another is earnings and employment data obtained from the Connecticut Department of Labor.

At a programmatic level, Charter Oak assesses its educational effectiveness in three areas: general education curriculum, Capstone Course structure, and academic program review.

Appraisal

Student-Level Appraisal

One-Year Retention

Charter Oak measures one-year retention in two different ways. The first way is fairly traditional. The College calculates fall-to-fall and spring-to-spring retention rates where "retained" means registered for courses a year after matriculation or graduated within the same time. Rates are calculated for all matriculants, all of whom are transfer students and most of whom are part-time. The fall cohort includes summer matriculants (following the practice in IPEDS).

The second way is non-traditional and specific to Charter Oak's history as a credit aggregator and commitment to providing students with alternatives to course-taking to earn credits. In any given semester, Charter Oak has a population of non-registered, matriculated students who pay a student services fee to remain matriculated. Since these students are not taking courses, one cannot measure their retention status based on course registration. Instead, the measure of retention is whether students are still enrolled at the institution 13 months after their matriculation date. The reason 13 months was selected is because students are allowed a grace period of two semesters to pay the student services fee. Summer is counted as a semester, and students must pay the fee during the summer to remain continuously enrolled. The Registrar administratively withdraws students who fail to pay the fee for three semesters (13 months).

Retention is not an end in itself. Rather, it is supposed to measure persistence to degree. It is a valid and reliable measure for course-registrants. However, it is not as valid and reliable for non-registered matriculants because merely paying a student services fee does not necessarily equate to accumulating credits from alternative sources and making progress to degree. In fact, data covering Fall 2014, Spring 2015, and Fall 2015 show that 24% of non-registered matriculants have not earned any credits in over a year (despite remaining enrolled and matriculated).

Both of these measures of retention can be found in the Data First Forms about undergraduate retention and graduation rates. The true rate of one-year persistence to degree lies somewhere between the two retention rates discussed above. The 13-month retention rate was in the low 80s for three years, but dropped to 75% in the most recent year. Much of the attrition in the 13-month rate comes from students who were unsuccessful in IDS 101. Unsuccessful students tend to stop paying the student services fee and wait to be administratively withdrawn from the institution after one year, though a minority of unsuccessful students withdraws voluntarily.

Since the Fall 2011 cohort, one-year retention as measured by course registration has run in the range of 52-58%. Some of the non-registrants are those who failed IDS 101. The College does not have reliable data on the remainder of non-registrants. Some may be pursuing credits by alternative pathways, while others may have stopped degree-seeking altogether and have not officially withdrawn. These students receive multiple communications from their academic counselors which results in some students returning, but not all.

In summary, the percentage of new matriculants making one-year progress to degree lies somewhere in the range of 52-82%. Although not a new problem, this large range makes it difficult to understand the first-year progress of students. The cause of the difficulty is the impossibility of knowing about alternative credit accumulation until students actually have them transcribed by the Registrar.

In addition to overall retention, the College tracks retention by gender, race/ethnicity, and for military, College Unbound, and WIT/CT-WAGE students. Course-taking retention rates for women tend to be higher than for men. White students also tend to have better course-taking retention than other racial/ethnic groups. Military students tend to have lower course-taking retention than the overall student body, while College Unbound and WIT/CT-WAGE students tend to have higher retention.

For 13-month retention, the racial/ethnic and College Unbound patterns are the same as above. However, men have tended to have better retention on this measure, while the pattern is more mixed for military and WIT/CT-WAGE students.

General Education

At the student level, the general education requirements needed for degree completion are met by earning the requisite number of credits in written communication, oral communication, information literacy, ethical decision-making, US history/government, non-US history or culture, global understanding, literature and fine arts, social/behavioral science, mathematics, and natural science. The goals of these knowledge areas are broad and general. Charter Oak's general education requirement was reviewed as part of the CSU system review and found to be in

compliance with the exception of a required laboratory science that the College added to its requirements after the review.

The courses that meet the general education requirements have more specific learning outcomes that fit into the parameters set by the knowledge areas above. Faculty assess assignments and participation in the courses to determine whether students have met the course learning outcomes and earn the related general education credits.

The College also uses information from the Graduation Survey for an indirect assessment of general education. Students are asked to self-assess their competency in 12 areas. They are 1) writing effectively, 2) speaking effectively, 3) thinking critically, 4) analyzing information, 5) making ethical decisions, 6) understanding US History, 7) understanding other cultures, 8) global understanding, 9) understanding literature and fine arts, 10) understanding people, groups, and society, 11) understanding mathematics, and 12) understanding science and the scientific method. Students provide two competency ratings for each area. One rating is for when they first began their education at Charter Oak and the other is for just prior to graduation. Rating categories are *not competent*, *somewhat competent*, *competent*, and *very competent*.

Not surprisingly, graduates believe themselves to be more competent in all areas at graduation compared to when they began their education. The tendency is for students to self-assess as *somewhat competent* or *competent* when reflecting back to when they first started at Charter Oak and as *competent* or *very competent* at graduation.

Graduation Satisfaction Measures

When students apply for graduation, they are given the opportunity to complete a graduation survey (Appendix JJ). The response rate is high (over 90%) because the survey is integrated with the online graduation application. The survey helps the College understand how students feel about their experience at Charter Oak and what they are planning for the future.

Two open-ended questions ask students what they liked best about Charter Oak and what they wish could be changed. Students commonly report that they like the friendly transfer credit policy, the flexibility and convenience of online education, 8-week courses, and affordability. Things that students would like to change are more varied and often one-offs. Many students report that "nothing" should be changed, but some examples of suggested changes include more course offerings, better course descriptions, clearer communication about financial aid, billing, and payment procedures, a better Blackboard experience, better communication about dates and deadlines, more rigor in online discussions, quicker access to academic advisors, and the development of graduate programs.

Over the past three years, 50-60% of bachelor's degree recipients report that they are not planning to pursue further education or that they do not know yet. Among students who are planning further study, over 80% report being well or very well prepared for future study. Among associate degree recipients, 67-79% indicated that they plan to pursue further education, with over 80% of those planning to continue at Charter Oak.

A great majority of associate and bachelor's degree recipients (80-90%) report being employed, and approximately four in five say their Charter Oak experience enhanced their job skills.

The satisfaction of graduates is very high. Over the past three years, 96-97% reported being satisfied or very satisfied with Charter Oak and 98-100% would recommend Charter Oak to others.

Graduation Rates

Most Charter Oak students are part-time and all matriculate with at least nine credits from transfer courses, exams, or PLA, so Charter Oak does not report graduation rates to IPEDS based on 150% of normal time to completion. However, the College aligns its graduation rate measures with IPEDS as much as possible. The College calculates six-year graduation rates for bachelor's degree students and three-year rates for associate degree students. It also calculates rates by gender, race/ethnicity, military, College Unbound, and WIT/CT-WAGE status (see Standard 8 Data First Form about undergraduate retention and graduation rates).

Over the past four years, the six-year graduation rate has been declining (from 63% to 58%). The three-year graduation rate for associate degree students had a low of 14% three years ago, but is otherwise 23-24%.

As with retention rates, the six-year graduation rates vary by subgroup. Black students consistently graduate at lower rates than white students, while Hispanic students have mixed performance (sometimes lagging white students and sometimes outpacing them). Women have graduated at slightly lower rates than men over the past three years. Military students have poor six-year graduation rates, while WIT/CT-WAGE students perform on par with the overall population (some years slightly better and some years slightly worse).

Charter Oak has relatively few students who pursue an associate degree (See Standard 4 Data First Form on headcount by undergraduate major). Three-year graduation rates for all subgroups are low (see Standard 8 Data First Form about undergraduate retention and graduation rates).

Alumni Survey

In Fall 2013, the College restarted its alumni survey. It is done annually now, but had gone dormant for a number of years. The latest results are in Appendix KK.

Alumni are asked about employment, salary, preparation for employment or further education, and personal activities, such as raising a family, traveling, and hobbies. The information gathered is not particularly actionable. The data are unreliable because of a low response rate (16-23% over the past three years) and small number of respondents. The data seem more anecdotal rather than definitive.

The most important information the College seeks is about post-graduation employment, income, and further education. The survey's low response rate does not provide this information with any reliability. Fortunately, the College has other ways of acquiring it. Income figures for graduates working in Connecticut are available from the Connecticut Department of Labor, while post-graduation enrollment information can be acquired from the National Student Clearinghouse.

Post-Graduation Outcomes

Employment and earnings data for Connecticut students come from the Connecticut Department of Labor (CTDOL). Out-of-state student data are not available from CTDOL.

Metrics	Program Completers, FY12	Program Completers, FY13	Program Completers, FY14
Completed program	572	557	559
Completed program, CT residents	364 (64%)	354 (64%)	348 (62%)
Employed in first quarter following completion, CT residents	282 (77%)	279 (79%)	291 (84%)
Retained employment for 6 months, CT residents	272 (96%)	266 (95%)	277 (95%)
Weekly wages on entering employment, CT residents	\$1,044	\$991	\$1,204
Change in weekly wages (pre-to-post-completion), CT residents	\$268	\$184	\$269

Information about students' education beyond Charter Oak is spotty. The College has a little information from the alumni survey, but it is unreliable because of the low response rate. There is a need to use the National Student Clearinghouse to report better data on the subsequent enrollment of Charter Oak graduates.

Other Student Outcomes

While Charter Oak has no codified institutional outcomes focused on character traits, such as civic participation and religious formation, the College is aware of the voting behavior of its students. According to the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement, the voting rate of Charter Oak students was 66% in the 2012 presidential election and 44% in the 2014 mid-term election (Appendix LL). Charter Oak's rates were higher than the "All Institutions" and "Bachelors Institutions" averages. Age played a large role in determining whether students voted. The likelihood of voting increased as the age of students increased. The College's high voting rates were driven by the fact that its students are older on average than traditional college-aged students.

Course-Level Appraisal

Course and Instructor Evaluations

In Fall 2010, Charter Oak implemented an online course evaluation system aptly named CoursEval. The questions used on the evaluation surveys have gone through a number of revisions (including the period prior to Fall 2010), but trend data on two questions have remained consistent going back to Fall 2005. These questions ask students to rate the "overall effectiveness" of the course and the instructor separately. Response categories are *very high*, *high*, *average*, *low*, and *very low*.

Both courses and instructors have scored well on this measure. In any given semester, the percent of instructors and courses rated *high* or *very high* is almost always over 80%, while the

percent rated as *average* is almost always over 10%. The remaining 2-8% (varying by semester) are rated *low* or *very low*. The Provost monitors poor ratings, which are considered during faculty evaluations and academic program reviews.

In Fall 2013, the Provost, Director of IE, Assessment Committee, and core faculty reviewed the course evaluation survey to determine if it provided faculty with helpful feedback. The survey had been shortened in Spring 2012, but it was agreed that the shortened version did not provide enough information about what aspects of courses worked well and what needed improvement. Therefore, the survey was redesigned by the Assessment Committee with input from the faculty to try to achieve the right balance of questions to acquire essential information helpful to faculty without overburdening students with extraneous survey questions.

The expanded survey and results can be found in Appendix DD. The survey includes a series of statements with which students can *strongly agree*, *agree*, *disagree*, or *strongly disagree*. The statements concern specific practices related to effective teaching and course design. The feedback based on these statements help faculty unpack the concept of "effectiveness" by giving them specific areas they might seek to improve. In addition, students can provide written comments to further aid faculty.

The results thus far are encouraging. As noted in the course evaluation reports produced every semester, the percentage of students who agree that they found effective teaching practices in their courses tends to run over 90%.

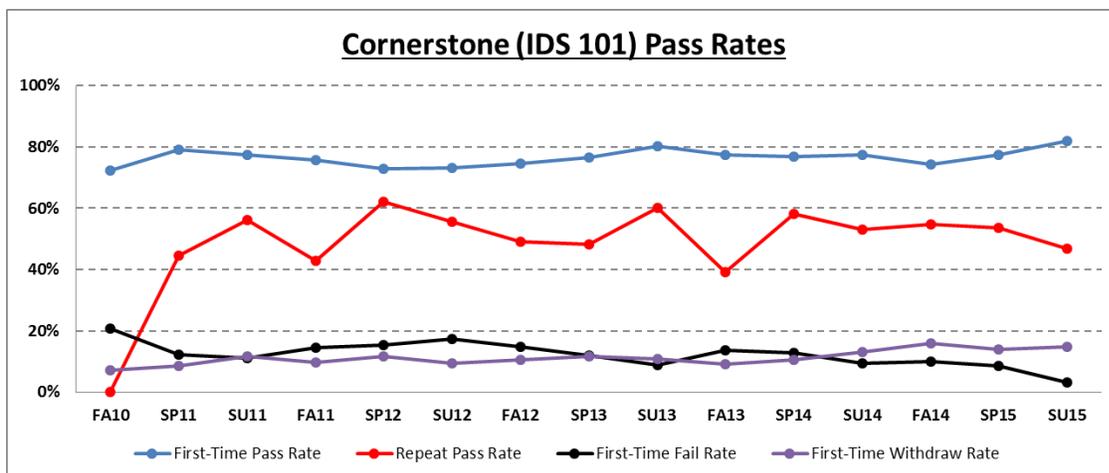
Overall, the course evaluation process is effective. The only concern that has been expressed is the response rate, which is in the range of 35-39%. It is not as high as the College would like. This is an issue shared by all colleges that have implemented online course evaluations. A counter-weight to this concern is that there exists some research to suggest that lower response rates (relative to "captive audience" paper surveys done in class) do not affect the substantive findings of evaluations in any significant way. Despite this fact, the Office of IE attempts to improve the response rate by sending faculty and students numerous reminders when the CoursEval system is open to accept responses.

The results of the student ratings are sent to the faculty members and are reviewed by the Provost who uses these ratings to improve instruction, inform faculty retention decisions, and program improvement. See Standards 4 and 6 for further elaboration.

Cornerstone Course (IDS 101)

The learning outcomes for the Cornerstone Course can be found in its syllabus. They include employing critical thinking skills, developing writing skills, developing a research project, and acquiring other skills necessary to be successful in college. Students need to pass the course with a grade of C or above to continue in a degree program.

Since Fall 2010, the pass rate among students taking IDS 101 for the first time has fluctuated slightly and averaged 76%. The average rate among students who needed to take it more than once is 52%, and rates have been more volatile from semester to semester.



Students who are unsuccessful in their first attempt taking the Cornerstone Course do not always attempt it a second time. Thus, the overall success rate has an average of 82%. In other words, Charter Oak loses an average of 18% of its new matriculants to the Cornerstone Course, which is not the intent of the course. The course is not meant to weed students out, but to position them to be successful. However, students who cannot pass the course will likely have trouble in later courses and, therefore, cannot continue at the institution.

Capstone Course

Charter Oak tracks the Capstone pass rates of students by bachelor's degree major or concentration (Appendix MM). Historically, students have been able to take the Capstone Course after completing their concentration or major requirements even if they had not yet completed the general education requirements. In some cases, this meant that a student might take the Capstone mid-career, particularly if most of the major or concentration requirements were completed via transfer courses or PLA. Usually though, students have taken the Capstone Course closer to the end of their degree program, and just recently the faculty voted to approve a policy requiring students to take the Capstone Course during the final semester before degree conferral. The reasoning was that the Capstone Course should be a culminating experience allowing students to draw upon the complete range of knowledge and skills developed during their education (including general education and elective courses), rather than just from courses in the major or concentration.

Capstone Course grades are based primarily on the completion of a Capstone research project. Instructors assess projects to determine whether they represent the culmination of student learning in the program and demonstrate program learning outcomes. The overall pass rate for Capstone Courses is very high, which is as it should be. Capstone students are generally close to graduation by the time they take the course and should be expected to pass the course with a C or better. Over the past five years, beginning in 2010-11, the pass rate has increased from 92% to 95%.

Pass rates vary by area of study. Cumulative five-year pass rates range from 79-100%. Out of 43 areas of study, 8 have pass rates of 79-89%, 6 have rates of 90-94%, and 29 have rates of 95-100%. In other words, 81% of bachelor's degree programs have Capstone pass rates of 90% or greater.

Program-Level Appraisal

To complement student-level and course-level assessment, Charter Oak engages in program-level assessment as well. This occurs in three areas.

General Education Curriculum

From 2013-15, the College used the ETS Proficiency Profile (ETSPP) to collect student data regarding general education. The data were collected to help assess its general education program, not the general education outcomes of students themselves. IE analyzed the data in December 2015 after collecting results from over 1,000 exams (Appendix NN).

To gather the data, students took the ETSPP as part of completing the Capstone Course. Students took the abbreviated, unproctored version of the test. This format was chosen because it was aimed at assessing general education outcomes in the aggregate to see if Charter Oak's program was succeeding at providing students with general knowledge and skills indicative of a bachelor's level education. It was not meant to be a student-level diagnostic test. At the time of implementation, the College was not ready to commit to the long-format diagnostic test since students often come to Charter Oak having already taken many of their general education courses at their transfer institutions.

Students responded to 36 questions that provide data on math, reading, writing, and critical thinking in the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. While the test was administered through the Capstone Course, it did not impact a student's graduation or have any bearing on the grade in the Capstone Course. Thus, the ETSPP is considered a low-stakes test.

Data analysis included comparisons with a group of institutions that administered the abbreviated, unproctored test to seniors and regression models aimed at discovering which factors drove student performance. The comparative analysis showed that Charter Oak students performed as well as the comparison group on the total score and in critical thinking, writing, and natural science. Charter Oak performed slightly better in reading, humanities, and social science, and had slightly lower scores in math. Of particular concern was the high percentage of Charter Oak students and those in the comparison group who were designated as "not proficient" in higher order reading, writing, math, and critical thinking. Percentages in these categories ranged from 50-84%.

Linear regression analysis of Charter Oak students showed that a strong predictor of all scores was whether students completed at least 75% of the test. This speaks to the low-stakes nature of the assessment. Students have no incentive beyond internal motivation to take it seriously, try their hardest, or even finish it, but those who did complete at least 75% of the test tended to score better. Other findings were that non-white students and women tended to score lower than white students and men, respectively.

Since Charter Oak students can complete much of their learning outside of Charter Oak classes, the College was particularly interested in learning how Charter Oak and other learning influenced general education outcomes. The Director of IE measured these two locations of learning using the Charter Oak and transfer GPAs, respectively. Regression analysis showed that performance in Charter Oak courses drove general education test scores, while performance in transfer courses had no effect. This finding suggests that Charter Oak's expansion into offering

its own courses online has been good for helping achieve its degree-completion mission. While transfer courses and PLA credits help students earn enough credits to graduate from Charter Oak, it appears that taking Charter Oak courses and doing the necessary work to be successful in them is what builds the skills measured by the ETSP.

Capstone Course

Capstone Courses for the majors and concentrations undergo program-level assessment. The Assessment Committee rates samples of student work against a rubric. The comparison to the rubric has no effect on student grades. Rather, the Assessment Committee rates student work in ignorance of the grades assigned to papers by Capstone instructors.

Developing a rubric has been a work-in-progress (Appendix OO). Numerous variations have been tried to determine how to best assess the areas of senior-level writing, critical thinking, and mastery of learning outcomes. Different numeric scales and weightings for the three areas have been explored, but the Assessment Committee finally concluded that points and weights create an unnecessary and artificial precision. Instead, the rubric simply has raters identify whether areas have been met, met with distinction, or not met. The rubric is being piloted this year.

Regardless of the rubric that has been used, the rubrics have demonstrated that the Capstone program is meeting its intended purpose of having students demonstrate a college-level writing, critical thinking skills, and subject matter expertise.

Capstone Courses are also reviewed as part of the program review process. In the first year of those reviews, no changes were recommended to the Capstone Course in any of the concentrations and majors under review.

Academic Program Review

Until Charter Oak became part of the CSCU system, Charter Oak reviewed its courses every five years and its program outcomes on a regular basis when it was reviewing the catalog. In 2009, the College mapped all of its course outcomes to program outcome. Since then mapping has become standard practice whenever a new program or course is developed.

Academic program review is now on a seven-year cycle following the format determined by the BOR. This process involves the faculty, instructional designers, and Provost. There is also a one-year review of new programs to see if they are meeting enrollment goals. There is a complete discussion of program review in Standard 4.

Discontinued Assessments

Research done by IE has led Charter Oak to discontinue the use of a number of assessment products since 2012

ETS Proficiency Profile (ETSP)

The ETSP was discontinued by the Assessment Committee in 2015-2016 after reviewing the data analysis done by IE. The committee had numerous concerns. First, multiple choice exams are not as rich as embedded assessment in courses. Second, there is some misalignment between the ETSP and Charter Oak's general education curriculum. Specifically, the ETSP measures

very specific skills not necessarily taught through the College's general education curriculum. Third, there is no way to compel students to do their best on the exam. Lastly, there are questions about why the test classifies so many students (Charter Oak and otherwise) as not proficient.

A number of institutions that Charter Oak uses as peers have stopped using the ETSP for the same reasons.

ETS Criterion Writing Evaluation

In October 2013, IE analyzed how Criterion placed students into gateway writing courses and how these courses related to performance in the Cornerstone Course (Appendix PP). The gateway sequence started with a writing refresher course (if needed), then proceeded to English Composition 1, which is a prerequisite to the Cornerstone Course.

Students who scored 0-2 on the Criterion were required to take the refresher course, while those with 3-6 had to take English Composition 1 unless they fulfilled that requirement with an equivalent transfer course in English composition. The College found that doing well on the Criterion predicted success in the refresher course, English composition, and the Cornerstone Course. Also, success in English composition correlated with success in the Cornerstone Course.

However, a problem with the placement process and gateway sequence existed at the beginning of the chain. Criterion placed only 5% of students into the refresher course. Furthermore, only a minority of that 5% even proceeded to take English composition. Of those that did, there was no relationship between performance in the refresher course and English composition.

The College concluded that all students should first take English composition if needed, then proceed to the Cornerstone Course if successful. The College discontinued the use of Criterion and took the writing refresher course out of the gateway sequence. There was no need to burden incoming students with a placement test that would only steer a few of them into a refresher course that did not help them succeed in English composition.

National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)

Charter Oak used the NSSE every even year from 2008-2014. The College began using it to benchmark against other adult-serving colleges as part the President's Forum "Transparency by Design" initiative, which was a collaborative group of regionally-accredited, adult-serving, distance education institutions with a mission to help adult learners become informed consumers of distance education. The participating colleges agreed upon a number of NSSE questions to use for comparison. The initiative was discontinued by the President's Forum board in 2013 (<http://www.presidentsforum.org/transparency-by-design>). In the following year, IE did a formal review of the longitudinal data to determine what, if anything, had changed (Appendix QQ).

After four NSSE administrations, 72 out of 85 (85%) metrics remained essentially unchanged. The College found that some NSSE questions that related to on-campus, co-curricular activities were not really applicable to adult students pursuing an online degree. Aggregate student responses to relevant questions about academic and intellectual experiences, assignments, quality of relationships, and the institutional environment were generally acceptable and remained unchanged. Some data regarding self-assessed personal growth were already available to us from

the College's graduation survey. In short, the College felt it was not getting useful information from NSSE and decided to discontinue its use.

Projection

- The Provost and Director of IE, along with the Assessment Committee, will pursue a number of projects over the next few years. One will be to devise a plan to assess the general education program. The Assessment Committee will explore the Lumina Foundation's Degree Qualifications Profile (DQP) and Association of American Colleges and Universities VALUE rubrics to see what they have to offer. A strong general education assessment plan will be based on the analysis of student work embedded in actual courses, rather than a one-time test to measure skill development.
- The Director of Academic Support Services, along with the IE staff, will continue to explore the impact of non-cognitive traits on retention. The College has already begun piloting a data collection project using Smarter Measure. In Fall 2016, the College will analyze the data collected to determine if there are traits identified by Smarter Measure that influence student learning. If so, the College will use the information to create resources to help students strengthen those traits.
- As part of the strategic planning process in Fall 2016, the Director of IE will conduct research into the retention and graduation gap between white and non-white students, including a review of grades and grade point averages. The College will explore variables that might help explain the gap. If there are any variables the College can affect, then the institution will pursue plans to influence them.
- The IE Office will implement a subsequent enrollment study of drop outs and graduates in Fall 2016 using the National Student Clearinghouse. This study will help the College understand where its graduates go and will also show if students who withdraw or get dismissed go on for schooling elsewhere.

**Standard 8: Educational Effectiveness
(Undergraduate Retention and Graduation Rates)**

Student Success Measures/ Prior Performance and Goals		3 Years Prior	2 Years Prior	1 Year Prior	Current Year	Next Year Forward (goal)
		(FY2013)	(FY2014)	(FY2015)	(FY2016)	(FY2017)
IPEDS Retention Data						
	Associate degree students	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Bachelor's degree students	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
?	IPEDS Graduation Data (150% of time)					
	Associate degree students	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Bachelor's degree students	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
?	IPEDS Outcomes Measures Data					
	First-time, full time students					
	Awarded a degree within six years	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Awarded a degree within eight years	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Not awarded within eight years but still enrolled	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	First-time, part-time students					
	Awarded a degree within six years	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Awarded a degree within eight years	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Not awarded within eight years but still enrolled	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Non-first-time, full-time students					
	Awarded a degree within six years	--	--	--	70%	70%
	Awarded a degree within eight years	--	--	--	70%	70%
	Not awarded within eight years but still enrolled	--	--	--	0%	0%
	Non-first-time, part-time students					
	Awarded a degree within six years	--	--	--	55%	55%
	Awarded a degree within eight years	--	--	--	60%	60%
	Not awarded within eight years but still enrolled	--	--	--	1%	1%
?	Other Undergraduate Retention/Persistence Rates					
1	One-year retention (fall-to-fall) by course reg (overall)	58%	58%	54%	58%	58%
1	One-year retention (fall-to-fall) by course reg (men)	61%	52%	47%	57%	57%
1	One-year retention (fall-to-fall) by course reg (women)	57%	61%	58%	59%	59%
1	One-year retention (fall-to-fall) by course reg (White)	61%	53%	53%	61%	61%
1	One-year retention (fall-to-fall) by course reg (Black)	55%	48%	51%	49%	49%
1	One-year retention (fall-to-fall) by course reg (Hispanic)	51%	51%	55%	58%	58%
1	One-year retention (fall-to-fall) by course reg (Others)	51%	53%	63%	61%	61%
1	One-year retention (fall-to-fall) by course reg (Military)	50%	70%	45%	43%	43%
1	One-year retention (fall-to-fall) by course reg (College Unbound)	--	--	70%	66%	66%
1	One-year retention (fall-to-fall) by course reg (WIT/CT-WAGE)	63%	83%	100%	75%	75%
2	One-year retention (spring-to-spring) by course reg (overall)	54%	54%	57%	52%	52%
2	One-year retention (spring-to-spring) by course reg (men)	47%	51%	56%	51%	51%
2	One-year retention (spring-to-spring) by course reg (women)	59%	56%	57%	52%	52%
2	One-year retention (spring-to-spring) by course reg (White)	59%	58%	61%	55%	55%
2	One-year retention (spring-to-spring) by course reg (Black)	55%	47%	51%	43%	43%
2	One-year retention (spring-to-spring) by course reg (Hispanic)	52%	52%	42%	56%	56%
2	One-year retention (spring-to-spring) by course reg (Others)	36%	45%	60%	38%	38%
2	One-year retention (spring-to-spring) by course reg (Military)	11%	43%	54%	61%	61%

2	One-year retention (spring-to-spring) by course reg (College Unbound)	--	--	--	33%	33%
2	One-year retention (spring-to-spring) by course reg (WIT/CTWAGE)	50%	100%	100%	82%	82%
3	Still enrolled at 13 months (overall)	81%	83%	82%	75%	75%
3	Still enrolled at 13 months (men)	81%	81%	83%	77%	77%
3	Still enrolled at 13 months (women)	80%	84%	82%	74%	74%
3	Still enrolled at 13 months (White)	85%	86%	85%	79%	79%
3	Still enrolled at 13 months (Black)	74%	69%	79%	63%	63%
3	Still enrolled at 13 months (Hispanic)	77%	81%	71%	78%	78%
3	Still enrolled at 13 months (Others)	70%	87%	83%	71%	71%
3	Still enrolled at 13 months (Military)	85%	74%	85%	75%	75%
3	Still enrolled at 13 months (College Unbound)	--	--	86%	81%	81%
3	Still enrolled at 13 months (WIT/CTWAGE)	65%	88%	100%	61%	61%
?	Other Undergraduate Graduation Rates					
4	Six-year grad rate for bachelor's degree (overall)	63%	61%	60%	58%	58%
4	Six-year grad rate for bachelor's degree (men)	62%	63%	62%	59%	59%
4	Six-year grad rate for bachelor's degree (women)	64%	60%	59%	57%	57%
4	Six-year grad rate for bachelor's degree (White)	63%	65%	63%	60%	60%
4	Six-year grad rate for bachelor's degree (Black)	55%	47%	49%	44%	44%
4	Six-year grad rate for bachelor's degree (Hispanic)	70%	48%	62%	58%	58%
4	Six-year grad rate for bachelor's degree (Others)	66%	69%	51%	58%	58%
4	Six-year grad rate for bachelor's degree (Military)	0%	0%	0%	17%	17%
4	Six-year grad rate for bachelor's degree (College Unbound)	--	--	--	--	--
4	Six-year grad rate for bachelor's degree (WIT/CTWAGE)	67%	59%	61%	63%	63%
5	Three-year grad rate for associate degree (overall)	23%	14%	24%	23%	23%
5	Three-year grad rate for associate degree (men)	16%	20%	21%	23%	23%
5	Three-year grad rate for associate degree (women)	29%	11%	26%	22%	22%
5	Three-year grad rate for associate degree (White)	30%	14%	29%	33%	33%
5	Three-year grad rate for associate degree (Black)	0%	10%	13%	10%	10%
5	Three-year grad rate for associate degree (Hispanic)	8%	0%	0%	11%	11%
5	Three-year grad rate for associate degree (Others)	50%	43%	60%	0%	0%
5	Three-year grad rate for associate degree (Military)	--	--	--	0%	0%
5	Three-year grad rate for associate degree (College Unbound)	--	--	--	--	--
5	Three-year grad rate for associate degree (WIT/CTWAGE)	0%	0%	0%	20%	20%

Definition and Methodology Explanations

1	Students are considered retained if they are taking courses in the fall semester a year after a summer/fall entry.
2	Students are considered retained if they are taking courses in the spring semester a year after a spring entry.
3	Students are considered retained if they are still enrolled at 13 months after matriculating. Students do not need to be taking courses in the 13-month rate because they are allowed to earn credits by alternative methods.
4	Completing a bachelor's degree within six years counts as success. This rate differs from IPEDS because COSC students are all transfers (not first-time) and mostly part-time (as opposed to full-time)
5	Completing an associate degree within three years counts as success. This rate differs from IPEDS because COSC students are all transfers (not first-time) and mostly part-time (as opposed to full-time)

Standard 8: Educational Effectiveness
(Student Success and Progress Rates and Other Measures of Student Success)
As of July 2016

		Bachelor Cohort Entering		Associate Cohort Entering	
? Category of Student/Outcome Measure		6 years ago	4 years ago	6 years ago	4 years ago
? First-time, Full-time Students		Fall 2010 cohort	Fall 2012 cohort	Fall 2010 cohort	Fall 2012 cohort
Degree from original institution		--	--	--	--
Not graduated, still enrolled at original institution		--	--	--	--
Degree from a different institution		--	--	--	--
Transferred to a different institution		--	--	--	--
Not graduated, never transferred, no longer enrolled		--	--	--	--
? First-time, Part-time Students		--	--	--	--
Degree from original institution		--	--	--	--
Not graduated, still enrolled at original institution		--	--	--	--
Degree from a different institution		--	--	--	--
Transferred to a different institution		--	--	--	--
Not graduated, never transferred, no longer enrolled		--	--	--	--
? Non-first-time, Full-time Students		72%	59%	33%	20%
Degree from original institution		72%	59%	33%	20%
Not graduated, still enrolled at original institution		2%	8%	0%	0%
Degree from a different institution		1%	0%	33%	20%
Transferred to a different institution		2%	10%	0%	40%
Not graduated, never transferred, no longer enrolled		24%	24%	33%	20%
? Non-first-time, Part-time Students		55%	43%	14%	28%
Degree from original institution		55%	43%	14%	28%
Not graduated, still enrolled at original institution		4%	14%	0%	6%
Degree from a different institution		8%	4%	2%	0%
Transferred to a different institution		3%	7%	16%	25%
Not graduated, never transferred, no longer enrolled		29%	32%	68%	42%

Measures of Student Achievement and Success/Institutional Performance and Goals					
	3 Years Prior	2 Years Prior	1 Year Prior	Current Year	Next Year Forward (goal)

Success of students pursuing higher degrees (add more rows as needed; add definitions/methodology in #1 below)

1	Subsequent enrollment report to be implemented in Fall 2016 - no data available				
---	--	--	--	--	--

Other measures of student success and achievement, including success of graduates in pursuing mission-related paths (e.g., Peace Corps, public service, global citizenship, leadership, spiritual formation) and success of graduates in fields for which they were not explicitly prepared (add more rows as needed; add definitions/methodology in #2 below)

1	NA					
2						
3						
4						

Definition and Methodology Explanations

1	
2	

**Standard 8: Educational Effectiveness
(Licensure Passage and Job Placement Rates and
Completion and Placement Rates for Short-Term Vocational Training Programs)**

	3-Years Prior	2 Years Prior	1 Year Prior	Most Recent Year
	(FY 2)	(FY 2)	(FY 2)	(FY 2)

? State Licensure Examination Passage Rates									
	Name of exam	# who took exam	# who passed	# who took exam	# who passed	# who took exam	# who passed	# who took exam	# who passed
1	No state license exams								
2									
3									
4									
5									

? National Licensure Passage Rates									
	Name of exam	# who took exam	# who passed	# who took exam	# who passed	# who took exam	# who passed	# who took exam	# who passed
1	No national license exams								
2									

? Job Placement Rates										
	Major/time period	*	# of grads	# with jobs						
1	No tracking of job placement by major									
2										

* Check this box if the program reported is subject to "gainful employment" requirements.

Web location of gainful employment report (if applicable)

Completion and Placement Rates for Short-Term Vocational Training Programs for which students are eligible for Federal Financial Aid

3 Years Prior	2 Years Prior	1 Year Prior	Current Year	Next Year Forward (goal)
(FY 2)	(FY2)	(FY 2)	(FY 2)	(FY 2)

? Completion Rates					
1					
2					

? Placement Rates					
1					
2					

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

**Standard 8: Educational Effectiveness
(Graduate Programs, Distance Education, Off-Campus Locations)**

Student Success Measures/ Prior Performance and Goals	3 Years Prior (FY2013)	2 Years Prior (FY2014)	1 Year Prior (FY2015)	Current Year (FY2016)	Next Year Forward (goal) (FY2017)
--	------------------------------	------------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------	--

? Master's Programs (Add definitions/methodology in #1 below) Retention rates first-to-second year Graduation rates @ 150% time Average time to degree Other measures, specify:	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

? Doctoral Programs (Add definitions/methodology in #2 below) Retention rates first-to-second year Graduation rates @ 150% time Average time to degree Other measures, specify:	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

? First Professional Programs (Add definitions/methodology in #3 below) Retention rates first-to-second year Graduation rates @ 150% time Average time to degree Other measures, specify:	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

Distance Education (Add definitions/methodology in #4 below) Course completion rates (C or better) Course completion rates (D- or better) Retention rates Graduation rates Other measures, specify:	84%	85%	85%	85%	85%
	88%	88%	88%	88%	88%
	See 8.1				
	See 8.1				

Branch Campus and Instructional Locations (Add definitions/methodology in #5 below) Course completion rates Retention rates Graduation rates Other measures, specify:	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

Definition and Methodology Explanations

1	
2	
3	
4	Course completion rates use grades A through F, plus W and AW. The two withdrawal grades count as non-completion because the credits are not earned, but are counted as attempted.
5	

Standard Nine: Integrity, Transparency, and Public Disclosure

Integrity

As a public College within the CSCU system, the College's leadership, faculty and staff strive to operate within the highest ethical standards on behalf of all of its constituencies, including students, prospective students, faculty, staff, alumni, donors and the general public, and to be transparent in all of its endeavors. The College's delivery of information has greatly improved with the evolution of its website to a content management system, supporting its efforts to fully disclose to all interested parties policies and information that impact all areas of the College and ultimately its students and prospective students. The recent refresh of the publicly facing website (www.charteroak.edu) and its internal student portal (acorn.charteroak.edu) provide a more easily navigated interface from which to locate information, and the public site is now responsive and easily navigated via various technologies (i.e., smart phones, tablets, desktops).

The College outlines its expectations for students and staff online. For students, policies are located in the online Official Catalog posted on the website. Policies outlined within the Students Rights and Responsibilities section include Policy of Nondiscrimination, Student Code of Conduct, Campus Security, Academic Honesty Policy, and Sexual Assault Policy. The Academic Policies and Regulations section lists 27 policies in effect. The expectations for staff, including all policies and procedures, are posted online on the College's SharePoint site. Its nondiscrimination and affirmative action policy is published within its brochures for prospective students and also online. Faculty can access the Teaching Faculty Handbook in the Faculty Resource Center in Blackboard. Charter Oak's Bylaws outline the roles and responsibilities for teaching faculty, core faculty, and special assessment faculty. New Teaching and Core Faculty must participate in a faculty orientation program and continue to participate in ongoing faculty development. Finally, the Board of Regents posts policies on its website (www.ct.edu) by which the College is also governed by. Responsibilities related to the Teaching and Core faculty are discussed with the respective groups before any changes are made. See Standard 6.

The online Catalog and the Registrar's section of the College's online Student Portal addresses Academic Integrity, including the definitions of Academic Misconduct, the role of instructors related to plagiarism, suspicious behavior, and academic misconduct, sanctions, and options for students to contest any sanctions applied. The college strictly adheres to all FERPA regulations on behalf of its students. Policies and procedures are applied equitably to all students according to which Official Catalog students fall under based on their matriculation date. The Official Catalog is reviewed annually by all departments of the College and policies are updated as appropriate. If there are imminent policy changes, students are immediately notified of the changes via email, a notice on the web page, and in the student newsletter. The content of all College advertising and collateral (brochures, direct mail, posters) is screened by the Marketing Director and provides factual information about the institution, programs and the job market related to programs so prospective students can make an informed decision before enrolling.

Since all of Charter Oak's faculty are adjunct, the College does not limit their educational nor their consulting pursuits unless they want to use Charter Oak students, staff, facilities, or data. In those cases, they are governed under the same policies as are full time faculty within the CSCU system. If students want to do research as part of a course, the instructor would need to work with the student to determine if institutional review board (IRB) approval is needed.

The College clearly displays on its website that it is accredited by NEASC, receives its formal authority to operate in the state of Connecticut from Connecticut's Office of Higher Education (OHE), and that it is one of 17 colleges in the CSCU system, governed by Connecticut's Board of Regents for Higher Education. State specific and other required disclosures are posted on the website (www.charteroak.edu/current/services/compliance-complaint-resolution.cfm). Charter Oak's Health Information Management major recently received accreditation status by the Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management, (CAHIIM), the governing authority in the field. This accreditation is clearly portrayed on the website (www.charteroak.edu/health-information-management). The Provost oversees the College's accreditation and state authorization approval processes and our Executive Committee ensures that the College observes the laws governing the institution.

As previously noted, the College's policies of nondiscrimination and affirmative action are posted online within the Official Catalog and published within brochures for prospective students, current students, staff, instructors and the public. It is also published within the Teaching Faculty Handbook. Charter Oak's advertising and website features images reflecting a diverse population and its recruitment practices are inclusive of all gender and ethnic identities. The College enthusiastically supports the efforts of its hiring committees to embrace the affirmative action policies at the College. The Affirmative Action Plan is presented annually by the Chief Financial Officer to the staff. A member of the Human Resources staff meets with all search committees to go over hiring procedures and participates in the searches.

The College is forthright in its mission and policies and makes every effort in interactions with students to serve them with the utmost integrity, from their first touch experience with the College whether that be a formal inquiry, an interaction with a counselor via an online admissions chat or a simple question posted on its Facebook page. This continues to their academic experience at the College with its Academic Counselors who provide counsel via email and phone or in person when requested, and in interactions with instructors via courses, concentration plans of study approval process, or emails or phone calls with the students. The College receives very few complaints regarding its staff or faculty; however, when it does, the Executive Staff investigates the complaint and responds quickly. The College's automated communications are approved; copies of e-mail communications and notes are stored by Admissions Counselors and Academic Counselors in "Note Pad," a feature within the student information system (SIS). The College has approved templates for a majority of its communications. Communications are sent via college email accounts and therefore is retrievable as needed. The College has provided staff training on customer service. The Faculty Handbook (www.charteroak.edu/aboutus/teaching-faculty-handbook-rv-072315.pdf), appointment letter, and orientation for Teaching Faculty address the timelines and appropriateness of communication with the students. The College requires that all communications be done within the Blackboard system and that only Charter Oak emails be used so the administration can easily research any complaints.

As noted in Standard Five under *Student Activities*, the College has expanded its student services to include more workshops that are specific to its mission of educating students who are often working, raising families and completing their degrees. Workshops are held in the evening and usually feature a webinar component for those at a distance. Enrollment Services provides counsel via evening and lunchtime open houses and weekly online chats. Career Services are

offered via the website and also by appointment with one of the Academic Counselors who has a career services background. The College's Foundation sponsors academic lectures and panels that are free and open to the public supported by the Shea Endowment fund. This year's panel discussed "Work and the Modern Family: Connecting the Dots."

Appeals procedures and hearings for students are outlined in the Official Catalog's Student Code of Conduct section and Academic Policies and Procedures section, as well as the Registrar's section within the online student portal. The Faculty Grievance policy is covered in the Faculty Handbook. Staff grievance resolution is outlined in the current union contract which is accessed online via the institutional SharePoint platform.

Continual review and discussion of the delivery of the College's mission, and the successful implementation of its policies and procedures, are discussed during weekly Executive Committee meetings, monthly Cabinet meetings, and Core Faculty Committee meetings. Minutes of the Core Faculty meetings and Cabinet meetings are posted in SharePoint. A review of policies and procedures are undertaken according to agenda items and adjustments and/or modifications implemented accordingly. These changes are made with thoughtful consideration of the interests of all parties and in a transparent manner in the spirit of institutional integrity.

Charter Oak keeps the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (CIHE) abreast of its new endeavors through the annual review process and in between through phone calls and e-mails. The College often relies on the Commission for advice and counsel. Charter Oak maintains a great relationship with the Commission and appreciates the staff's openness and responsiveness.

Institutional integrity is embodied in all the College undertakes whether it is through its marketing, its website, its policies, or its interaction with students, faculty, staff or the public. In addition to the requirements already covered in the NEASC standards, the College is also responsive to all standards outlined by the Connecticut Office of Higher Education and the BOR.

Transparency

As an online college, all policies, procedures, and academic information affecting and of interest to students and prospective students is published in the following locations: the Official Catalog (www.charteroak.edu/catalog), the Acorn student portal (<http://acorn.charteroak.edu>), or by searching the main website (www.charteroak.edu). The College website also includes a "Public Disclosure" page that contains information relevant to its constituents (www.charteroak.edu/aboutus/disclosures.cfm).

Admissions information is covered fully in the Admissions section on CharterOak.edu, which is logically housed under the *Get Started* tab located on the homepage. Employment information is located in the *About Us* section of the website. Information outlining student discipline and the consideration of complaints and appeals is contained in an orderly fashion that is easily navigated within the Official Catalog, located on the CharterOak.edu website. All student related processes and procedures can also be found on the ACORN student portal.

The College has a public webpage profiling our students and graduates (www.charteroak.edu/aboutus/profile.cfm). Included are retention and graduation rates, employment outcomes, and financial metrics. The College also provides data to many college

guide publishers, such as College Board and Princeton Review. The College responds to data requests from the Board of Regents, Governor's Office, and State Legislature. Occasional email and phone requests for information are addressed, when reasonable, using aggregated data stripped of any personally identifiable information.

The College had not previously published its financial audits on its website, however, it has begun to do so with the FY15 audit, which was recently completed. It can be found on the "Disclosures" page in the "About Us" section on CharterOak.edu (www.charteroak.edu/aboutus/disclosures.cfm).

Some information on the College's website is synced so that when a change is made in one location it will automatically update in all locations. Other information is purposely housed in only one location so that when updates are made there is only that one current and factual reference available. Both previous print catalogs (when there were only print catalogs) and more recent electronic catalogs are archived and can be requested through the Registrar's Office. Our official College catalogs are also available through College Source, dating back to 2000. At that time Charter Oak only offered a handful of courses, and most of them were video correspondence courses and not offered online.

The information in the "Institutional Profile" and "Fact Sheet" section of the website (<https://www.charteroak.edu/aboutus/profile.cfm>) is data that has been garnered from various places, such as surveys, enrollment data, and financial data that are a standard part of the College's data collection and analysis. Information on jobs, tuition comparisons, etc., have been verified either by documented means, such as our CAHIIM accreditation status, Bureau of Labor statistics for that field, or promotions or job status of our Alums that are either submitted by Alums or documented via a news story in the media. Learning outcomes are documented on the website and all references to the College's programs in advertising and on the website are factually accurate and updated as needed.

The College's Official Catalog is subject to an annual review that involves college-wide assessment, input and updating that occurs over a four to five month period. The Registrar tracks changes in policies throughout the year to ensure that the Catalog is methodically reviewed and updated in detail. The Teaching Faculty Handbook is updated annually. Print publications, such as program brochures, are frequently updated as changes occur so as to provide the most accurate information to prospective students and the public as possible at that time. New information is added to the College's website daily.

Public Disclosure

All information outlined in standards 9.18 to 9.25, excluding 9.21 and 9.22 noted below, is clearly conveyed either in the Official Catalog or at a location on the website. The College's Official Catalog is online and easily accessible on the website.

Standard 9.21 is not applicable to Charter Oak State College since there is no physical classroom space or branch campuses. Regarding standard 9.22, the institution publishes information regarding what *is* available. The College publishes a yearly revolving course schedule so students can always plan out a year at a time. If a course is not available when a student needs it, the College arranges for the student to be able to take it as a contract learning course. The

College publishes a schedule of when tutoring and help desk services are available. If for any reason, the College is closed, Blackboard is not available, or the email is not available students and faculty are notified. If either Blackboard or email is scheduled to be unavailable, students and faculty are notified in advance.

The Core and Teaching Faculty are listed on the website

(<https://www.charteroak.edu/aboutus/faculty.cfm>), along with an explanation of the role each plays in the institution. The role of the Special Assessment Faculty is explained, but they are not listed because they change constantly depending on the program being evaluated.

The College publishes information about tuition and fees in the online catalog and at www.charteroak.edu/prospective/tuition. A net cost calculator is available at www.charteroak.edu/netcost. A breakdown of the total cost of attendance, including books and living allowances, is at www.charteroak.edu/current/sfa/whatwillitcost.cfm. Financial aid eligibility requirements and availability are at www.charteroak.edu/current/sfa/types.cfm.

Data regarding Charter Oak's default rates and average annual loan amounts are publicly available on College Navigator, run by the US Department of Education, at <http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/?id=128780>. It is also available on the College's Institutional Profile page (<http://www.charteroak.edu/aboutus/profile.cfm>). Charter Oak's default rate is 4.3%, significantly below the national average of 11.8%.

The Director of Marketing and Public Relations is the official spokesperson for the College. All requests from the media for information flows through the Marketing Department. The Registrar and Provost are the official contacts for requests coming from someone other than the student regarding information about a student. Staff are trained on FERPA and HIPAA requirements. Official enrollment statistics come from the Institutional Effectiveness Office. All faculty and staff are reminded at meetings and in orientation that they are representing the College when they speak to the public, students, prospective students, conference attendees, and others. Staff are also clearly aware of the level of obligations they can make in the name of the College.

The College's accreditation status is clearly worded on the website, in our publications, and within the College's boilerplate that appears at the bottom of all news releases.

Appraisal

The Marketing Department has only one person dedicated to managing the website, along with other responsibilities. Therefore it found that it could no longer keep up with the requests for updates to the web pages. As a result, over the past five years the Marketing Department has implemented a content management system for its website. The College has trained almost two dozen staff members to act as editors, which allows them to make immediate updates to their assigned pages on CharterOak.edu. The Marketing Department has set up a process for editors and publishers so there are always two checks of the content before it goes live. This change expanded the internal resources so that changes are made very quickly, in real time, and resulting in a more up-to-date and transparent collection of information for the students.

In reviewing the website as part of the College's ADA strategic plan, it was determined that the website needed to be accessible to students with screen readers. That change has been made. In addition, the website is now mobile friendly so it can be viewed on any device.

The College's Office of Accessibility Services recently obtained the JAWS software program (screen reading software). The program will be made available for use by the Accessibilities Specialist, the Instructional Design Team, and other departments as needed. It will be used to identify areas within Blackboard, the website, and Jenzabar that are not compatible with screen readers.

A redesign of the website provided the College with the ability to improve navigation so users could promptly and easily find what they were looking for. The College made this change in response to comments that users were having difficulty locating information. It resulted in most items being located only two clicks away from the homepage. In addition, the refresh included transitioning to a responsive site, automatically adjusting the screen size whether a user is operating a smartphone, tablet or laptop.

Based on a survey of its students, the growing cost of printing the Catalog, and the growth of its online offerings, the College began moving to an online Catalog over five years ago giving the option to students to request a printed copy of the Catalog. After a couple of years, there were no requests, so the College moved the Catalog totally online in 2013-14. The College will still provide a printed copy upon request. This move allows only having information in one place with links from other areas on the website making it easier to have accuracy in information. The Catalog is now fully indexed and is more accessible and accurate as information is updated to reflect changes that occur throughout the year.

Up until this year, the College did not include its strategic plan on the website. The decision was made by the Executive staff to begin including it in the name of transparency. It is available at www.charteroak.edu/aboutus/strategic-plan.cfm. The Executive staff also decided to expand the Institutional Profile on the site to include success rates, persistence rates, financial aid, and strategic initiatives.

Additionally, based on the review of the PLA material on the website as part of the BMI grant, the PLA Coordinator has expanded the credit for prior learning section. The College made these changes to be transparent, to be helpful to students, and to be responsive to posting/publishing mandates.

While there will always be room for improvement, the presentation of the College's programs is now clearer to students than ever before. The Director of Admissions reports receiving fewer requests for refunds of the application fee, and far fewer statements from prospective students suggesting that they are unable to locate information or that our website is unclear.

Based on data measuring Facebook usage by our students, the College has begun using Facebook to provide fast and easy communication to those students who like the College's Facebook page. Posts include reminders to register for courses, order books, or sign up for upcoming events. This was done to offer students another way of receiving information from the College that best works with their schedules. Using Facebook meets them online where they might already be instead of asking them to continually check their college email account.

As a result of the Marketing Department tracking the behavior of prospective students, the College is utilizing more online advertising and social media in its marketing efforts. Almost 50% of the efforts for marketing Connecticut's "Go Back to Get Ahead" program were online, and data show that our prospective students are utilizing social media to have conversations with the College, have questions answered, and find information or receive recommendations from other students or alumni related to the College. The College recognizes that students who choose to attend an online college are generally responsive to online advertising. In addition, this allows the College to provide real time information to prospects and students, meeting them "where they are" as opposed to waiting for them to "come to us" via the Charter Oak website.

Projection

- In 2016-17, the College will investigate purchasing a text messaging service to provide students with information more efficiently and effectively.

Standard 9: Integrity, Transparency, and Public Disclosure (Integrity)

?	Policies	Last Updated	Website location where policy is posted	Responsible Office or Committee
	Academic honesty	5/20/04	http://www.charteroak.edu/catalog/current/student_rights_responsibilities/academic_honesty_policy.cfm	Provost
	Intellectual property rights			
	Conflict of interest			
	Privacy rights			
	Fairness for students	7/1/12	http://www.charteroak.edu/catalog/current/student_rights_responsibilities/student_code_conduct.cfm	Provost
	Fairness for faculty	2010	Faculty Resource Center	Provost
	Fairness for staff	6/30/10	http://www.ct.edu/files/pdfs/hr-2006-2010-Professional-Union-Contract.pdf	Finance and Administration
	Academic freedom			
	Research			
	Title IX			
	Non-discrimination policies			
	Recruitment and admissions	6/30/16	http://www.charteroak.edu/catalog/current/student_rights_responsibilities/policy_non_discrimination.cfm	Provost and CFO
	Employment	6/30/16	http://www.charteroak.edu/catalog/current/student_rights_responsibilities/policy_non_discrimination.cfm	Provost and CFO
	Evaluation	6/30/10	http://www.ct.edu/files/pdfs/hr-2006-2010-Professional-Union-Contract.pdf	Human Resources
	Disciplinary action	6/30/10	http://www.ct.edu/files/pdfs/hr-2006-2010-Professional-Union-Contract.pdf	Human Resources
	Advancement	6/30/10	http://www.ct.edu/files/pdfs/hr-2006-2010-Professional-Union-Contract.pdf	Human Resources
	Other: Dealing with troubled students	2008	Faculty Resource Center	Provost

Resolution of grievances

Students	7/1/12	http://www.charteroak.edu/catalog/current/student_rights_responsibilities/student_code_conduct.cfm	Provost
Faculty	2010	Faculty Resource Center	Provost and UG Dean
Staff	6/30/10	http://www.ct.edu/files/pdfs/hr-2006-2010-Professional-Union-Contract.pdf	HR
Other; specify			

?	Other	Last Updated	Website location or Publication	Responsible Office or Committee

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

Standard 9: Integrity, Transparency, and Public Disclosure (Transparency)

Information	Website location and/or Relevant Publication(s)
How can inquiries be made about the institution? Where can questions be addressed?	https://www.charteroak.edu/aboutus/department-directory.cfm
Notice of availability of publications and of audited financial statement or fair summary	https://www.charteroak.edu/aboutus/disclosures.cfm
Processes for admissions	http://www.charteroak.edu/prospective/apply/index.cfm
Processes for employment	http://www.charteroak.edu/aboutus/employment.cfm
Processes for grading	https://www.charteroak.edu/catalog/current/academic_policies_regulations/index.cfm
Processes for assessment	http://www.charteroak.edu/prior-learning-assessment/index.cfm
Processes for student discipline	https://www.charteroak.edu/catalog/current/student_rights_responsibilities/student_code_conduct.cfm
Processes for consideration of complaints and appeals	https://www.charteroak.edu/catalog/current/student_rights_responsibilities/

List below the statements or promises made regarding program excellence, learning outcomes, success in placement, and achievements of graduates or faculty and indicate where valid documentation can be found.

Statement/Promise	Website location and/or publication where valid documentation can be found

Date of last review of:	
Print publications	Program Brochures – Annual review in January; Semester Brochures – Created new each semester
Digital publications	Online Catalog – Annual review in Spring for July 1 posting

Please enter any explanatory notes in the box below

Standard 9: Integrity, Transparency, and Public Disclosure (Public Disclosure)

Information	Website location
Institutional catalog	https://www.charteroak.edu/catalog/current
Obligations and responsibilities of students and the institution	http://www.charteroak.edu/catalog/current/student_rights_responsibilities/index.cfm
Information on admission and attendance	https://www.charteroak.edu/catalog/current/academic_policies_regulations/attendance_policy.cfm
Institutional mission and objectives	https://www.charteroak.edu/catalog/current/general-information/
Expected educational outcomes	http://www.charteroak.edu/prospective/programs/
Status as public or independent institution; status as not-for-profit or for-profit; religious affiliation	http://www.charteroak.edu/aboutus/
Requirements, procedures and policies re: admissions	https://www.charteroak.edu/catalog/current/ug_admission_policies_matriculation/index.cfm
Requirements, procedures and policies re: transfer credit	https://www.charteroak.edu/catalog/current/academic_policies_regulations/course_transfer_policy.cfm
A list of institutions with which the institution has an articulation agreement	http://www.charteroak.edu/community-college/
Student fees, charges and refund policies	https://www.charteroak.edu/catalog/current/fees_financial_aid_scholarships/
Rules and regulations for student conduct	http://www.charteroak.edu/catalog/current/student_rights_responsibilities/student_code_conduct.cfm
Procedures for student appeals and complaints	http://www.charteroak.edu/catalog/current/academic_policies_regulations/grade_appeal_procedures.cfm
Other information re: attending or withdrawing from the institution	http://www.charteroak.edu/catalog/current/academic_policies_regulations/administrative_withdrawals.cfm
Academic programs	http://www.charteroak.edu/prospective/programs/
Courses currently offered	http://www.charteroak.edu/catalog/current/courses/index.cfm
Other available educational opportunities	http://www.charteroak.edu/certificates/index.cfm
Other academic policies and procedures	http://www.charteroak.edu/catalog/current/academic_policies_regulations/
Requirements for degrees and other forms of academic recognition	http://www.charteroak.edu/catalog/current/academic_policies_regulations/graduation_requirements.cfm
List of continuing faculty, indicating department or program affiliation, degrees held, and institutions granting them	http://www.charteroak.edu/catalog/current/appendices/teaching-faculty.cfm
Names and positions of administrative officers	https://www.charteroak.edu/aboutus/staff-directory.cfm
Names, principal affiliations of governing board members	http://www.ct.edu/regents/members
Locations and programs available at branch campuses, other instructional locations, and overseas operations at which students can enroll for a degree, along with a description of programs and services available at each location	NA
Programs, courses, services, and personnel not available in any given academic year.	NA
Size and characteristics of the student body	https://www.charteroak.edu/aboutus/profile.cfm
Description of the campus setting	https://www.charteroak.edu/aboutus/directions.cfm
Availability of academic and other support services	http://www.charteroak.edu/catalog/current/student_services/index.cfm
Range of co-curricular and non-academic opportunities available to students	http://www.charteroak.edu/catalog/current/student_services/index.cfm
Institutional learning and physical resources from which a student can reasonably be expected to benefit	http://www.charteroak.edu/catalog/current/student_services/index.cfm
Institutional goals for students' education	http://www.charteroak.edu/aboutus/strategic-plan.cfm

Success of students in achieving institutional goals including rates of retention and graduation and other measure of student success appropriate to institutional mission. Passage rates for licensure exams, as appropriate	https://www.charteroak.edu/aboutus/profile.cfm
Total cost of education and net price, including availability of financial aid and typical length of study	http://www.charteroak.edu/prospective/tuition
Expected amount of student debt upon graduation and loan payment rates	https://www.charteroak.edu/aboutus/profile.cfm
Statement about accreditation	https://www.charteroak.edu/aboutus/accreditation.cfm

Appendices

Appendix	Description
A	Affirmation of Compliance
B	Audited Financial Statements, FY 2015
C	Auditor's Management Letter
D	Making Assessment More Explicit: E-Series Form
E	NEASC Self-Study Participants
F	Strategic Plan 2015-16
G	New Student Survey Results
H	Sample of weekly enrollment report
I	Inflow/outflow chart and Monte Carlo projection
J	Student profile
K	Florida marketing campaign documents
L	Go Back to Get Ahead PowerPoint
M	PLA Scholarship Report
N	Enrollment plan
O	Academic Counseling External Review
P	Program review calendar
Q	Summary results of program reviews
R	Sample TAP pathways
S	CCAP Manual
T	CACE documents
U	Health and Life Science CCAP document
V	Samples of CPS documents
W	Agreement with College Unbound and Cost/Revenue Figures
X	Accessibility service forms
Y	Orientation Study
Z	College By-Laws
AA	Faculty handbook and appointment letter
BB	Faculty orientation documents
CC	Sample program crosswalks
DD	Course evaluation survey and summary report
EE	Letter of employment
FF	Collective bargaining agreements
GG	Affirmative action plan
HH	Foundation strategic plan
II	Library Review
JJ	Graduation Survey
KK	Alumni Survey
LL	NSLVE Voting Report
MM	Capstone pass rates
NN	ETS Proficiency Profile Report
OO	Capstone Rubric
PP	ETS Criterion Report
QQ	NSSE Overview