Middle States Commission on Higher Education
Periodic Review Report

Presented by:
Bryn Athyn College of the New Church

May 2008

Chief Executive Officer: President Eric H. Carswell

Commission action which preceded this report:
Reaccreditation, March 2003

Date of the evaluation team's visit:
November 2002

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Information Available Upon Request

- 2006 Academy Strategic Plan

- Baccalaureate Reports for Six Majors (abstracted versions appear in PRR)

- Faculty Handbook

- Sasaki Comprehensive Master Plan, September 2006

- Student Handbook

- Architects' video 3-D rendering of Science and Classroom building and Admissions Complex

- Communications Plan from Lawlor, Inc. (2007)

- Search and Awareness Campaign Proposal from Royall & Co. (2007)

- General Awareness Plan from Lawlor, Inc. (2008)

Periodic Review Report Committee

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Middle States Commission on Higher Education

Certification Statement:
Compliance with MSCHE Eligibility Requirements
& Federal Title IV Requirements

An institution seeking <u>initial accreditation</u> or <u>reaffirmation of accreditation</u> must affirm that it meets or continues to meet established MSCHE eligibility requirements and federal requirements relating to Title IV program participation by completing this certification statement. *The signed statement should be attached to the Executive Summary of the institution's self-study report.*

If it is not possible to certify compliance with all eligibility requirements and federal Title IV requirements, the institution must attach specific details in a separate memorandum.

 Bryn Athyn College of the New Church   is seeking
(Name of Institution)

(Check one)   ___ Initial Accreditation   _X_ Reaffirmation of Accreditation

The undersigned hereby certify that the institution meets all established eligibility requirements of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education and federal requirements relating to Title IV program participation.

___ Exceptions are noted in the attached memorandum (check if applicable)

_____   _____
(Chief Executive Officer)   (Date)

_____   _____
(Chair, Board of Trustees or Directors)   (Date)

PART ONE
Executive Summary

Process for writing the periodic review report

The report was written primarily by a team of three people—the academic dean, the college dean, and the director of outcomes—with the academic dean leading the process. The dean of students and the theological school dean wrote their respective sections, and input from the president and treasurer helped shape parts two, four, and six. Heads of majors worked on assessment reports for each major and gave feedback for part five. A summary of purpose, content, and progress went to the board of trustees and faculty in February 2008. The report went through multiple drafts of each section. The academic sections of the report (parts two, three, and five) went to the curriculum and academic policy committee for review in April. The completed report went to College faculty and the board of trustees for review in early May.

Although the process for writing the PRR would have been better served if key members of the team had release time to collect, write, and revise their sections (rather than an overload of additional duties stemming from the campus growth initiative), the committee as a whole is satisfied that the report is thorough, specific, and honest, and that it positions the College well for a useful self-study in 2012.

Overview of Bryn Athyn College of the New Church

Bryn Athyn College is a religious, four-year liberal arts college offering six baccalaureate degrees in biology (BA/BS), education (BS), English (BA), history (BA), interdisciplinary studies (BA), and religion (BA). A psychology major (BA) has been affirmed by faculty (April 2008) and might be introduced in 2009 if sufficient resources can be allocated. The College also offers an associate degree with emphases in a variety of liberal arts disciplines, but this two-year degree—now optional rather than required for the BA/BS programs—is becoming less integral to the academic identity of the College as it moves toward a four-year identity.

The College is served by 21 full-time faculty members (24 FTE), 76 percent of whom have a PhD or terminal degree in their field. This year's student body of 122 students comes from 14 states and 14 foreign countries. Bryn Athyn College operates on a trimester calendar, where one term credit is equivalent to one semester credit. The institution is a part of The Academy of the New Church, which is affiliated with the General Church of the New Jerusalem.

Academy and General Church

Chartered in 1877, the Academy of the New Church includes the Theological School, Bryn Athyn College of the New Church, a secondary school for girls, and a secondary school for boys. The Academy operates under the auspices of the General Church of the New Jerusalem, a Christian church that accepts as written revelation the Old and New

Testaments and the theological works of the eighteenth-century theologian Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772). The specific term "General Church" refers to an organization consisting of about 60 communities around the world, of which Bryn Athyn Pennsylvania is the Episcopal center. The more philosophical term "New Church" refers to the spiritual growth within any individual who lives a life of love and charity, in harmony with the teachings revealed by Swedenborg. A summary of the teachings and faith of the New Church can be found in the introduction to the 2002 Self-Study Report.

Mission and Vision

Mission Statement

Bryn Athyn College of the New Church serves as an intellectual center for all who desire to pursue a higher education in the liberal arts and sciences, enriched and structured by the Old and New Testaments and the Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg. The purpose of this education is to enhance students' civil, moral, and spiritual life, as well as to contribute to human spiritual welfare.

The mission's emphasis on civil, moral, and spiritual life is finding new and tangible expression in the College's redesigned Core Program, which requires specific study in courses devoted to each of these three areas. Additionally, the College's historic emphasis on the doctrine of use is finding new expression in various efforts to integrate service into the curriculum, to continue to enhance internships as a signature program, and to view these initiatives in the context of strategic planning.

In an effort to provide the necessary focus and energy for strategic planning, the College leadership, with input from faculty and support from the Academy administration, developed a spiritual and academic vision for the growth of the College.[1] This vision is articulated in three statements: a core purpose, core values, and a thirty-year goal (see below).

Core Purpose
- To help build the Church within individuals through intellectual engagement on moral, civil, and spiritual levels.

Core Values
- Explore academic subjects in light of New Church teachings
- Inspire students to apply learning for the greater good
- Encourage spiritual inquiry and fresh applications of truth
- Help students delight in discovery
- Foster virtue-based student life

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[1] This process is based on concepts presented in Jim Collins' book *Good to Great*.

30-year goal
- Become nationally recognized for engaged, value-added learning, the integration of academic and spiritual life, and the advancement of New Church thought.[2]

Major Institutional Changes and Developments Since the 2002 Self-study

The major changes and developments since the last decennial report are the implementation of a new Core Program, the enhancement of assessment practices at course and program levels, changes to top leadership structure, some vacillations in morale as faculty weather the change, and evidence of real progress in making the College campus a viable center for higher education.

Abstract of Bryn Athyn College's 2008 Periodic Review Report

The six sections of the periodic review report follow the guidelines from Middle States' *Handbook for Periodic Review Repots* (ninth edition, including March 2006 revision to section 4, enrollment and finance trends and projections).

Part One Executive Summary

This section includes a brief description of the process for writing the periodic review report; an overview of the College and its relation to the educational institution of the Academy of the New Church and the religious institution of the General Church; a statement of major changes and developments since the decennial accreditation (2003); and abstracts of the five sections of the report.

Part Two Responses to recommendations from team report and institutional self-study

This section looks at progress in the five areas highlighted by MSCHE for the monitoring report: outcomes assessment, enrollment management, organizational structure and budgeting, facilities, and library resources. Progress in four additional areas of concern noted by the visiting team, though not specified by MSCHE, are also addressed: educational programs, faculty, student life, and the Theological School. Finally, this section updates progress (by way of reference to Appendix K) on all recommendations made by the College in its 2002 self study report. This comprehensive update of the institution's own recommendations helps the College position itself for a productive self study process in 2012.

Part Three Institution's major challenges and/or current opportunities

In addition to work already accomplished in the three areas of enrollment, campus development, and administrative restructuring, the College will need to make *further* progress in these areas, as well as in four other areas: implementation of the new Core

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[2] A longer description of the College's academic aspirations for thirty years from now can be found on the College website http://www.brynathyn.edu/Academics/VisionStatement.

Program, ongoing development of a formal assessment program, attention to issues of faculty compensation, and website development.

Part Four Analysis of enrollment and finance projections for next five years

While enrollment has remained relatively flat over the past five years, the College has recently expanded its admissions office and marketing effort in an effort to double enrollment in the next five years. A retention analysis provides additional insight into how the institution can become more effective in attracting and retaining students into its four-year programs. After reviewing revenue and expense trends over the past five years and assessing the Academy's overall financial health, this section outlines the expected financial impact of expanded enrollment on the institution's campus, resources, and programs over the next several years.

Part Five Evidence of outcomes assessment (institutional effectiveness and student learning)

The College is making progress in developing a comprehensive outcomes assessment program that relies primarily on course-level assessment. The ground work has been laid in three important areas: new standards and assessable learning outcomes for course syllabi, the implementation of a new Core Program, and the development of programmatic learning outcomes for each of the baccalaureate programs. The College has also developed and implemented a course-based assessment program to measure student proficiency in four Core skills: information literacy, public presentation, quantitative reasoning, and writing. Course grading is integral to much of this assessment, therefore grading patterns have been analyzed to see what adjustments may be necessary to use course grading in institutional assessment of student learning. The use of several standardized opinion and performance assessments complement course-based measures of institutional effectiveness.

Part Six Linked Institutional Planning and Budgeting Processes

This section presents a discussion of the financial strategy underpinning the College's strategic growth plan and explores its impact on the annual operating budget, capital expenditures, and endowment payout. Financial models developed with the help of a planning and design firm suggest that the College will likely achieve a balanced budget at an enrollment of just under 1,000 students. A balanced budget may be achieved with fewer students, depending upon factors such as increases in tuition and fees and the time frame for contributions to the capital campaign.

PART TWO
Responses to recommendations from
Visiting Team's report and from the College's self study

Three areas of follow up to the 2002 self study

I.   Five recommendations from MSCHE, followed by descriptions of progress or developments in each area since submission of the monitoring report
II. Progress in areas of concern raised by the visiting team but not specified by MSCHE for the monitoring report.
III. Progress in College's own additional recommendations from self study

I. Responses to the five recommendations from MSCHE

In March 2003 MSCHE reaffirmed the accreditation of Bryn Athyn College (letter to President Rogers from Michael Greenbaum) and requested a monitoring report (Appendix A) documenting progress in five specific areas:

> A. Outcomes Assessment
> B. Enrollment Management
> C. Organizational Structure and Budgeting
> D. Facilities
> E. Library Resources

A. Outcomes Assessment

The MSCHE asked for "further development and implementation of a comprehensive outcomes assessment plan, with linkages to the strategic planning process." In response to this request, the monitoring report targeted five areas of concern in assessment and proposed specific actions for each area. The five areas are:

> 1. Confusion about committee roles in curricular change
> 2. Syllabi standards
> 3. Curricular review and assessment of student learning
> 4. Standardized assessment tools
> 5. Connection between assessment and planning

Each area is discussed below, including developments since 2004 and future plans for improvement.

1. Confusion about committee roles in curricular change

The confusion about committee roles has been addressed through clarification of the administrative roles of three committees: Academic Affairs, Academic Policies, and

Curriculum (these committees were highlighted in the visiting team report, p. 8, Appendix B).

The College's monitoring report asserts that the confusion about committees stems more from the faculty not knowing the roles of each committee and less from actual overlap in stated functions. Little was done in 2004-2005 to clarify and distinguish the roles of these three committees. However, with the transition to a new academic dean in 2005-2006 and the formation of a "standing" curriculum committee to implement the new Core Program (2006-2008), the actual work of these committees has become more visible to the faculty. This visibility has clarified shortcomings that need to be addressed. Specifically, the Curriculum Committee is overworked; the ad hoc Academic Policy Committee seldom meets; and the Academic Affairs Committee seems unsure of its curricular role now that the academic dean relies heavily on the Curriculum Committee.

Strategies for improving the effectiveness of academic committees:

We have dissolved two of the existing committees (a and b below), redefined the curriculum committee (c below), created a new committee to address the Core Program (d below), and added a college cabinet (e below).

a. **Academic Policy Committee** has been dissolved. Historically this committee advised the academic dean on policy issues, but this advisory function can be more effectively assumed by the reconstituted *Curriculum and Academic Policy Committee* (CAP), and through ad hoc counsel to the academic dean from the heads of majors and heads of divisions.

b. **Academic Affairs Committee** has been dissolved as a formal committee, though the heads of the six divisions continue to play advisory roles and to direct their divisions. Formerly this committee provided ad hoc counsel to the dean of the College on academic issues and hiring. For the past five years, however, this committee has become increasingly less active, in part because a standing curriculum committee now oversees a new Core Program and other academic areas, and in part because the formal training of division heads in terms of expectations and responsibilities has become haphazard.

In November 2007 the dean dissolved Academic Affairs as a formal committee and communicated the following new approaches to division heads:
- The two committees *Curriculum and Academic Policy* and *Core Program* will take on academic issues, communicating with the faculty as a whole as needed and appropriate.
- Division heads will continue to provide counsel to the dean, particularly related to hiring and divisional matters.
- The College will examine ways of supporting division heads in order to clarify expectations about their duties and responsibilities, including evaluating staff, running meetings, keeping institutional records, reporting, generating new courses to support the curriculum, and providing feedback from the division to the deans on specific issues.

- Compensation will be redistributed so that a division head gets one course release instead of two for running the division, and a head of major gets one release instead of zero for running a major. (This change requires additional study.)

c. **Curriculum and Academic Policy (CAP) Committee** now replaces the former *Curriculum Committee*. The purview of the newly formed CAP committee is wider, but its responsibility for the Core Program (which absorbed most of the attention over the past two years) has been delegated to another committee called the *Core Program Committee* (see below).

Responsibilities of the new Curriculum and Academic Policy committee

Through periodic review, analysis, and reporting, the *Curriculum and Academic Policy Committee* assures that courses, curricula, and academic programs and policies sustain and further the educational goals of the College. Specific duties include:

- Review proposals for new courses, programs, or degree requirements, or *changes* to existing courses, programs, or degree requirements
- Recommend/develop policies and procedures for curricular standards; develop and communicate evaluation procedures for curriculum proposals
- Initiate discussion about academic issues and recommend changes to strengthen academic programs. Provide counsel to other groups or committees regarding academic developments. Consider issues related to academic calendar
- Recommend budget allocations to support curricular development. Sign off on academic sections of institutional strategic plans
- Study national trends in curriculum
- Make a formal year-end report to dean and faculty on committee outcomes for current year and any major initiatives for following year

d. **The Core Program Committe**e was created to relieve the workload of the curriculum committee (now called *Curriculum and Academic Policy* committee) and to provide undivided attention for the Core. The general charge of the Core Committee is "to monitor, assess, and develop the Core Program." This committee reports to *Curriculum and Academic Policy Committee*. Starting in May 2008, the *Core Committee* will be led by the faculty member who led the four-year development of the Core Program (2002-2006), previously known as the Gen Ed Program. Appendix C is the final General Education Committee Report (2006), and Appendix D outlines the program under its new name — *Core Program*.

e. **College Cabinet** was introduced in 2007 to enhance communication and coordination between the College leadership and other parts of the Academy. In addition to the deans and the director of admissions, membership includes the Academy president, executive vice-president, treasurer, head of development, head of plant operations, and business office staff. The formation of this committee, which is chaired by the dean of the college, is viewed as an interim step toward the appointment of a College president with direct authority over budget, hiring, and fundraising.

Conclusions about changes to committee structure

The changes to committee structure outlined above are intended to increase efficiency and accountability. To help faculty better understand and distinguish among the responsibilities of the three committees, each committee chair will write a short formal report to the dean in April of each year recording action items for the past year and making recommendations for the next year. These reports will be circulated to faculty, discussed at a faculty meeting in May, and stored in an institutional database, to be organized and overseen by the *Director of Institutional Outcomes and Assessment* (see Part Five, p 44, for a description of this new position).

2. Syllabi Standards

As indicated in our monitoring report, syllabi standards were developed in 2003. From September 2004 to May 2007, all faculty members made good progress in implementing these new standards. Additional components have been added to enhance the original standards. Part Five details the progress in syllabi development. We are pleased to discover that the task of articulating and implementing specific syllabi standards, and then storing all syllabi for faculty and student use, has helped us in at least four important areas:

- strengthen course offerings
- make colleagues' pedagogy more visible and appreciated, and also more open to self critique and revision
- ease the process of credit evaluation for students transferring to other institutions
- highlight the ways courses support the skills, perspectives, and values of the Core Program, which visibility in turn facilitates assessment of student learning and programmatic goals

The next step in syllabi development will be to support faculty in 1) assessing how well students are achieving the stated learning outcomes and 2) recording data appropriately. Keeping track of relevant data will facilitate institutional assessment. The challenge will be to collect only what is meaningful and to help faculty see how such information can help them strengthen their teaching. If assessment becomes yet another task without visible worth to the learning environment, faculty will cease to engage with assessment in productive ways. (Part Five addresses the issue of faculty engagement with assessment.)

3. Curricular Review and Assessment of Student Learning

In the five years since the visiting team response, the College has developed a comprehensive and assessable Core Program to replace the reliance on two-year associate degrees as a general education foundation. We have now developed new optional AA degrees (Appendix E) that work *with* the Core Program, not in lieu of it. Additionally, we have implemented new syllabi standards (as noted above) and imposed greater accountability on the baccalaureate programs (see Part Five, pp 33-43). Although we would like to have made greater progress in the formal assessment of student learning in

individual courses, and in the completion of an overarching assessment plan, we chose first to address the four areas above—Core Program; new associate degrees; syllabi standards; and accountability in majors—in order to establish the framework for meaningful, orderly, and sustainable assessment of student learning. See Part Five, pp ____, for specific descriptions of developments in and future plans for curricular review and assessment of student learning. Appendix F provides a draft of our assessment plan, the first stage of which will be implemented in 2008/09.

4. Better Use of Standardized Assessment Tools

For the last several years the College has used two standardized student opinion surveys: the UCLA Higher Education Research Institute's first year student survey, given to all first year students at the start of the academic year, and the ACT Outcomes Survey, given to all students at the end of the academic year. In an effort to obtain reliable data on four-year graduates from Bryn Athyn College over the past twenty years, the College added a standardized alumni opinion survey in 2006/07. A summary of the alumni survey results appears on pp 54-56. In addition, the College began to use two standardized performance assessments in 2006/07: the James Madison University Information Literacy test and a content literacy test for history majors –The ETS Major Field Test. These and other assessment tools are described in Part Five, pp 50-51, and Appendix F.

5. Connections Between Assessment and Planning

Over the last three years the Outcomes Committee has made three specific improvements to strengthen connections between assessment and planning:

- The committee meets every two weeks instead of only a few times during the year, and it has expanded its purview beyond the Annual Outcomes Survey to include other surveys (such as retention, transfer, alumni, advising, and freshmen surveys). The committee also reviews grading practices, institutional record keeping, and the standardization of course reviews.
- The Annual Outcomes Survey has been adjusted to enhance benchmarking with other institutions, and student government has been brought into the process to design questions to address student concerns.
- The outcomes committee has tightened the process for analyzing and reporting results from the year-end outcomes survey. Survey results are gathered and assessed in June, with specific data sent to faculty members in charge of particular areas. These faculty members generate action items to address the feedback and improve programs, and these lists then become part of formal presentations of results in September, given to faculty and the student body, and included in various written reports. (See Appendix H, *Report of the Annual Outcomes Survey, 2007*.)

The Outcomes Survey is a comprehensive instrument, measuring student opinions ranging from institutional to program-specific learning goals, student life issues, including personal safety, athletic programs, social life, and support for career

development. (Appendix F, the *Draft Assessment Plan*, includes a table that relates items on the outcomes survey to institutional outcomes at several levels, pp 7-8.) 'Closing the loop' on findings from the Outcomes Survey provides pathways for following up on all other forms of assessment. To facilitate the coordination, administration, analysis, reporting, and follow up process for assessment, the College created a new position in 2007/08, Director of Institutional Assessment and Outcomes. Part Five outlines developments in this area and proposes next steps.

B. Enrollment Management

The second of the five recommendations from MSCHE addressed the need to implement "a comprehensive enrollment management and retention plan, with a strong alumni component." Part Four summarizes developments in this area and proposes next steps.

C. Organizational Structure and Budgeting

The third of the five recommendations from MSCHE addressed the need to develop "organizational structures and budget processes that offer greater autonomy."

Governance Study

A committee was appointed by the president in the spring of 2006 to recommend changes in the administrative structures of the College and Academy to facilitate the institution's plans to expand enrollment and comply with governance standards recommended by the MSCHE.[3] Members of the committee included trustees, corporation members, faculty, and the dean of the Theological School.

In its September 2006 report, the committee recommended the following changes:

- Reorganize the Academy of the New Church into a foundation to manage the endowment in support of the College and other Academy schools.
- Designate the bishop of the General Church or his appointee as chair of the Academy board to avert the potential conflict that may arise from having the Academy president also serve as board chair.
- Establish the position of president of Bryn Athyn College. This position would report directly to and serve as an *ex officio* member of the Academy board of trustees.
- Reassign administrative functions to the College, such as finance, facilities, and development.

After the changes were recommended the ensuing discussion focused on identifying the provisional steps necessary for implementing this new structure. Several members of the faculty and corporation recommended making these changes immediately, while others advocated waiting until the institution experienced enrollment growth. There was some

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[3] The Commission indicated that the president of the institution should not also serve as chair of the board of trustees. The Academy instituted this structure in 2002.

disagreement as to whether reassigning administrative functions to the College would result in duplication of effort and additional costs to the institution. This issue will need to be resolved over the next 14 months as the institution looks toward the appointment of a College president in 2009.

Recent Actions

The Academy appointed the bishop of the General Church as chair of the Academy board in September of 2006 and created the new position of special assistant to the chancellor in February of 2007. The title of special assistant to the chancellor was changed to executive vice president (EVP) in September of 2007. The EVP, who reports to the president of the Academy and directly to the chancellor, is charged with implementing changes related to the operational success of the institution and assisting the College administration in obtaining the resources necessary for expansion. Depending on the success of this arrangement, the position of EVP may become a permanent position or be discontinued. Another potential outcome is for the position to evolve into a lay presidency. Concern was expressed by College faculty at a meeting held in February 2007 that this new position did not have any stated restrictions on its authority, that responsibility for hiring was not designated, and that the process for dismantling the position once a more permanent administrative structure is in place was not clear. The board of trustees is considering introducing several bylaw changes to help clarify the role of EVP and other senior Academy administrators.[4] In addition the College dean's contract has been extended through the 2008/09 year to provide increased continuity for the institution and a definitive timeframe for appointing a College president.

Next Steps

Bryn Athyn College's plans to significantly expand enrollment will require generous support from church members and Academy alumni. Since the majority of these groups attended high school at the Academy and not college, their allegiance is primarily to the Academy Secondary Schools. This reality makes it important for the College to maintain close ties with the Academy as a whole to promote the success of the upcoming capital campaign (see Part Six). While the institution's longer-term goal is to provide the College with the autonomy and resources necessary to fulfill its mission, these developments have been delayed in order to take advantage of the Academy's well-established culture and strong ties with patrons and friends.

The decision to rely directly on the traditional decision-making structure at the Academy while the College embarks on an ambitious growth plan has resulted in some minor role confusion between College leadership and central administration and a greater need for

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[4] Anticipated bylaw changes include the following: The chancellor will have the authority to remove the president and the executive vice president; the chancellor will chair all meetings; the president is responsible for the religious mission and administrative matters as they pertain to the religious life of the institution; the treasurer serves as the chief financial officer for the institution; and the executive vice president is responsible for all administrative functions.

discussion and coordination between these two groups. Decisions involving budget-allocation for new strategic initiatives are a case in point. While the dean is expected to exercise greater leadership in developing a vision and direction for the College, decisions regarding larger budget allocations and approval of new initiatives continue to rest with the Academy president, executive vice president, and treasurer. The creation of new central administration roles such as a director of marketing and the executive vice president has also introduced some complexity into the decision-making process.

Although administrators at all levels view this situation of multiple leaders as less than ideal, the overall sense of commitment to the College's mission and its plans for expansion have mitigated difficulties. The introduction of a College cabinet by the dean this past year has also fostered greater communication and coordination between College leaders and other parts of the Academy.

D. Facilities

The fourth of the five recommendations from MSCHE addressed the need to develop "plans for the construction and renovation of institutional facilities." Significant renovations have been completed within each of the major facilities on the College campus since the MSCHE recommendations in March 2003, with further renovations planned for the summer of 2008. In addition to its efforts to upgrade existing facilities, the Academy engaged Sasaki Associates in 2004 to develop a campus master plan (print form available upon request) for the entire Academy campus within the context of the institution's strategic growth plan. The overall goal of the College portion of the campus master plan (completed September 2006) was twofold:

- develop a physical plan for a coherent College campus to strengthen College identity, foster a sense of community, and create a more inviting experience for students
- articulate the facility and land requirements needed to support the levels of growth identified in the College's strategic growth plan.

Spillman Farmer (architectural design) and Carter Van Dyke Associates (site and landscape planning) were contracted to implement the initial phase of this plan, which includes the planning, design, and construction of three significant new facilities on the College campus: a student cottage complex (target completion spring 2008), a science/classroom building (target completion fall 2009), and an admissions pavilion (target completion fall 2009).

Renovations to Existing Facilities

Since the spring of 2003, many renovations have been completed or are near completion in existing facilities on the College campus (see Appendix G, *Campus Renovations and Construction since 2003)*. In addition to upgrading classroom facilities and technology, these improvements were designed to enhance the overall appeal of the campus and provide students with attractive space for residence life and social activity.

Construction of New Facilities (Appendix G gives full details for the four buildings listed below)

Dining Hall: A major renovation and addition to the existing dining hall on the Secondary School campus was begun in summer 2007 with completion targeted for May 2008. This expanded facility will serve as a shared dining facility for the Secondary Schools and the College until a new dining atrium is built on the College campus as part of the admissions pavilion planned for 2009. The renovated and expanded dining hall on the Secondary School campus will provide seating for 200 students in two separate dining pavilions.

Student Cottages: Construction began on four student cottages and one director cottage in fall 2007 with occupancy planned for fall 2008. Each student cottage (roughly 3,000 sq. ft) will house eight upper class students.

Doering Center: Planning is nearing completion on a new classroom and science building of roughly 39,000 sq. ft. that will provide dedicated and expanded space for college science.

Student Life/Admissions Pavilion: Planning is nearing completion on a new student life pavilion and dining atrium with construction scheduled for spring 2008 to meet an occupancy target of fall 2009. In addition to providing office space for admissions and financial aid, this 30,000 sq. ft. facility will feature an entrance gallery and display area, a snack bar, a finishing kitchen and dining area, a health clinic, and meeting space for student life organizations.

E. Library Resources

The fifth of the five recommendations from MSCHE addressed the need to examine "resources to support the library."

Progress in areas targeted in the 2004 monitoring report

- Restored part-time librarian position to full time (cut in 2001 budget)
- Restored library hours to 77 hrs/wk (cut to 68 in 2001)
- Added $18,000 to reduce periodical budget deficit (2005/06)
- Added two full text databases (JSTOR & Facts On File News Service online)
- Added NetLibrary Business Ref. Collection (one time purchase with gift funds for five years, 2005-2010)
- Information Literacy program started 2005/06 (see Part Five, pp 51-52, for results of the information literacy test for first year students.)
- Mold cleanup, professional service (2003-2006)
- New Leibert HVAC in Swedenborgiana/Rare Book vault (installed 2005)

- Antiquated acrylic skylight on roof replaced with new glass skylight (March 2006). Unfortunately, the installation did not alleviate the mold problems in the upper stacks, though the skylight needed to be replaced apart from the mold issue.

Lack of progress in areas highlighted in the 2004 monitoring report

- Curator of Swedenborgiana position not funded (cut in 2001)
- Book budget has no major increases ($19,250 2007/08 budget)
- Online databases dropped in 2001 due to budget constraints (Electric Library and Encyclopedia of Life Sciences online). Budget not restored.
- Library's two general online databases for academic fields do not cover psychology and life sciences
- HVAC system not upgraded or replaced, though there is the promise that it will be included in the capital fund drive for the new Academic/Science building (Doering Center). Still need funds for mold removal for summer 2008 ($13,000)
- Library hours restored, but staff cuts for summer still in effect. 156 hours cut
- Total library budget received modest increase ($296,667 to $375,000), but still below peer benchmarks in the Library Director's Report to the President November 2003 (Appendix I)

Other areas that need attention — Technology and Staffing Needs

- Funding for major upgrades to the online catalog and other system upgrades, which would include Oracle technology and server space for the digitization of important items in archives and Swedenborgiana/New Church collections
- Funding for staffing the Digitization Project currently staffed under the grant for one year, and for converting the electronic files of Swedenborg Documents (Green Books) into OCR scanned documents for the Digital Library
- Library book security gates (now 20 years old) need to be upgraded and/or replaced in the near future ($25,000 to upgrade with same technology)
- The library's strategic plan will need to anticipate future staffing for an expansion wing to house collections
- Staff recruitment/retention requires more appropriate benchmarking with peer institutions in the areas of salaries and faculty rank for librarians (currently under discussion with the director of human resources)

Progress in areas not mentioned in 2004 monitoring report
> Storage
> On-line collections
> Archives, Swedenborgiana grants and fundraising
> Security
> Renovations to College space

Storage: Compact Storage Units added to Swedenborgiana/Archives Vault and New Church Collateral/Rare Book vault in summers of 2006 and 2007 ($155,000 raised). Large donations of New Church and rare books (approx. 4,000 volumes) along with

continuing growth of archival material points out the need for the library to expand in the near future. One proposed area is the current computer lab located in the basement of the library. Compact storage units in this area would provide the needed space for these collections (vendor proposal $69,731).

On-line collections: A grant received from the Carpenter Fund for $45,000 supports the purchase of the *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (ECCO), an online database of 155,000 volumes, including books, sermons, essays, almanacs, catalogs, handbills, registers, gazetteers, and sheet music. This Eighteenth-Century database not only strengthens our academic holdings but enhances the goal to create a center for Swedenborg studies.

Archives & Swedenborgiana Grants & Fundraising

- Fundraising to support a full time archivist began three years ago and has raised $1.2 million toward a goal of $1.4 million. The archivist—in place by July 2008—will be responsible for the Academy Archives as well as archives housed in Glencairn Museum.
- Archives received a grant for $50,000 from the Asplundh Foundation in 2005, which was used to hire a professional consultant to advise on organization, conservation, etc.; training for staff in conservation techniques; purchasing supplies; and employing student staffing for the summer of 2005. The grant was shared with the archives at Glencairn.
- Two grants (total of $35,000) were received from John & Chara Haas for part time staffing and supplies for 2005/06 in the Academy Archives.
- Grant of $50,000 for digitization project in the archives was awarded by the Phoebe W. Haas Charitable Trust in 2007. This grant provides the funding to purchase equipment, software, training, and staffing for the first year in the Academy Archives.
- Grants received for the past five years from the Carpenter Fund for individual title appraisal of rare books, Swedenborgiana, and early New Church titles in vaults ($45,600). The Carpenter Fund also funded a request for $1,000 toward the Oral History Project. This project started in 2004 with the purchase of equipment and training. The library has used volunteers, students, and library and museum staff to conduct the interviews. Further funding is needed to start transcribing the recorded interviews.

Security

Security cameras and monitoring system were installed in 2004 with three additional cameras added in 2005. Funding for this was provided by the library's equipment budget over a period of several years.

Renovations to Library Space
- A wireless lounge was added to the main floor of the library, along with new carpeting, furniture, and 20 computers (2007)

- A temporary admissions suite was built in a large meeting room at the north end of the library (2007)
- Another meeting room was converted into a technology classroom
- Starbucks Café (*College Grounds*) constructed in a former reading area

Strategies for future improvements to Swedenborg Library

- Increase book, periodical, and online database budgets
    - Add new databases for academic fields (psychology and others)
    - Replace print indices with electronic databases
    - Add funding to support current and new programs
- Restore Curator of Swedenborgiana position (1/3 of a full time position) and fundraise for rare book acquisitions (gift fund depleted)
- Restore staff summer cuts (4.11 % increase for 2008/09 budget)
- Update storage units housing back issues of secular journals. These units are original to the building (1986) and need upgrades of the electrical system used to operate them. The parts to repair if broken do not exist; they would need to be retro-fitted for a cost of approximately $15,000-$20,000.
- Due to College needs for classrooms, offices, a café, and computer lounge, the library's main needs in the next few years will be to provide new space to house the main collections, convert indices and other references to electronic sources, and provide meeting spaces. The library is 20 years old, and previous plans for expansion may no longer be viable with new College buildings being constructed.

Concluding remarks about Swedenborg Library

Libraries are the academic center of institutions of higher education. As both a liberal arts college and a center for Swedenborg studies, Bryn Athyn College will increasingly depend on its library to anchor its academic identity in the next phases of its growth. In some ways, it is disappointing that the Academy has not been better able to support the mission-critical nature of Swedenborg Library. Though we have responded to crises as they arise, in crucial ways we have not adequately addressed the library's current needs or future development. We are making progress with updating the library spaces to make it more welcoming to young people (café, wireless, lounges) but this progress highlights some challenges. The library has a history of being under funded. Budgets need to be enlarged to protect those holdings that have been moved to make way for cafés and wireless lounges. New spaces need to be built to house expanding collections and personnel hired to meet the needs of the library.

The College is stepping into a new era of embracing the new faces and multiple functions of libraries in the 21st century. More than just a protective vault for physical forms of intellectual property, libraries are becoming multipurpose structures for activities that are directly related, indirectly related, and sometimes unrelated to library holdings. Successful libraries will be aesthetically and technologically welcoming spaces for study, research, and conversation. Swedenborg Library would like to be part of this movement,

but it needs simultaneously to rank higher in the budget priorities so that it can continue to function as a library, evolving to serve multiple audiences and needs.

II. Other areas of concern raised by the visiting team but not specified by MSCHE

The visiting team report targeted ten areas, four of which were *not* highlighted by MSCHE, thus not included in our monitoring report. Nonetheless we would like to address these areas as part of our ongoing assessment and development. The four areas are:

      A. Educational Programs and Curriculum
      B. Faculty
      C. Student Life
      D. Theological School

A. Educational Programs and Curriculum

In addition to the question of syllabi standards and confusion regarding the process for curricular change, both of which are addressed above (see pp 6-8), the visiting team raised two particular concerns about student frustration with IT services: helpdesk services and tightness of the filter.

These concerns have been addressed through the following seven measures:

1) Since 2005/06, a member of student government has served as a liaison to the IT department. This student meets with the head of IT on a regular basis to convey student concerns and to hear the reasons behind specific decisions, which are then communicated to the students.

2) Helpdesk has offered to provide a few dedicated hours each week to have a member of their department available to College students. The offer, made to the student government representative in the spring 2007, has not yet been acted on by the students.

3) Helpdesk has added part-time staff (one 30-hour per week employee)

4) The College now has a mobile teaching lab, laptops, and wireless access from many locations on the campus, though computer equipment problems need ongoing attention.

5) Commuting students can access thin client from home

6) The new Doering Center will have labs and flexible hours to accommodate students' needs

7) In March 2007 all filtering was removed except for pornography and any sites that threaten the security of the network. Internet access in the dorms is now virtually

unrestricted for gaming and streaming. Internet bandwidth has also been increased from 3 Mbps campus wide to 27 Mbps (download speed). A clear statement about moral and legal expectations for student behavior with relation to internet use appears on the network, is referenced in the 2007/08 Student Handbook (p 23), and is reviewed and signed by students during orientation each August.

B. Faculty (record-keeping for credentials; tenure policy)

In terms of the collection and documentation of faculty academic credentials, the visiting team noted that the College's practice was "sub-standard" and suggested that requests for academic transcripts might be linked in a systematic way to "either the appointment process or the routines surrounding contract renewal" (Appendix B, p 9). In response to these observations, the president asked all full- and percentage-time faculty to provide updated copies of transcripts in 2003. Current policy now requires all faculty to provide updated transcripts showing additional coursework or degrees on an annual basis. The College will also require all new faculty hires to provide academic transcripts at the time of their appointment.

In terms of tenure policy, the visiting team noted the lack of "economic incentive for pursuing the activities or meeting the standards that higher ranks demand," and the team drew attention to the unhealthy tension between faculty and board members over tenure in the institution (Appendix B, p 9).

Tenure has long been a sensitive issue at the College due to the College's small size and homegrown brand of tenure (see 2002 Self-Study pp 63-64). However, some specific changes occurred in 2007/08 that should lessen tension about tenure. In August 2007 the board tenure committee made a number of recommendations to ensure an orderly transfer of responsibility for the tenure process (Appendix J, *Communications on Tenure*), and in December 2007 the College tenure committee responded with its own report (also in Appendix J) addressing the board's recommendations and accepting responsibility for taking on the duties formerly administered by the board tenure committee.

C. Student Life

The visiting team noted student dissatisfaction with the areas listed below, pointing out as well that the College was well aware of and sympathetic about these issues:

- Sharing facilities with Secondary Schools
- Quality of science labs and location on Secondary School campus
- Location of dining hall and field house on Secondary School campus
- Condition of residence halls
- Lack of social center in a location that promotes student interaction on campus

All of these concerns are being addressed through specific building projects covered in the facilities section (pp 12-13, and Appendix G). So much progress has been made,

ironically, that current students now seem to resist the upheaval and change in their physical environment. Upper class students in particular have expressed frustration with the pace of change and the inability of students to be consulted or feel heard. By the next school year we hope the student body will have settled into the College's new phase of building a campus that can encourage and support growth. In the meantime, the deans and student leadership have set up several avenues for students to register their concern, and the College is working on ways to help the upper classmen feel valued and visible:

- Once-a-week hour of free coffee for student who come and chat with the deans in the café
- Junior/senior class trip in the spring
- Student liaison for construction activity over the summer

D. Theological School

The Master of Divinity Program

During the school year of 2006/07 the Theological School undertook a strategic planning process[5] that focused on three areas: the mission of the Theological School, its core values, and a thirty year goal (see Appendix Q). The school's thirty year goal is to "consistently graduate amazingly effective pastoral leaders." To achieve this goal, the Theological School has implemented the following changes:

1. The faculty adopted a minimum grade point average of 3.0 for continued attendance at the school. Students falling below this minimum are placed on probation, and if unable to improve their achievement, leave the program.

2. The assessment of the communication skills including preaching has been expanded to include a panel assessment of each student's abilities in the spring of the final two years of the program.

3. Admission will become more stringent, requiring interviews and a personality test given by a professional psychologist. Standards for continuing attendance will include both minimum GPA and continued assessment of a student's ability to relate to people in pastoral situations.

The General Church of the New Jerusalem, which the Theological School serves, has established the recruitment and training of pastors is its number one goal. In order to support this mission, the dean of the Theological School established a steering committee comprising members of the Academy and General Church boards, the treasurers of each institution, and the Academy president and development officer. This committee was charged with identifying barriers to recruitment and recommending appropriate changes. In its report, which was submitted to the General Church and Academy boards in January of 2008, the committee concluded that financial challenges are a major obstacle to

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[5] The planning process used is based upon Jim Collins' book *Good to Great.*

attending the Theological School, particularly for second career men. To address this challenge, the committee recommended establishing a fund to provide theological school students with a stipend and appropriate support for housing and medical coverage. This plan was accepted by both boards and will be implemented beginning in 2008/09 (see Appendix R, *General Church and Academy Theological School Business Plan*).

In addition to serving resident students preparing for ordination, the Theological School plans to develop a program for those students living at a distance. The first classes for an internet-based program were offered in 2007/08 to students in Japan, Denmark, and India. Students who successfully complete this modified distance pre-ordination program will qualify for a Master of Arts in Religious Studies degree rather than a Master of Divinity.

The Master of Arts in Religious Studies Program (MARS)

Since the inception of the MARS program, twenty-nine students have graduated, thirteen in the past five years. There are currently three active students.

The MARS program needs to reevaluate its degree to make sure it is offering a high-quality and attractive program to graduate students while staying true to its mission. This reevaluation process involves expanding the administrative team and undergoing a Collins visioning process during the summer of 2008 to assess the current situation and to identify the reasons for the fall off in enrollment. It will then be possible to begin planning for the redevelopment of the program for the future. Key issues are how to connect the MARS program more closely Bryn Athyn College developments to make the masters degree more attractive to graduating students. Other issues center on staff, cost, and improved distance technology.

III. Other areas of concern raised by the Self Study

Most of the concerns targeted by the visiting team and reiterated by the MSCHE were identified in the College's self study report. We address these throughout our PRR. However, our self study report made additional or related recommendations *not* targeted by the visiting team or the MSCHE, which remain important to us as we prepare for our next self study in 2012. To facilitate that process, and to bridge our 2002 and 2012 reports, we have collected the recommendations from the last self study and updated progress in the following four areas:

    A. organizational structure, institutional effectiveness, and outcomes
    B. educational programs and curricula
    C. academic resources
    D. student services and activities

Appendix K, *Itemized Progress on College's Comprehensive Recommendations from 2002 Self Study* gives this information in full detail.

PART THREE
Institution's major challenges and/or current opportunities

In addition to increasing enrollment, developing the campus, formalizing and strengthening assessment, and navigating through a time of significant administrative change, the College faces three additional (and welcome) challenges over the next four years. First, it must implement its new Core Program. Second, it needs to address ongoing issues regarding faculty compensation. And third, it needs to build and maintain a cutting edge website both to attract new students (initially our primary audience) and to serve current students, parents, and alumni (secondary audiences, at least until the website is fully developed).

I. The New Core Program

The new Core Program was developed by the former General Education Committee over a period of four years, 2002-2006. (See *General Education Committee Report*, Appendix C, for a description of the outcomes of this committee's work.) During those four years the committee studied general education programs at other institutions and national trends in general. It experimented with various scenarios to complement the College's religious mission, philosophy, and culture. And it developed practical, assessable components. Over the course of the four years, the committee sought feedback and buy-in from the entire faculty for a complete overhaul of the curriculum. The program is described in Appendix D. The major changes to the curriculum are five:

1. For the first time we have a formal Core Program, with requirements extending across all four years of undergraduate education.
2. Every faculty member participates in the Core Program because every course in the catalog addresses some aspect of the Core Program directly or indirectly.[6]
3. New emphasis falls on practical and assessable liberal arts skills (information literacy, public presentation, quantitative reasoning, experiential education, and writing). Three of the skill areas (writing, information literacy, and public presentation) are also developmental, with proficiency required at multiple levels.
4. The College's mission to develop students' civil, moral, and spiritual life is underscored through specific course requirements addressing these three areas.
5. The two-year associate degree is no longer required, nor is it the foundation for any of the four-year degrees. The two-year degree remains, however, an *optional* part of the curriculum, which can be pursued without delaying progress toward the four-year degrees. If the AA becomes superfluous to the College's mission in the future, we will consider removing it entirely, but for now it continues to serve a limited but important use for those students who seek a two-year degree from a New Church college.

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[6] Courses contribute to the Core Program at three equally-valuable levels: 1) all courses address one or more of the six Core goals (see listing of goals in Appendix D, p 1); 2) many courses enhance (without formally satisfying a requirement) one or more of the four Core skills in writing, quantitative reasoning, information literacy, and pubic speaking; 3) some courses are certified Core courses, meaning that they fulfill a skill area, a perspective area, or a moral/civil/worldviews requirement.

Implementing the New Core Program

Students who entered the College in 2007/08 are experiencing the first year of the new Core Program. We have sufficient numbers of Core courses to address first-year needs (see Appendix L, *Core Report March 2008,* pp 11-12). With the recent approval of a dozen new courses satisfying the Core, the selection also looks adequate for 2008/09. More than 40 courses fulfill specific skill requirements as well as the three categories of civil, moral, and spiritual. These numbers will be adequate for the first two or three years of the program but will need to be increased gradually to allow for greater flexibility in scheduling and variety in offerings.

End of year reports from all the chairs of the Core subcommittees (Appendix L) suggest good morale among faculty in terms of support for the Core. The challenge, however, will be to sustain enthusiasm for developing new courses (or facets of courses) to support the Core. An effective strategy for this will need to encompass the following measures:

- Provide financial resources to the Core committee to sponsor workshops and reward faculty efforts
- Find out if and how faculty see Core requirements strengthening their courses and pedagogy, thus making the effort worthwhile
- Communicate institutional assessment outcomes so that faculty see progress not just in isolated courses but in larger programs and in the overall preparedness of our graduates as they go into the workplace.

The College is blessed with hard-working faculty members who are willing to try new approaches. But many faculty members are sufficiently overworked that they will not be willing to take on additional labor unless they see clear educational value.

II. Address Ongoing Issues Regarding Faculty Compensation

Concerns about faculty compensation and the lack of progress toward meeting benchmarks surface in four places in this report: *salaries and benefits* (p 27); *employee engagement survey* (p. 57); closing paragraph (p 62), and Appendix T (outline of eight years of exchanges about compensation). The College is currently waiting for the completion of another compensation study (summer 2008). Some faculty are urging action rather than additional studies. Deteriorating morale over compensation issues will need to be addressed, not only because poor communication has fed frustration, but because the growth phase itself depends on an engaged faculty that feels valued.

III. Build and Maintain a new Website

Outside funding has been made available for the development of the College website, in conjunction with the development of websites for the General Church, the Theological School, and the Secondary Schools. The primary focus of the retooled College website will be to market to prospective students. A portal for current students is planned as a next step (2009/10).

PART FOUR
Analysis of enrollment and finance projections for next five years

I. Enrollment

The number of students enrolling in Bryn Athyn College has remained relatively constant over the past six years (Table 1 below). In addition, the proportion of all New Church students listed in the Church's database choosing to attend the institution has remained relatively constant at approximately 20 percent. First year and other new students come from three primary sources: the Academy Secondary Schools, Church students living in North America, and Church students from overseas. The Academy Secondary Schools continue to supply between 50 and 70 percent of all full-time first-year students.

Table 1. Full Time Enrollment: 2002-2007

Academic Year	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
First Year	39	49	63	56	58	53
Second Year	34	33	42	43	32	31
Third Year	20	21	11	22	21	14
Fourth Year	23	17	23	13	19	15
Total:	116	120	139	134	130	113

As Table 1 shows, retention is a significant issue. Approximately 60 to 70 percent of each entering class returns for a second year, and about 50 percent of sophomores return to pursue a four-year major. The College began conducting an annual study in the fall of 2003 to identify factors associated with student retention and to improve the accuracy of enrollment projections. The results indicate that 1) students' plans and educational goals are related to the decision to return to Bryn Athyn College in the fall following the survey administration, and 2) first-year students whose homes are in or near the Bryn Athyn area and those graduating from the Academy Secondary Schools are less likely to return for a second year.

The fact that first-year students from the local area are more likely to leave the institution is not surprising, given that most of these students typically have attended Church schools for most of their life and may be looking for new educational experiences outside of Bryn Athyn and away from the influence of the Church. Data from the Annual Freshman Survey directed by the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA support this finding: over the past five years between 10 and 20 percent of all full-time, first year students enter Bryn Athyn College with the intention of obtaining a bachelor's degree from the institution.

These findings suggest that the College may be able to reduce attrition by attracting students from different educational backgrounds who are interested in pursing a degree at a religious institution. This past fall, each academic division offered ideas for attracting

and retaining students into their respective programs. The College administration also developed an overall approach to retention that includes internships, study abroad opportunities, a trip for juniors and seniors, and other incentives designed specifically for students pursuing four-year degrees. Two additional factors that may account for lower retention rates for first and second year students include the limited number of academic programs offered and the lack of attractive facilities and amenities available on campus. Both of these shortcomings are addressed in the institution's strategic plan (available upon request).

Other projects relating to retention that will be introduced during the current strategic planning cycle (2006-2011) include:

- an institutional "brand" and curriculum centered on applying moral values to life
- an expanded merit-based scholarship program
- increased use of alumni to assist in identifying and recruiting potential students
- more effective use of faculty advising to promote retention

To increase the number of applications from potential students, the College hired two consulting firms that specialize in marketing private colleges. Two additional admissions office positions were created in 2006 and 2007. A more robust database was also purchased for tracking inquiries and to deal with the expected increase in applications. Plans are in place to hire two additional staff members and appoint a chief enrollment management officer in 2009, who will be responsible for developing strategies to achieve the institution's recruitment and retention goals.

A large meeting room located on the main floor of Swedenborg Library was renovated this past fall to create an expanded and more attractive space to house admissions. The institution is also developing plans for constructing a new entranceway to campus and a separate admissions building that will be ready for occupancy in the fall of 2009.

II. Finance

The Academy of the New Church comprises four schools: a theological school, Bryn Athyn College, and a boys and a girls school that serve secondary school students.

Operating expenses (not including financial aid) for the Academy as a whole were $18,000,407 in 2007, 34 percent of which ($6,041,987) were incurred by Bryn Athyn College. Of this amount, $4,231,844 or 70 percent were related to programs, $720,417 to housing, $966,417 to central administration, and $123,309 for research and other expenses .

A. Revenue Sources

1. Investment Income

Over the past century, generous contributions to endowment and prudent financial management enabled the Academy to fund a significant number of educational programs and services. Currently, about 73 percent of the institution's operating budget comes from endowment income.

Following the downturn in U.S financial markets in 2001 and 2002, the Academy's endowment grew by 36 percent; from $313,336,000 in 2003 to $426,212,000 in June of 2007.[7] While the overall size of the endowment is substantial, particularly when considered in relation to enrollment, benchmark data[8] suggest that this growth rate is slightly below that experienced by peer institutions during this period. Part of the reason for this lower rate of return is the conservative investment strategy employed by the Academy. The recent board decision in 2004 to split the pension assets out from the endowment will enable the institution to pursue higher yields associated with hedge funds, venture capital funds, real estate, and hard assets. This change is in line with new investment strategies established at other colleges and universities across the country.

Since 2003, the payout rate, which is calculated using a three-year rolling average, increased from 4.28 percent to 4.75 percent. The primary reason for this increase is the upfront spending associated with the College's strategic plan. The relatively high proportion of unrestricted endowment will provide the institution with the necessary flexibility to pursue the opportunities identified in the plan. Other factors contributing to the payout increase over the past five years include rising costs for employee benefits and for fuel.

While the payout rate increased over the past five years, it remains within the guidelines (3 to 5 percent) set by the institution. This policy reflects the Academy's heavy reliance on investment income and the subsequent need to restrict spending to maintain the endowment's purchasing power. It is very likely, however, that the payout rate will exceed this amount for several years as the institution begins investing in new programs and facilities to augment the quality and appeal of the College as outlined in the Academy's strategic plan. (See Part Six "Funding for the Strategic Plan" for more detail.) Fortunately, the fact that a large portion (65 percent) of the Academy's endowment is unrestricted suggests that the institution is well-positioned to fund these strategic initiatives.[9]

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[7] These figures are for the Academy as a whole.
[8] The Academy uses the following blended benchmark for its endowment: Wilshire 5000 (64 percent), All Country World Index ex-US (16 percent), and Lehman Brothers Aggregate Bond Index (20 percent).
[9] Based on figures from audited financial statement from June 2007.

2. Tuition and Fees

Increased revenue from tuition represents the most significant change in income over the past five years. Between 2003 and 2007, total receipts for tuition and fees went from just over $783,000 to almost $1,218,000; an increase of 55 percent (or 11 percent per annum).

Given that enrollment has remained relatively constant, most of the increase in tuition revenue over this period can be attributed to aggressive increases in tuition charges in 2004 and 2005, and the institution's decision to participate in federal and state financial aid programs in 2005 (see Table 2 below). Total revenue from government grants was $304,084 in 2007.

Table 2. Gross Tuition and Fees: 2002-2007.

Academic Year	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Tuition and Fees	$6,657	$7,656	$8,804	$9,639	$10,114	$10,114
Room and Board	$4,764	$4,956	$5,154	$5,360	$5,574	$5,574
Total:	$11,621	$12,612	$13,958	$14,999	$15,688	$15,688
Percent Increase from previous yr.:		8.5%	10.7%	7.5%	4.6%	0%

Despite the large percentage increases in tuition in 2004 and 2005, Bryn Athyn College's tuition remains relatively modest when compared with peer institutions. (Average tuition and fees for the twelve small religious colleges located in the Philadelphia region is $21,331.)

Net revenue per student also increased significantly during the past five years, from $8,712 per boarding student in 2003 to $11,943 in 2007, an increase of 37 percent, suggesting that the College is moving toward greater financial health and that the demand for an education at Bryn Athyn College is relatively stable or inelastic. The rise in net tuition revenue is the result of introducing federal and state aid programs as well as the higher sticker-price paid by families who can afford it.

Studies suggest that adding students will contribute to the institution's bottom line and provide a growing source of revenue in the future.[10] This strategy will move the institution away from a "low cost/low aid" pricing model to one where tuition and aid are closer to the norm for small private religious colleges. A higher sticker price may also enhance the perceived quality of the institution, resulting in an increase in student applications. The College plans to gradually increase gross tuition as improvements are made to the campus and new programs introduced into the curriculum. Additional study is needed to better understand the interaction among enrollment, gross tuition, and various forms of financial aid on net tuition revenue and selectivity.

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[10] See *Factors Affecting Net Tuition Revenue at Private Colleges* by Bethaviva Cohen, a working paper produced for the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) in Boulder, Colorado (1982).

3. Gifts and Grants

Between 2003 and 2007 gifts and grants to the Academy as a whole increased by 30 percent, from \$508,167 to \$659,900.[11] While contributions to the institution have generally kept pace with other revenue sources, patrons are now more likely to earmark their contributions rather than donate to the general operating budget. The Academy development office is looking at several ways to deal with this trend by focusing attention on supporting student scholarship funds and running other activities, such as auctions and social events that generate support for the annual fund. The development office will be striving to sustain a strong annual giving program as the institution embarks on a capital campaign for its strategic plan over the next several years.

B. Expenses

1. Salaries and Benefits

Salaries and benefits, which account for 61 percent of the College's operating budget, rose by just over 16 percent (or about 3 percent per year) from \$2,216,166 in 2003 to \$2,574,399 in 2007. This relatively small increase is due to several faculty retirements during this period as well as a concerted effort by the administration to manage costs by limiting hiring during a period of fixed enrollment.

The College raised faculty salaries, nevertheless, by an average of 7.6 percent in 2006 to benchmark more closely with salaries paid at a set of selected regional independent colleges. The objective is to compensate faculty at the median salary level for assistant professors at these institutions. Additional increases will be necessary to bring salaries up to this level. (See Appendix T, "College Faculty Compensation Events, 2000-2008," for an outline of steps taken over the last eight years regarding faculty compensation.) Revenue from enrollment growth and tuition increases is expected to provide the necessary funding. A new compensation study for faculty, staff, and other employees, which should be completed by the end of the current academic year, will provide updated information on the College's progress toward this goal. (See Part Five pp 56-57 for a summary of faculty survey data on compensation and other matters.)

Changes in retiree medical benefits in 2007 for employees with less than ten years of experience and the move to a defined contributions plan in 2008 will enable the institution to manage future retirement benefits costs more effectively.

2. Facilities and Depreciation[12]

Facilities costs for the Academy as a whole increased at an average rate of just over 3 percent per year, from \$2,983,187 in 2003 to \$3,476,254 in 2007. Bryn Athyn College's

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[11] Gifts to the annual fund are allocated by the institution to the College and other schools of the Academy on the basis of annual enrollment figures.

[12] The figures reported are for the institution as a whole, since a number of facilities are shared between the four Academy schools and charges for these items are allocated on the basis of each school's relative use.

share of these expenses is approximately 30%. Substantial increases in utilities and fuel costs were partially offset by reductions in insurance premiums.

The institution has traditionally committed significant resources for depreciation of plant and equipment. For 2007, $1,486,518 in depreciation was charged against operating results, 2.5% percent of the historical cost of the physical plant. Bryn Athyn College's share of this figure is approximately 28%. Depreciation expense has grown by 27% since 2003, reflecting steady investment to improve the physical plant. Depreciation expenses and facilities costs will rise significantly over the next several years as the new buildings and other campus improvements from the College's strategic plans are completed. By 2013, we anticipate that depreciation will approach $4 million and facility operating costs will increase by over 20% (inflation adjusted) from current levels.

PART FIVE
Evidence of Outcomes Assessment
(institutional effectiveness and student learning)

I. Course level assessment
      A. Grading Standards
      B. New Syllabi Standards
II. Program level assessment
      A. Core Program
      B. Four-Year Majors
III. Institutional assessment
      A. Curricular Review of Assessment and Student Learning
      B. Use of Standardized Assessment Tools
      C. Using Assessment to Improve Programs

I. Course Level Assessment

A. Grading Standards

Assessment of student learning at the level of individual courses is performed almost entirely by instructor-graded course returns such as tests, papers, reports, and group work. Small classes, averaging 7.5 students per class, create opportunity for individual attention and for faculty (rather than teaching assistants) to assess student work and to give students direct feedback orally and in writing. Students appreciate this sort of attention and give the College high marks on the outcomes survey for quality of instruction and concern for students as individuals.

Students express concern, however, about the lack of consistency of grading from one teacher to the next, and from one discipline to another. Religion is often cited as a subject area that does not demand 'college-level' work. Regarding several disciplines, some students complain that the quality of their work that earns a C from one instructor will earn an A from another instructor. This feedback has been collected over the past four years from year-end meetings of graduating seniors with the three deans, from course and teacher evaluations, and from the Annual Outcomes Survey.

In response to feedback from seniors and other anecdotal evidence, the academic dean asked for data about grade distribution. A faculty member (now the outcomes director) collected data for course grade distribution of all faculty over the preceding three-year period (see Appendix N "Grade Distribution Data"). The results of this study suggest that course grading can serve as a reliable means of assessing performance because most of the instructors make use of several grade levels and sparing use of the top grade. In addition, the vast majority of students' complaints about grading are about high rather than low grades, indicating that students in general accept marks below the A range when applied fairly and in support of their education. See section III [A. 4.] below on institutional assessment (pp 46-50) for a full discussion of institutional grading and how it may be used in student learning assessment.

B. New Syllabi Standards

After the 2002 self study, the College responded promptly to the visiting team's recommendation to develop and implement syllabi standards. A syllabi sub-committee of the curriculum committee developed 10 syllabi standards that were approved by the faculty (5/12/03), and then revised (2/18/04). These standards are listed below:

Standard Items for Bryn Athyn College Course Syllabi
1. Basic Course Information
2. Course Description
3. General Goals
4. Specific Learning Objectives
5. Course Materials
6. Course Policies
7. Support Services
8. Course Grading
9. Course Calendar/Schedule
10. Major Assignments/Returns

These standards were expanded into a 20-page workbook to help faculty build syllabi that are formal, professional, and clear, and that accurately reflect the content and expectations of the course (syllabi workbook available on College website http://www.brynathyn.edu/Academics/FacultyResources/FacultyResourcespdfs/Guidelines%20for%20Writing%20Course%20Syllabi%202-22-04.pdf). With the development of syllabi standards and a workbook, the dean designated 2008/09 as the year in which all course syllabi would model the proposed standards.

Over the past three years three additional syllabi components have been added to the original ten:

11. Syllabus available on the network
12. Syllabus clearly states consequences for plagiarism
13. Syllabus articulates how the learning objectives, or other parts of the course, support specific areas of the Core Program, if at all.

The associate dean of academic affairs has worked with division heads over the past four years to help faculty rework their syllabi (and their courses) to conform to the new standards. In order not to overwhelm faculty, this process was mapped out in gradual stages.

2003/04 New Syllabi Standards created and presented to faculty

2004/05 At least half of standard content items present in all syllabi, with course goals and grading parameters expected in all syllabi. All syllabi will be placed in a shared network folder in a readable and printable format.

2005/06 At least three quarters of standard content items present, with the expectation that course goals, learning objectives/outcomes, and grading parameters are present.

2006/07 All or nearly all standard content items present.

2007/08 High level of clarity in the syllabi in preparation for publication on the College website.

To date, we have met the goals for the time line above, except for the current year 2007/08. The focus of "a high level of clarity" is more difficult to promote and to track than simple recording of the presence or absence of components. In order to foster well-written syllabi across the board, the institution will need to stop depending on divisions heads alone to assess syllabi. An alternative approach, to be pursued beginning in 2008/09, will be to create a single group or committee to look comprehensively at all the syllabi, with an eye to publication.

In 2002 the visiting team found almost no syllabi available electronically, certainly no central storage. Now all syllabi can be found, by year, on the College network.

For 2008/09 the emphasis will be on the most recently added syllabus component—articulation of specific ways the course supports the Core Program. Because our Core Program draws on *every* course in the curriculum, in direct or indirect ways (see footnote #6), this component has significant potential. If implemented appropriately it can help faculty, students, and other constituents see that all the courses support Core values, skills, or perspectives, even when those courses are not formally designated as 'Core skills' or 'Core perspective' courses. Every faculty member is encouraged to own and help develop the Core Program. By asking for clear articulation of how the course supports the Core, this syllabus component encourages faculty to develop or highlight these facets; it reassures students that the Core program informs the curriculum; and it helps facilitate formal assessment of curricular support for the Core.

Next steps for syllabi development:

- Continue to refine and supplement syllabi standards—process overseen by curriculum and academic policy committee, not solely by the academic dean.
- Develop ways to encourage division heads to generate syllabi reports on their own initiative as a form of quality control and not merely in response to the prodding of the academic dean or the curriculum and academic policy committee.
- Continue to have division heads spot check for adherence to syllabi guidelines and incorporation of required components, but supplement this oversight by creating a small committee of 3-4 faculty members to start reviewing syllabi with an eye to *publishing* them on the Web. This effort will have to be made in stages, with a style sheet developed. Attention will be given to readability of prose, clarity of format, and reasonable conformity of style. The committee will not be a

'review' committee so much as a resource to support faculty in continuing to strengthen syllabi.
- Work with outcomes director to explore how syllabi can be used to support course, program, and institutional assessment.

II. Program Level Assessment

A. Core Skill Assessment

We are in early stages of implementing our new Core Program. Students entering in September 2007 are the first to experience the Core. The development of faculty-approved criteria for 1) skills components, 2) scoring, and 3) perspective courses was a significant step toward building a structure to support formal assessment over the next decade (see *Faculty Booklet Core Criteria* located on the College website http://www.brynathyn.edu/Academics/FacultyResources/FacultyResourcespdfs/FacultyBookletCoreCriteria3-07.pdf). Additionally, in May 2008 a Core committee was charged to oversee, develop, and assess the Core Program, as discussed in Part Two above. Until that time, the curriculum and academic policy committee carried the weight of developing the Core, along with all its other curricular duties. Under the leadership of our new outcomes director,[13] the Core committee will be able to direct and support faculty in these crucial first steps of developing programmatic and institution-wide assessment. One area already in place is a system for scoring and tracking proficiency in skills areas.

The Core Program includes a built in feature of institutional scoring for skills courses, which provides a standardized system of assessing student skill proficiency on course-embedded assignments. The system provides a means of using assessment results beyond the confines of a single class. Instructors have always assessed particular skills such as writing and information literacy, but these measures have not been available for programmatic or institutional assessment because there has been no mechanism for recording them apart from averaging them in with the course grade. The skill scoring system for the Core Program addresses this problem.

The College has adopted a four-level (0 to 3) scoring system to report student proficiency in key skill areas: information literacy, public presentation, quantitative reasoning, and writing, (IL, PP, QR, W[14]). The score is based solely on proficiency rather than on effort or participation and is standardized by course level (100, 200, 300, & 400). In all Core skill courses, (designated as IL, PP, QR, and W in the catalog) instructors provide a numerical assessment of each student's performance of the skill, based on overall performance of skill assignments in the course. These scores do not appear on the transcript or affect the GPA but do become part of each student's academic record and are used to track progress.

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[13] This faculty member, who led the development of the general education program, will lend both expertise and continuity to the process of ongoing development and assessment of the Core Program.
[14] Writing (W) was initially described as Writing Intensive (WI) in earlier Core documents.

Instructors calculate scores based on the student's highest, reliable proficiency level demonstrated on work submitted throughout the course. Students must pass the course in which the skill is embedded in order to have a skill score recorded.

Skill scores are normalized by the following criteria and constraints:

- Performance well above expectations receives a score of 3. No more than 25% of scores reported by any instructor *over time* may be at the highest level of 3.
- Performance that meets the normal expectations for that skill at the level of course (100, 200, 300, 400) receives a score of 2.
- Performance that is below expectations but still passing receives a score of 1.

Expectations are based on experience with typical capability at the relevant course level (100, 200, 300, and 400).

Based on these criteria and constraints, skill assessment scores have the following meanings:

0 = Fail.
1 = Minimal Pass. Indicates that the student should consider means of strengthening proficiency in this area.
2 = Meets expectations for course level.
3 = Exceeds expectations for course level.

In the Fall and Winter terms of 2007/08, the College offered a total of 17 course sections in support of Core skills. Instructors have reported scores for each student in those courses, and the pattern of scores is reasonable. The distribution of the 77 scores reported was:

Score	Percent of scores assigned
0	8%
1	14%
2	69%
3	9%

Instructors have not reported any difficulties in assigning scores.

The main purpose of student skill performance assessment is to identify those students who require additional support to develop their skills to an appropriate level, and to facilitate support early in the students' academic program.

B. Assessment of Four-Year Majors

Background: The baccalaureate program heads wrote strategic plans in 1999 (gathered into one document—*Baccalaureate Programs*—for 2002 self-study report). The 2002

report lists six shared priorities, as well as individual objectives for each of the six majors. In the Spring of 2003 the dean of the College asked the heads of the baccalaureate programs to develop specific goals—tied to learning objectives—to be used for assessment and development of the majors. Heads of majors met with the dean in 2004 to discuss these goals, and again the following year to analyze progress.

Current status: In the fall of 2006/07 the associate dean of academic affairs asked for formal assessments of program goals, to include the following four areas:

- The original goals, tied to sources of feedback
- Specific changes made over the past four years, including adjustments for the new Core Program
- Key weaknesses and plans to address those weaknesses
- Additional strategies for future development and strengthening of the major

The full reports for the six baccalaureate programs are available under separate cover (*Assessment Reports for Four-year Majors, 2008*). What follows are reduced versions of the reports, including a) major goals & assessment tools, and b) strategies to address weaknesses.

1. Biology Major (BA & BS)

a. Learning Goals and Related Assessment Tools

Upon completion of the Biology major, a graduate should demonstrate satisfactory proficiency in the following five areas:

1) Understanding scientific terms, concepts, and theories, and using this understanding to address questions relative to the study of biology.
    Assessment tools: Course-embedded testing, lab work and reports, writing assignments, and graded homework. All 100-300 level biology courses.

2) Using various laboratory procedures and field methods, and writing laboratory reports that communicate effectively the results of a scientific investigation, including the translation of data into tables and graphs.
    Assessment tools: Course-embedded laboratory reports (100-300 level courses).

3) Formulating empirically-testable hypotheses.
    Assessment tools: Course-embedded laboratory report and written assignment grading at the 300 and 400 (capstone) level.

4) Using appropriate information resources (print and electronic) to research methods, results, and conclusions of scientific investigations; critiquing scientific articles and books; and conducting individual research on instructor- or student-selected topics.

Assessment tools: Includes course embedded research papers, critiques, and book reports. Biology 200-300 level courses and 400 level seminar courses and capstone.

5) Capacity for semi-independent biological research based either on literature resources or on a combination of literature resources and experimentation.
Assessment tools: Biology 495 (capstone). Biology 298 and 398 (biology internship)

b. Strategies to address weaknesses or promote growth

1) Build a new science building to accommodate the major; create a biology presence on the campus; and address substandard facilities and equipment.

2) Hire adjunct faculty to cover needed areas (including anatomy and physiology). These hires will address the lack of variety of teachers in the major, especially in pre-medical fields.

3) Increase recruitment to major, develop outreach projects, and enhance the biology community on campus to address low enrollment in the major.

4) Develop program-level assessment strategies that make better use of course-embedded assessments, capstone, and senior seminar courses for all biology majors and include a rubric for long-term assessment of specific biology learning goals (especially #s 3-5).

5) Develop and implement a Center for Environmental Conservation as an avenue for student and faculty research and enhanced interaction with the surrounding community.

2. Education Major (BS) Assessment Report

Recent legislation will require significant changes in Pennsylvania teacher education programs. At the time this report was written the Pennsylvania Department of Education had not yet published the specific standards for those changes. Faculty from Bryn Athyn College will work with Holy Family University (our current partner in certification) to create new programs that will fulfill state standards while at the same time meeting the unique educational needs of General Church Schools as outlined in the New Church Teacher Competencies[15] (Appendix O).

a. Learning Goals and Related Assessment Tools

1) Students are prepared to teach in public schools
*Assessment tool*s
- State approved assessment administered by Holy Family faculty through regular observation of senior teaching experience and portfolio requirements

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[15] New Church Competencies reflect the specific pedagogy associated with New Church education.

- Teaching observations by Bryn Athyn College faculty
- Course embedded assignments
- PRAXIS II (educational tests) for students seeking state certification

2) Students are prepared to teach in General Church schools
    Assessment tools
- Teaching observation by Bryn Athyn College faculty
- Course embedded assignments
- Portfolios
- Exit exam

b. Strategies to address weaknesses or promote growth

1) Enhance technology skills of students and faculty:

- Create courses aimed at integrating technology and pedagogy (Education 260 *Technology Integration in the Classroom* added to course offerings 2008/09)
- Train faculty in the use of Smart boards and online technology skills
- Support professional development for technology

2) Provide more focus on diverse learners and ELL (English Language Learners):

- Bring program into compliance with new Pennsylvania state standards
- Embed standards into courses
- Increase professional developments in this area

3) Clarify New Church certification requirements and process:

- Clarify program requirements and timeline for completion
- Update exit interview protocol, information handbook, and exit exam. (The latter should include questions about each competency in a format similar to the PRAXIS tests.)
- Work with the General Church Office of Education on a professional development program for General Church schools

4) Enliven student participation in the education major:

- Sponsor juniors in attending a professional conference
- Create online videos with testimonies and information
- Sponsor an Outward Bound experience for first- or second-year college students – "Do you have what it takes to be a teacher?"
- Help education students sponsor a College wide service project that focuses on education

3. English Language and Literature Major Assessment Report

a. Learning Goals and Related Assessment Tools

Upon completion of the English major, a graduate should demonstrate satisfactory work in the following seven areas:

1) Write effectively in most of the following areas: exposition, narration, description, analysis, argumentation, criticism, and creative expression.
   Assessment tools: Writing assignments from 100-level, 200-level, and 300-level literature and writing courses.

2) Conduct independent research and produce a competent account of its results, particularly in the form of a research paper (sound argument, clean style, proper citation and documentation).
   Assessment tools: All 300-level and most 200-level literature courses require research papers. Capstone paper.

3) Outline major British authors and literary movements from Chaucer through the early 20th century, and major American writers or schools from the late 18th century through the early 20th century. Overview indicates awareness of the context of the literature.
   Assessment tools: Built in portion of final exams for the required survey courses in British and American Literature (English 218, 219, 220, & 221).

4) Speak effectively, as in giving an oral report or lecture (public speaking).
   Assessment tools: Speech 105 required. A video of any public presentation would also serve.

5) Edit writing that has problems with grammar, usage, coherence, or flow.
   Assessment tools: English majors keep in their portfolio copies of the stages of revision of a writing assignment, their own or a classmate's. More than half of the English courses require this assignment and develop this skill.

6) Analyze passages of poetry, prose, fiction, and drama, showing familiarity with the vocabulary of literary analysis as well as the broad characteristics of a variety of genres.
   Assessment tools: See assessment for #1 and #2. All the literature and writing courses address this goal in some measure. The challenge is to ensure that written returns get from the class to a programmatic assessment record.

7) Research and interpret passages from the theological writings of Emanuel Swedenborg in order to enrich the findings or performance of any one of the above six goals.
   Assessment tools: All of the above assessments, with the added dimension of research in and interpretation of Swedenborg's theology.

b. Strategies to address weaknesses and future development

1) Address lack of field-related internships by looking for alumni support and exploring information from other colleges about their approach to internships in English.

2) Address lack of career networking opportunities (due to small alumni base):

- Stay in closer contact with English major graduates
- Build stronger communication with the alumni we already have. Online networking
- Develop a visiting speaker program focused on career opportunities

3) Address the lack of variety of teachers and courses in the major through hiring more adjuncts to teach literary areas not covered by the two Ph.D.s who currently teach (one part-time) in the major.

4) Enliven the English major for students:

- Create an ESL teaching experience (perhaps a gap term abroad)
- Explore summer media programs in New York City
- Encourage student leadership in the major

4. History Major Assessment Report

a. Learning Goals and Sources of Assessment

The history faculty has implemented assessments for five of its twelve learning goals (1, 6, 7, 8, and 10). These assessments provide feedback in each area of our learning goals: content, skills, and values.

Content learning goals

1) A broad narrative of cultural, religious, economic, social, and political history in western civilization and one or more non-western cultures
> *Assessment tools for Goal #1:* The ETS major field test in history, which is administered to majors in History 402 (Senior Seminar)

2) The complex nature of cause-and-effect relationships

3) New Church and other religious concepts of spiritual history

4) The historical context of the Old Testament, New Testament, and the Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg

The ETS major field test offers the ability to include customized questions for our majors. We are considering the possibilities of using this tool to assess goals 3 and 4.

5) The value of developing New Church interpretive framework for history and of engaging with other interpretive frameworks

Skills learning goals

6) Research skills
- Identify, locate, and use appropriate resources

7) Analysis skills
- Analyze and contextualize primary evidence (textual and material)
- Identify and analyze the theses, arguments, and evidence of secondary sources
- Analyze, articulate, and apply appropriate methodological perspectives

8) Presentation skills
- Generate a clear thesis
- Build a logical argument with appropriate use of supporting evidence
- Write clearly and professionally
- Employ appropriate and effective grammar, style, documentation
- Speak clearly and professionally

Assessment tools for Goals #6-8: Course embedded evaluation. The history faculty identifies class assignments that provide assessment points for the learning outcomes listed above. For each declared history major, the faculty member generates a score according to the criteria below for each of the learning outcomes addressed by course assignments. See appendix W for an example record. The head of the history major keeps the scores, which are used for program assessment.

Scoring Criteria:		
	0	Fails to meet expectations
	1	Meets expectations at a min level
	2	Meets expectations
	3	Exceeds expectations

Values learning goals

9) Appreciation for the field of history

10) The application of historical study to other aspects of life
Assessment tools for Goal #10: Alumni survey. Alumni are asked for their assessment of the usefulness of the skills they developed in the program to their careers and other areas of their life.

11) An understanding of oneself and one's own culture in relation to the cultures of others

12) The importance of participating in the historical study of the Church

b. Strategies to address weaknesses or promote growth

1) Change assessment technique from portfolio to course embedded and standardized.

2) Create areas of focus in program requirements, based on the recommendation from the American's Historical Association's recommendations in *Liberal Learning and the History Major* (www.historians.org/pubs/Free/LiberalLearning.htm). (See appendix P for the new program.)

3) Modify offerings to

- make study more relevant to contemporary world
- draw upon faculty expertise
- support Core skills and requirements in ethics and technology
- support capstone paper

4) Build community among the majors through weekly coffee house gatherings and creation of online presence

5) Strengthen alumni relations

- Activities for history major alumni during alumni weekend
- Develop online community

6) Enhance career guidance and guest speaker programs

7) Offer more structured guidance for a New Church interpretive framework for studying history.

8) Support technology in the major

9) Enliven student participation in the major:

- Advertise courses and developing brochures for areas of focus
- Promote 18th century field of specialization (Swedenborg's era)
- Improve history major web page

5. Interdisciplinary Major Assessment Report

a. Learning Goals and related assessment tools

Upon completion of the Interdisciplinary Major, a graduate should demonstrate satisfactory proficiency in the following five areas:

1) Applying the terms, concepts, and theories specific to two chosen fields, especially in regard to the application of the two fields in the analysis of a particular topic.
    Assessment tools: Tests and written returns in field-related courses in preparation for the capstone. Capstone project.

2) Communicating effectively in written form in a manner appropriate to the two fields.
    Assessment tools: Course-embedded writing assignments. Core skill scores in writing. Capstone project.

3) Using information to address a question and presenting results and balanced analysis clearly, logically, and with appropriate documentation of sources.
    Assessment tools: Course-embedded research assignments. Core skill scores in information literacy. Capstone project.

4) Recognizing and applying religious principles based on the Old and New Testaments and the Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg.
    Assessment tools: Written work in spiritual perspective courses, especially the third-year writing intensive religion requirement. Capstone paper requires a compelling integration of religious perspective at a level that enlightens both the chosen topic as well as the religious teachings.

5) Conducting semi-independent research, integrating the two fields and New Church thought, and producing a competent account of analytical results in the form of a research paper (sound argumentation, clean style, proper citation and documentation).
    Assessment tools: Evaluations in Junior research course and Senior capstone project.

b. Strategies to address weaknesses or promote growth

1) Address student interest in business and psychology by adding emphases in both disciplines.

2) Address quality control in advising by expanding the pool of advisors to include faculty from other four-year majors and by creating a committee to guide the ID program.

3) Address student criticism of unclear expectations for capstone and lack of structure in the program by creating guidelines and reforming curricular requirements.

4) Address faculty burnout by providing support for capstone advising, as follows:

- Develop a framework for handling record keeping to assist in tracking student progress in the capstone and in preparation for the capstone
- Establish a budget to pay for faculty development and for advising stipends
- Attach work load units to ID capstone advising
- Clarify expectations for project advisors and establish an accountability system

6. Religion Major Assessment Report

a. Learning Goals and related assessment tools

Upon completion of the Religion Major, a graduate should demonstrate satisfactory proficiency in the following four areas:

1) Basic knowledge of the Old and New Testaments
     Assessment tools: Religion 363 & 364 (Survey of Old and New Testaments)

2) Familiarity with basic Doctrines of the New Church
     Assessment tools: Religion 305 & 306 (Survey of New Church doctrine)

3) Overview of the Heavenly Doctrine: chronology, different styles (expositional, doctrinal, narrative), basic subject matter of major works.
     Assessment tools: Introductory survey added to the beginning of Religion 305

4) Familiarity with the basic beliefs of other religions; outline of the history of religion; comparative study of present-day religions
      Assessment tools: One of Religion 193, 283, or 284 (courses in comparative, Christian, and pre-Christian religions)

b. Strategies to address weaknesses or promote growth

1) Address criticism of lack of practical relevance in the major by developing specific skills in research, writing, and public speaking.

2) Address lack of information about possible careers for religion majors beyond the ministry.

- Compile a list of careers pursued by recent graduates and invite one or two of these graduates to speak to majors.
- Formalize career guidance in the last year of the program.

3) Address lack of cohesiveness or sense of identity among religion majors by creating activities for the majors, such as field trips and colloquia, service learning experiences, and attendance at conferences alongside faculty.

Conclusions about Baccalaureate Assessment

Although there is much work to be done in building a culture of efficient and consistent assessment to strengthen four-year programs, there are a number of factors that bode well for ongoing improvement. The new Core Program has generated enthusiasm among faculty and good will toward new initiatives around assessment. The Core Program was itself created with a close eye on assessment, and because the faculty is comprehensively on board—having had an integral part in the creation and approval of the program and its assessment tools—it is open-minded about extending the assessment initiative into other areas of the curriculum, especially the four-year degree programs. The academic dean meets several times each term with heads of majors, providing a forum for discussion about progress and problems and for sharing ideas and resources. These meetings were not happening three years ago. There is a healthy sense of rapport among the heads of majors, and a cooperative spirit between those who administer the Core Program and those who administer the majors. Heads of majors seem relieved that the Core Program is setting and assessing specific learning goals as well as delegating clear responsibility to the majors to develop major-specific requirements and assessments. In particular, heads of majors are expected to take full responsibility for two crucial areas of Core values not covered in the Core Program—ethics and technology. Each major is addressing ethics and technology skills in ways appropriate to its own field, but cooperatively with other majors in several instances. Finally, the new position of outcomes director provides promise that efforts at the levels of course-, program-, and institutional-assessment will be monitored and integrated in meaningful ways into a larger view of how our efforts in assessment are serving our students, and thus the larger communities in which they will one day participate.

III. Institutional Assessment

As mentioned in Part Two, our monitoring report targeted five areas of concern regarding assessment: 1) confusion about committee roles and curricular change (Part Two); 2) syllabi standards (above); 3) curricular review and assessment of student learning (below); 4) standardized assessment tools (below); and 5) connection between assessment and planning (below).

A. Curricular Review of Assessment and Student Learning

With development of our Core Program, standards for course syllabi, and assessment plans in each of our baccalaureate programs, the College is positioned now to develop a comprehensive, institutional outcomes assessment plan, and it is taking steps to do so. The first step was the creation in 2007/08 of a new administrative position, outcomes director.

1. Director of Institutional Outcomes and Assessment

The Director of Institutional Outcomes and Assessment is responsible for designing and implementing a College outcomes assessment plan. The position is appointed by and reports to the dean of the College. The director's duties are:

- Chair the Outcomes and Assessment Committee
- Serve as central point of contact for all assessment instruments
- Write outcomes and assessment sections of strategic plans and accrediting reports
- Manage college-wide surveys and student skill assessment
- Annually compile and analyze course grading and report findings to the academic dean

While the director's function is to gather, compile, analyze, and report outcomes and assessment information to the deans, heads of majors, and division heads as appropriate, it is up to administrators in charge of various areas of the curriculum or student life to use that information to improve programs.

In 2007/08, the director's position was allocated one work unit (one course release). One to two work units for this position are planned for 2008/09, with administrative support amounting to roughly 100 hours of secretarial help per year. The work units and administrative support will be reexamined for the 2009/10 academic year and enhanced as necessary.

The dean has identified three major, initial projects for the outcomes director:

- Conduct an assessment inventory
- Conduct an actuarial accounting of support in each degree program
- Write an assessment plan

2. Institutional Learning Outcomes

A necessary step in developing a comprehensive institutional outcomes assessment plan is to identify institutional goals and outcomes. The outcomes director drafted learning outcomes statements based on the College's mission statement, the Core Program goals, and outcomes stated in the four-year program assessment plans.

Because the Core Program goals did not identify specifically assessable learning outcomes, the outcomes director has begun to draft learning outcomes for each of the Core goals. These goals and outcomes are included in Appendix F, the *Draft Assessment Plan* (pp 3-6). In addition to these newly-generated learning outcomes based on goals of the Core Program, the baccalaureate programs have identified outcomes specific to their programs. From these major-specific goals the outcomes director compiled a list of learning outcomes that are common to several of the baccalaureate programs.

The institution-wide learning outcomes (seven to date, see below) are statements of student proficiency expected upon graduation. They will be assessed in coursework, in the capstone project, and with other instruments. When students complete a four-year program at Bryn Athyn College they should demonstrate satisfactory proficiency in the following seven areas:

1) Participating in society as reflective individuals and useful citizens, conscious of spiritual reality and responsive to local, national, and international contexts. (Based on the College's mission statement and the preamble to the Core Goals. See Appendix F "Draft Assessment Plan" pp 3-4 for a listing of the Core Program goals.)

2) Applying field-specific terms, concepts, theories, and practical skills to perform semi-independent research, and producing a competent account, orally or in writing, of findings. (Based on Core Goals 1 and 2, and on common, baccalaureate program learning outcomes 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, and 7. See Appendix F pp 4-5 for a listing of the learning outcomes common to the baccalaureate programs.)

3) Demonstrating skills necessary for employment in the chosen field and preparation for career changes. (Based on common, baccalaureate program learning outcome number 2. See Appendix F p 5.)

4) Recognizing, applying, challenging, and developing religious principles drawn from the sacred texts of the New Church. (Based on the College's mission statement, the preamble to the Core goals, and the common, baccalaureate program learning outcome number 8. See Appendix F p 5.)

5) Responding sensitively to the variety of human experience. (Based on Core goal 4, Appendix F p 4.)

6) Maintaining openness to new information and experience in encounters with God, society, nature, and self. (Based on Core goal 5, Appendix F p 4.)

7) Taking responsibility for the wellbeing of others. (Based on Core goal 6, Appendix F p 4.)

These institutional learning outcomes have not yet been reviewed or approved by the faculty and will likely be modified in that process. In draft form they are helpful in considering possibilities and parameters for a comprehensive assessment plan.

3. Developing an Institutional Outcomes Assessment Plan

The dean has charged the outcomes director with developing an institutional outcomes assessment plan on the following timetable:

> 2007/08   Build an inventory of current assessment instruments

2008/09	Present Draft Assessment Program (May 2009) for experimentation
2009/10	Present Revised Assessment Plan for faculty approval
2010/11	Implement the plan
2011/12	Assess the plan

The inventory of assessment instruments has not yet been completed but will be by the end of the 2007/08 academic year. The process of developing a draft assessment plan will require building consensus on institutional learning outcomes. The outcomes director will facilitate a process in 2008/09 to consider and approve learning outcomes at the institution, program, and division level. With an agreed-upon set of learning outcomes at these levels, faculty will be able to articulate on course syllabi how their courses support and assess those outcomes. Ultimately, graded course and capstone work will provide the most powerful means of assessing attainment of the institutional learning goals, although other instruments will be necessary as well.

During 2008/09 the College will experiment with methods of reporting course-based graded work for use in outcomes assessment. The methods used will be similar to the Core skill scoring system and will be targeted on a few outcomes to keep the system streamlined. Based on results of these experiments, a revised assessment plan will be proposed in 2009/10 for formal implementation in 2010-2011. See Appendix F for further details on assessment plan development at Bryn Athyn College.

4. Course Grading and Institutional Assessment

a. Background

Assessment of student learning at Bryn Athyn College will depend mostly on course-based evaluations of student performance. Course-based assessment is a powerful means of measuring student learning and skill proficiency, so long as the grading is a reliable measure of proficiency. By relying on graded coursework the institution overcomes the issue of student motivation that is often problematic when assessment instruments are outside of or in addition to coursework and carry no incentive for students to render their best work. By using course-based assignments the institution also avoids the problem of a potential mismatch between institutional, programmatic, or course goals with the goals assumed by an independent assessment instrument.

The main disadvantage to using graded coursework for institutional assessment is that its success depends on a shared grading philosophy that uses a range of marks and that conducts evaluations using standardized performance criteria. One form of analysis for reliability of course grading in outcomes assessment is grade distribution. Because of normal variation in students' skills, grades should show a distribution that reflects a spread in quality of work. Collectively, Bryn Athyn College faculty award 50% of their grades in the A range, and they award 30% at the top mark.[16]

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[16] Bryn Athyn College records a grade of A+ with the same numeric value as a grade of A (both 4.0) in calculating the GPA. Therefore, a grade of A as well as A+ constitutes the "top grade."

On end-of-year surveys and in feedback sessions with the deans, some students at Bryn Athyn College have complained that grading standards vary too widely from instructor to instructor. The great majority of the feedback tells us that the issue exists at the high end of the scale—there are too many "easy As." Because of this feedback, and because the institution is interested in making use of course grading in outcomes assessment, the College studied faculty grading patterns over three years (2003-2006).

b. Grade Distribution Analysis

The study of grade distributions demonstrated that in fact many instructors make sparing use of the top grade, and that in several cases the instructors who have consistently received high marks from students for quality teaching are those who are least likely to use the highest mark. The analysis revealed that 77 percent of the 31 instructors who assigned 50 or more grades over the study time period used the highest mark for fewer than 40% of their course grades. See Figure 1 (below). Although there are aberrations,[17] the majority of faculty use the top grade between 10 and 40% of the time, with the distribution centered at 24%.
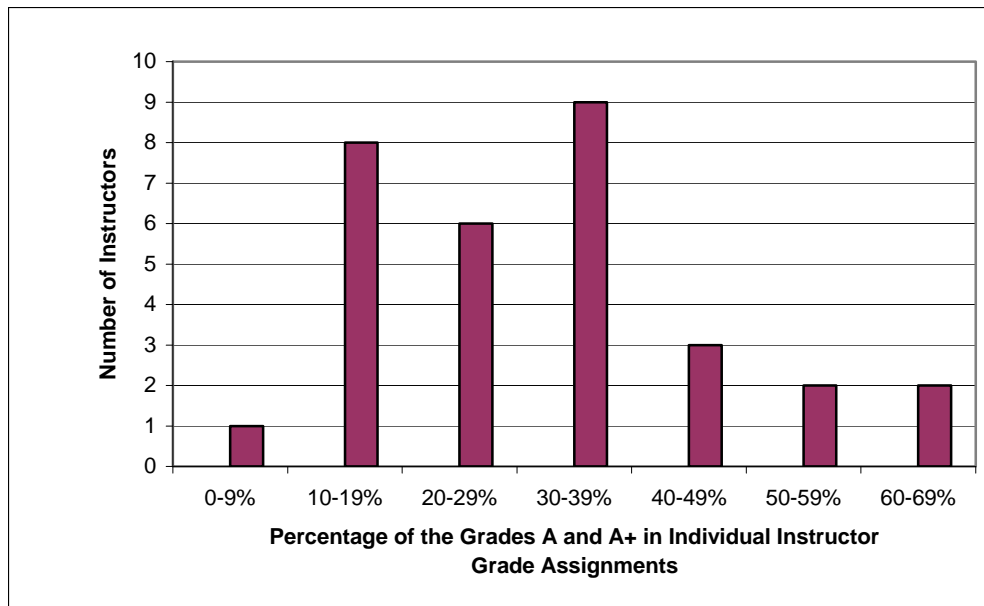

Figure 1. Variation in Assigning the Grade A or A+ Among Instructors Who Assigned 50 or more Grades from 2003-2006

An analysis by division showed that 73% of grades assigned in the Physical Education Division were in the A range. The institution switched from grading PE courses pass/fail

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[17] One instructor assigns the top grade to fewer than 10% of the course grades, whereas two instructors assigned the highest mark 60% of the time, and these latter two instructors assigned 10% of all the institutional course grades given over this time period.

to letter grade in 2003/04. Given these data, the institution should reexamine this decision.

The Education Division faculty assigned grades in the A range 64% of the time. Follow-up discussions with the education faculty revealed that there is a significant difference in grading philosophy between the education faculty and other divisions. The education faculty award grades based on the "mastery model," which emphasizes completion of tasks over quality of work and tends to concentrate grades in the A range.
When subtracting out grades assigned in PE and education courses, and the grades assigned by the small number of faculty with highly-outlying grade distributions, the institutional grading distribution is 45% in the A range, and 24% at the top mark. Grades assigned by these instructors with more stringent grading standards represent 63% of all grades assigned. (See Appendix N for details.)

This grade distribution analysis suggests that much of the course grading going on in the institution may be reliable as a form of student learning and outcomes assessment. This conclusion is based on two observations: 1) more than half of the faculty make sparing use of the top grade; and, 2) students complain much more often about 'easy As' than about grading that is too low. The near absence of student complaints about low grades suggests that when instructors assign grades below the A range students perceive these marks as fair and helpful.

However, because there is heterogeneity in instructor grading philosophies, to utilize course grading for institutional assessment we must either better align grading philosophies or make use of course grading for assessment only with those instructors whose grading practices return reliable information about the range of student performance. Given the education division grades using the mastery model, it makes sense to develop an assessment approach for the education division based on methods other than course grading.

c. Next Steps

The grade distribution data (with names removed) were presented at a faculty meeting in the fall of 2006. There were a number of follow-up meetings and conversations leading to a decision on the part of the College dean, the academic dean, and the director of outcomes that the Outcomes Committee will need to map a strategy for addressing grading practices that cluster at the high end of the spectrum.

In an effort to better align grading philosophies, the dean met individually with instructors whose grade distributions were heavily weighted toward the A range. The purpose of these meetings was threefold: 1) to show these instructors where their grades fell in comparison to the middle of the institutional grading pattern; 2) to discuss the impact these instructor's grades have on the institution; and 3) to discuss methods the instructors could use to bring their grading into closer alignment with the rest of the faculty.

In addition, the outcomes director had several discussions with faculty members about grading methods and philosophy and the role grading can play in institutional assessment of student learning. Through these discussions it became clear that some instructors believe that they serve their students best by having the majority of students receive grades in the A range. These instructors argue that limiting the number of grades at the highest mark is artificial and damaging. They suggest that grading should be done using a rubric and that students completing the items listed on the rubric should receive a high score. Discussion of criterion-referenced grading as described by authors of a text on that subject[18] highlighted a crucial point these authors make—that criterion-referenced grading must be calibrated from time to time against a standard curve. This is how instructors establish expectations for appropriate levels of proficiency. Without a system of establishing realistic standards, instructors are left to guess at what performance level constitutes an A, a B, and so forth.

The key outcome of these discussions was identifying the crux of the difference in grading philosophies, which was the method of calibrating instructor expectations for student performance. The majority of faculty hold to a philosophy that instructor expectations should be based on long-term observations of student performance and how that performance is distributed in terms of quality. A small group of faculty contend that student performance ability is evenly distributed and that instructors need not adjust their grading standards so that students receive a wider range of grades. Within this issue is a difference of opinion about what a grade below the A-range means to a student. A small group of Bryn Athyn College faculty are concerned that grades below the A-range are punitive and have damaging rather than constructive effects on students. The majority of faculty, on the other hand, seem confident that grades below the A-range can be useful to students. Student feedback in several forms—course evaluations, the Annual Outcomes Survey, and in feedback sessions with the deans—indicates greater agreement with the latter philosophy than with the former.

Discussion of grading philosophy helped build a better understanding of the various motivations and standards instructors use in their grading, and the discussion helped encourage instructors to consider how their grading can contribute to institutional assessment of student learning. It is too soon to see what effects these discussions have had on institutional grading patterns. At the end of the 2007/08 academic year, the outcomes director will analyze grade distribution for the 2006-2008 time period.

To connect course grading with institutional assessment, two further steps must take place:

1) Course syllabi should identify assessable learning outcomes that relate to divisional, programmatic, and institutional learning outcomes.
2) Instructors need a system by which they can report individual student proficiency in particular learning outcomes identified by the course syllabus.

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[18] Chapter 14, "Assessment of Classroom Learning," from Jack Snowman and Robert Biehler's *Psychology Applied to Teaching*, 11th edition, 2004.

Implementation of standards for course syllabi to include learning outcomes has partly satisfied the first area. To complete this process, faculty need to approve learning outcomes at the divisional, programmatic, and institutional levels.

The Core scoring methodology (described earlier, pp 32-33), implemented to assess student proficiency in writing, information literacy, quantitative reasoning, and public presentation, provides a model of how instructors might report student proficiencies in other areas as well.

B. Use of Standardized Assessment Tools

The College makes use of both standardized survey and performance assessment tools, and the use of these tools has expanded over the last three years. The longest-standing instruments used are Annual Freshman Survey, from the Higher Education Research Institute of UCLA, and the ACT Outcomes Survey. Two years ago the College began using the ACT Alumni Survey, and last year it began using two standardized performance assessment instruments.

1. Standardized student performance assessment

At this time the College is using two standardize performance assessment instruments, one supporting the Information Literacy Program, and the other supporting the History Major. Several of the major programs are considering incorporation of standardized performance assessments.

a. Information Literacy (IL) Test

In 2006/07 the College began using the on-line information literacy test provided by the Center for Assessment and Research Studies, James Madison University. This test is designed to measure information literacy skills at both the basic (entering student) and advanced (senior year) levels, the levels distinguished by score. The instrument provider recommends interpreting a score of 65% or higher as "passing" at the basic level.

The College's IL program requires that students pass this test at the basic level before earning any degree (AA or BA/BS). The program also requires BA/BS students to pass an IL component in the senior capstone project. The College offers the IL test to all first-year students each spring. Students who fail the test are permitted to take it each year until they pass.

In April of 2007, 37 first-year students took the test and 68% of those students passed. Three students passed at the advanced level. A disproportionate number of ESL students did not pass the test. In response, the College increased attention to developing information literacy skills in English 100, English as a Second Language, a course designed for all incoming non-native English speaking students.

In April of 2008, 48 first and second year students took the test. This time the pass rate at the basic level was 69%, with five students scoring at the advanced level. Again, a disproportionate percentage of ESL students did not pass the test. Further support for these students beyond that already added to English 100 will be required to improve this group's IL test performance.

b. Content area proficiency test in History

Faculty teaching in the history program selected the ETS Major Field Test in History to assess content knowledge of students in the history program in comparison with history students at other institutions. Five students (all of the juniors and seniors in the history program) took the test in April of 2007. Four of five of the students scored at or above the 65th percentile, with one in the 95th percentile of all students who have taken the test nationwide over the last four years. One student scored in the 40th percentile. The faculty in the program are satisfied with the instrument and plan to continue using it. Students were enthusiastic about taking the test and interested in seeing how they stood in relation to their counterparts elsewhere.

2. Standardized survey instruments

a. ACT Outcomes Survey

The College has been using the ACT Outcomes Survey for several years, but until 2006 students were instructed to complete only a limited number of the survey items. This was to allow time to respond to an extensive set of items developed in house. In 2006 the number of in-house items was reduced in favor of using the entire ACT survey, which provided similar information, and information that could be compared to results at other institutions. The survey is administered to all students each year in May. Over the last few years participation rates have exceeded 80%.

The ACT Outcomes Survey includes items dealing with nearly every aspect of the College's operation. The survey measures student opinions of their development and satisfaction in career preparation, advancement in the major, academic skills, liberal arts perspectives, extracurricular activities, civic engagement, health, student life, and campus safety. (See pages 7-8 of Appendix F *Draft Assessment Plan* for a breakdown of areas covered by the survey with links to institutional, Core, and student satisfaction outcomes.)

Survey Results

One valuable aspect of the ACT survey is the availability of comparative data from other institutions that use the same instrument. ACT provides normative data based on nearly 52,000 student records from 96 colleges and universities from the years 2000 through 2005. ACT also provides subgroups for comparison purposes. Our primary comparison group is "Private Colleges." These are four-year institutions, most with religious

affiliation but several not religiously affiliated. We also compare our results to the "2-Year Colleges" group.

The Outcomes Committee focuses on the survey results in two ways. The first is noting the areas in which our students' responses are well above or well below the comparison group. The second is noting responses on items of particular interest in terms of the College's goals. To facilitate this examination, the Outcomes Committee has selected 89 items from eight subsections for close analysis.

For comparison with normative data, the mean of the response scores Bryn Athyn College students gave the selected items is compared to the mean scores of the normative data. Those items scoring well above or well below the normative data are then flagged. A list of the items identified by this process is presented in the "Report of the Annual Outcomes Survey, 2007." A summary of the most outstanding items is provided below.

Survey items with mean scores well above the comparison groups are:

- Personal growth in religious values, and the College's contribution to that growth
- The College's welcoming of student feedback and using that feedback to improve
- Student satisfaction with freedom from harassment on campus
- Students feel cared for as individuals

Survey items with mean scores well below the comparison groups are:

- Students' reported progress in learning how to manage finances, and the College's contribution to helping students in that area
- Students' assessment of the importance of applying scientific knowledge and skills, and students' reported progress in that area
- Students' reported progress toward developing effective job-seeking skills, learning about career options, and acquiring knowledge and skills needed for a career
- Students' reported progress in becoming competent in their major
- Students' assessment of the importance of applying mathematical concepts and statistical reasoning

The high- and low-scoring items from the 2006 and 2007 surveys were nearly identical, both in score and area.

Because of the College's mission, dedicated faculty, and relatively safe campus environment, the high marks the students give the College in promoting religious values and in providing individual and personal support is no surprise. It is heartening that our students report also that the campus is mostly free from harassment and that students feel that that College welcomes their feedback and uses it well.

The areas scoring below the normative data are all in the area of practical skills. We have noticed a pattern of relatively low scores in this area from a number of survey

instruments, including the annual first-year student survey. Students entering Bryn Athyn College tend, as a group, to place less value on practical skills than do first year students elsewhere. This explains in part the relatively low scores we observe on the Annual Outcomes Survey regarding student perceptions of the importance of and their progress in applying scientific knowledge and skills, mathematical concepts, and statistical reasoning. And demographics of the student body (69% of the survey respondents had completed fewer than 60 credits) can explain in part the low scores in the areas of becoming competent in the major and acquiring knowledge and skills needed for a career.

Given that students entering Bryn Athyn College tend as a group to be less career oriented and less inclined to developing practical skills than are students on other campuses, Bryn Athyn College will need to devote resources to develop student interest and skills in these areas.

See Appendix H, "Report of the Annual Outcomes Survey, 2007," for further information on survey results.

Responses to Survey Results

Quantitative reasoning (QR) skills are now required by the Core Program, which was implemented for first-year students in 2007/08. The College has increased support for course-embedded QR skill development through establishing criteria for courses to qualify as fulfilling the QR requirement. (See *Faculty Booklet Core Criteria* pp 5-6 http://www.brynathyn.edu/Academics/FacultyResources/FacultyResourcespdfs/FacultyB ookletCoreCriteria3-07.pdf)

To improve support for students developing their scientific interests and skills, the Mathematics and Science Division has developed its offerings in first year biology and is considering options for 200-level, interdisciplinary offerings in environmental science for non-science majors.

The College has recently introduced several informal opportunities that promote career awareness and development on campus. Starting in 2006/07 the College invited several speakers from various professions to meet with students over lunch to discuss career fields. Beginning in 2008/09 the College will allocate additional staff time to career placement and work more directly with the alumni association to develop career opportunities for four-year graduates. Another program will offer upper-level students a series of monthly, evening "career conversations." These conversations will feature a variety of professionals who will speak with the students about career and financial matters such as interviewing skills, portfolio management, and financial planning. The conversations will also support students in expanding their network of contacts in the professional community.

A new program under consideration intends to provide qualified students guaranteed entrance-level employment for nine to twelve months after graduation. To implement this program the College will need to develop criteria to qualify students and to build a

network with a variety of employers. In addition to supporting students and recent graduates in their career development, the arrangement would also provide an assessment of student performance in skills valued by their employers. These data, in turn, would help the institution refine programs, as appropriate, to meet employers' expectations.

b. ACT Alumni Survey

Survey Scope and Parameters

Bryn Athyn College administered the ACT Alumni Outcomes survey in February 2007. The survey was sent to 193 people who had earned a four-year degree from Bryn Athyn College. Sixty-six people returned the survey, a response rate of 32.1%. The survey included 144 items, four of which were written by Bryn Athyn College.

The ACT Alumni Outcomes Survey is similar to the ACT Outcomes Survey in that it is a comprehensive opinion survey dealing with nearly every aspect of the College's programs. From 2001 to 2006, 94 colleges used the ACT Outcomes Survey, and records of nearly 31,000 alumni from these schools have been compiled to create a set of "normative data" for comparison purposes. These normative data are then further sorted into subgroups. We compare our results with the collective results from private, four-year colleges. Many but not all of these institutions are religiously affiliated.

Analysis of the data focuses on those items that are either of particular interest because they relate to the mission or goals of Bryn Athyn College, or those items that are significantly different from the comparison group.

Summary of Survey Results

Details of the survey findings are included in Appendix M, "Report of the Alumni Outcomes Survey, 2007." (All references in this section to tables and pages refer to Appendix M.) The overview provided here looks at the results in four areas. First is a listing of the highest and lowest scoring items. These lists give a sense of where Bryn Athyn College is performing well in comparison to other four-year private colleges, and where the College is relatively weak. The second is a summary of especially positive characteristics of Bryn Athyn College identified by alumni response. The third and fourth summarize two areas of great interest to the College's stakeholders: the level of involvement Bryn Athyn College students and alumni have in religious activities and organizations, and what employment and further study these graduates pursue.

High- and low-scoring areas relative to normative data

The areas of relative strength are:

- Student involvement in religious activities while in attendance and after graduation (Table 13, p 14)
- Low cost of tuition and/or availability of financial aid (Tables 4 and 11, pp. 6, 12)

- Motivating students to educational aspirations beyond those they had when they entered college (Table 5, p 7)
- The College's impact in helping students live their personal and professional lives according to their own standard or ethic (p 10)
- Opportunities for student/faculty interaction (Table 9, p 11)
- Concern for students as individuals (Table 10, p 12)
- Overall quality of instruction (Table 10, p 12)
- Responding well to student feedback (Table 11, p 12)
- Encouraging academic success (Table 11, p 12)
- Faculty available to students (Table 11, p 12)
- Safe campus (Table 11, p 12)
- An intellectually stimulating atmosphere (Table 11, p 12)

Areas of relative weakness are:

- General condition of buildings and grounds. This is the item with the most negative results of the entire survey. (Table 10, p 12)
- Campus atmosphere accepting individuals regardless of their sexual orientation. This is the item with the second most negative results on the survey. (Table 10, p 12)
- Preparing students for the employment they will have more than five years after graduation (Table 8, p 9)
- Preparing students to earn high-end salaries (Table 7, p 8)
- Supporting development of data analysis skills and helping students value this skill (p 10)
- Library services and resources (p 10 and Table 12, p 13)
- Student health and wellness services (Table 12, p 13)

Positive Characteristics of Bryn Athyn College

Bryn Athyn College alumni gave the College marks well above those of the comparison group in many areas. According to alumni responses, Bryn Athyn College fosters close working relationships between students and faculty, supports a stimulating intellectual environment, involving thought from a variety of fields, and encourages students in developing their academic success. It is a safe campus and relatively free of harassment. The College welcomes and makes good use of student feedback to improve programs, and the College is affordable (Table 11, and pp 12-13).

Involvement with religious thought, activities, and organizations

Bryn Athyn College alumni report a high level of involvement with religious activities and organizations, both when they were students at the College and currently. Current involvement (71%) is a little lower that the level of involvement while in attendance (82%) (see the full report, pp 5 and 14, and Table 13, p 14). Three quarters of the alumni

sampled agreed that their experience at Bryn Athyn College helped them apply their spiritual beliefs in their personal or professional life (see page 5 of the full report).

Further study and employment

Thirty-one percent of the alumni sampled with this survey have gone on to earn an advanced degree, compared to 42% of alumni of other private four-year colleges. Seventy-one percent of Bryn Athyn College alumni sampled indicate that they have set the earning of an advanced degree as a lifetime goal. The percent of our alumni with this educational goal is the same as the comparison group. (See Tables 2 and 5, pp 5 and 7.)

Seventy-three percent of the alumni sampled are currently employed. Fourteen percent appear to have not been employed since graduation. Approximately 34% of the female and 14% of the male alumni appear not to have been employed at the time of the survey. (See pages 7-8 and Table 6). The relatively high percentage of female graduates not employed at the time of the survey reflects the priority many families in the Church community place on mothers being home with their young children. About 14% of our female graduates earn their degree in education and enter the workforce in the Church's elementary school system, which supports employees in taking leave of employment to raise their families.

c. Employee Engagement Survey

The institution hired an independent consultant to conduct an employee engagement survey in October 2006, March 2007, and March 2008. This survey provides an example of how survey results can return representative and current information valuable for institutional planning. The purpose of the employee engagement survey is, among other things, to measure the commitment employees have to the institution in terms of effort, advocacy, and retention. The survey also measures employees' level of confidence in senior leadership, and employee satisfaction with compensation and workload. The employee group focused on in this summary is full-time College faculty. Feedback gathered by this survey showed marked, positive changes in faculty engagement resulting from the institution's significant investment in the College's campus and facilities, which began in 2007. The survey results also showed that two areas of faculty concern that have not yet been addressed—compensation and workload—were not alleviated by improvements in other areas but remain critical issues challenging the institution.

The survey results from October 2006, along with results from a follow-up survey conducted in March 2007, showed that there were troubling levels of discontent among the faculty regarding the Academy's senior leadership, faculty workload, compensation, and a number of other areas. The follow-up survey included two elements that were not present in the original survey: an index of importance for each of the items and an invitation to provide anonymous comments on each item. The item the faculty selected as most important regarded "confidence that senior leadership is moving the institution in a good direction." The comments clarified that faculty concern centered on the Academy

not taking steps to develop College leadership or the College campus. (See Appendix U, "Report of the College Faculty Employee Engagement Survey," for a summary report.)

Since March 2007, the climate on campus has changed dramatically. The board has demonstrated a commitment to develop the College campus by approving $68M to improve the campus infrastructure. Construction on several projects has begun. The Academy's renewed commitment to the health of the College has improved faculty morale.

In March 2008 the College faculty participated in another follow-up employee engagement survey, called a "pulse" survey. Results of this survey were significantly different in many areas from results of the previous two employee engagement surveys (see Appendix U).

The employee engagement survey proved sensitive to measuring the changing attitudes College faculty had regarding institutional direction. For example, the percent of faculty expressing confidence in senior leadership jumped from 38% in October 2006 to 68% in March 2008 (see Appendix U). This increase is attributable to the very significant investments being made at this time in the College's future.

The survey also revealed that issues that have not been addressed since 2006 remain a concern at the present time. Only 38% of the faculty in October 2006 agreed that they were fairly compensated. In March 2008, 32% of the faculty were satisfied with their compensation. In another parameter the level of faculty satisfaction went down markedly. In October 2006 half of the full time faculty agreed that their workload was manageable. That measure fell to 37% in March 2008. The decreased score with workload may reflect the extra effort needed to support the major developments taking place on campus, both in facilities and in programs. The steady and low state of satisfaction with compensation reflects the fact that the College faculty are paid well below benchmarks, and that little has been done over the last eight years to correct this situation. (See Appendix T, "College Faculty Compensation Events, 2000-2008," for an outline of this issue.)

In fall 2007 the institution hired another compensation consulting firm to conduct another comprehensive compensation study and to design a compensation program that meets the institution's goals. The consultants are expected to complete their work by summer 2008.

The employee engagement survey is providing useful information about factors affecting faculty morale, as demonstrated by marked improvements in areas the institution has addressed, and marked deterioration in areas it has not addressed. The crucial issues of faculty compensation and workload must be addressed, and in fact these two issues could become more problematic in the near future as further enhancements to the College's functions will require even more effort on the part of faculty, and as the contrast between investment in infrastructure without a corresponding investment in personnel will become more apparent.

C. Using Assessment to Improve Programs

1. Assessment as part of a continuing cycle

The purpose of assessment is to improve programs, and thus better to achieve goals. Assessment is one of three connected elements: setting goals and developing plans to meet them; implementing and maintaining programs; and assessing the outcomes of those programs. If inputs (students) and outputs (students educated to meet society's expectations for college graduates) remained the same, then this three-part cycle would not require ongoing attention. But because the inputs and outputs are dynamic, the cycle must also be dynamic and ongoing.

At Bryn Athyn College we have a proven record of responsiveness to assessment in terms of student feedback. Results from the Annual Outcomes Survey show that our students are, in comparison with students at other private four-year colleges, extraordinarily satisfied with the way the College welcomes and makes use of their feedback to improve programs. Eighty-four percent of the survey respondents in 2007 agreed or strongly agreed that Bryn Athyn College "welcomes and uses feedback from students to improve the college." The mean score our students gave this item was 0.73 points, on a five-point scale, above the comparison group.

It is gratifying that our students perceive the institution as using their feedback constructively. It is also pleasantly surprising that the College is able to make effective use of feedback without having a formalized program of comprehensive institutional assessment. As such a program develops over the next few years, we trust that the institution will build from the strength it already possesses in using assessment information to improve education.

One element required in using assessment to improve education is connecting assessment with financial planning. Though the institution has made budgetary changes in response to assessment information, a formal process for making budgetary requests based on assessment has not yet been established. The College's budget is based on the previous year's budget, and the budgeting process is under the control of the Academy's central administration with input from the College dean. The ability to allocate funds in response to assessment information will improve with the establishment of a College president who has control over the College budget.

2. Responses to assessment information

Information from our assessment instruments has spawned a number of responses to improve programs. These include making adjustments to institutional programs and methods, and initiating new efforts. Many of these responses have been described earlier in this report. A summary of these responses, along with references to fuller descriptions elsewhere, is provided below.

- Low scores on the Annual Outcomes Survey in students' reported level of progress in developing and applying quantitative reasoning scores reinforced the need to provide specific support for this area in the Core Program, which includes requirements in quantitative reasoning (p 53)
- Low scores on the Annual Outcomes Survey in students' reported progress in applying scientific concepts and reasoning skills encouraged the science faculty to redesign first year offerings in biology, to be implemented in 2008/09 (p 53)
- The Core Program, being implemented in 2007/08, includes specific support for developing students' awareness of the moral and civil planes of life. The need to increase support in this area was made apparent by Annual Outcomes Survey results (see Appendix H, "Report of the Annual Outcomes Survey, 2007" pp 18-20)
- The religion faculty have developed writing-intensive religion courses to support the Core Program and increase the academic rigor of the religion curriculum, which students have reported on the outcomes survey is less challenging than other areas of the curriculum (see Appendix H, "Report of the Annual Outcomes Survey, 2007" p 5)
- Student feedback regarding limited academic programs helped develop interdisciplinary programs with emphases in business and psychology (p 41)
- Student feedback to the heads of majors led to their developing discipline-specific internships (p 38)
- Syllabi enhancements to support transfer and increase clarity of course expectations came in response to requests from students and MSCHE (pp 30-32)
- The Library's addition of electronic databases addressed faculty and student concerns about availability of resources (p 13)
- Relatively poor performance of the ESL students on the information literacy test led to increases in information literacy support in ESL-focused courses (pp 50-51)
- Student and alumni concern for increasing research opportunities on campus helped commit resources to expand the College's research presence in biology (p 35)
- Plans to stabilize offerings in anatomy and physiology in response to student requests (p 35)
- The education major has targeted development of technology skills in response to student and alumni feedback (p 36)
- Concerns raised by students, faculty, and administration about institutional grading practices led to a study of grade distributions by instructor and academic division. This study provided information critical to developing an institutional assessment plan (pp 46-50)
- The Annual Outcomes Survey and the Alumni Outcomes Survey demonstrated that students feel underserved in developing career and financial skills while attending the College. Several programs are being developed in response (pp 53-54)
- Student dissatisfaction with several campus facilities helped make the case for campus improvements (pp 12-13)

PART SIX
Evidence of linked institutional planning
and budgeting processes

Financial Planning

Bryn Athyn College enjoys virtually no economies of scale due to its tiny enrollment and the need to provide the basic course offerings students expect as part of an undergraduate curriculum. As a result, average class size is small (about 7.5) suggesting that increasing enrollment would not only provide additional tuition revenue but also enhance the quality of students' educational experiences.

The financial planning models (Appendix S), developed with assistance from the master planning firm of Sasaki Associates, Inc., illustrate the impact of increasing the size of the student body while limiting the number of courses.[19] The student-faculty ratio is allowed to increase from 6-to-1 to about 13-to-1, which is a level more typical for small liberal arts colleges. Provision has been made for sectioning classes as needed and adding several new programs in keeping with the College's mission, all of which is expected to contribute to enrollment growth. Additional costs for the new facilities are outlined below. Equipment and staffing, as well as admissions and marketing expenses are also included. Student related revenues[20] at the College are assumed to increase from $1.2 million to $7.9 million as the institution reaches an enrollment of 500 students. A second new 20,000 GSF facility, which is accounted for in the model, will be brought online when enrollment reaches between 250 and 500 students.

The models project operating revenue and expenses for enrollments of 250, 500, 1,000, and 1,500 students and indicate that the College can achieve a balanced budget at enrollment levels approaching 1,000 students, using reasonable assumptions for student fee increases and higher operating costs for new facilities and programs. The institution may realize a balanced budget at a lower enrollment level, depending upon how rapidly tuition and fees are increased, when deferred gifts are received, and other factors such as the rate of enrollment growth. Deficits are expected to occur during the initial years of the plan, due to significant upfront costs for plant and equipment outlined below.

The Academy as a whole is expected to run a $5.1 million operating budget deficit in 2008-09, funded by endowment withdrawals or external borrowing. (The Academy currently has only a few million dollars of external borrowings against an unrestricted fund balance in excess of $300 million. As such, the institution has a great deal of internal or external financing capacity.) However, as enrollment expands, administration, faculty, and board members will assess the institution's progress on a regular basis, taking into account factors such as average class size, the availability of qualified faculty, the fit between student applicants and the institution's mission, and the average

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[19] Primary assumptions for the models appear on the second page of each scenario. All figures are stated in 2008 dollars.

[20] Net tuition and fees, external aid or loans and room & board.

indebtedness of graduates. This discussion will need to focus on coordinating the various goals of the strategic plan and adjusting expectations in light of experience.

Discussions held with the faculty in May of 2008 indicate that there are some questions concerning the institution's ability to generate sufficient revenue to 1) cope with the increases in operating and depreciation expenses associated with an expanding campus, 2) introduce a sufficient number of new academic programs to meet the needs of students, and 3) provide satisfactory compensation to attract and retain a quality faculty. A strategy for addressing these concerns is outlined below on page 62 of this document.

Funding for the Strategic Plan

Beginning in 2005, the institution added over $500,000 to the operating budget in support of the strategic plan, including $375,000 for marketing and admissions. This figure includes a new director of marketing office for all Academy schools and some additional funding to support a new business program. The creation of the new position of executive vice president for the Academy also contributed to the increase in operating costs.

A number of capital projects currently underway are expected to improve the attractiveness and appeal of the College's campus and to enhance several key facilities. Approximately $59 million will be spent on these initiatives between fiscal 2008 and 2010. This includes four cottages designed to house up to 40 students (spring 2008); a new science and classroom building to be named the Doering Center (fall 2009); major improvements to and expansion of the main classroom building, Pendleton Hall, including admissions, student life, and dining additions (fall 2009); an improved entranceway, campus landscaping, and signage (fall 2009); a student café and other improvements to Swedenborg Library (fall 2007); and significant deferred maintenance projects in the residence halls (throughout the period). A more detailed description of these renovation and construction projects appears on pp 12-13 (section D, Facilities) and in Appendix G.

The underlying financial strategy is to use unrestricted endowment to fund investment in plant and programs, enabling all Academy schools, including the College, to recruit and compete more effectively for students. Endowment will be restored by means of a capital campaign and reinvestment of depreciation expense (a non-cash outlay). It is expected that annual payout from endowment for operations will exceed our normal 5% ceiling for many years (target 10 – 15 years) until endowment is replenished. Also, higher student revenues (from growth in student numbers and increased tuition), coupled with more appropriate class sizes, will be necessary to bring operations back to financial stability. Over the next 15 years, the portion of the operating budget funded from student-related revenues (all Academy schools) is expected to increase from 15 percent to approximately 40 percent.

The financial models depict deficits during the first stages of growth, since the normal payout rate ceiling of 5% will be exceeded during this period due to the rapid increase in operating expenses. Initial estimates indicate that operating deficits for the Academy as a whole may reach $6.5 million that the payout rate may approach 8 to 10 percent. These rates reflect the fact that growth will take time and that most contributions to the capital campaign will be in the form of deferred gifts.[21] The board of trustees approved the $68 million in improvements to the campus, with the stipulation that the payout rate be returned to 5 percent or below by 2025.

The faculty is heartened by the Academy's unprecedented commitment to improve the College's campus and facilities and remains dedicated to the goal of serving a larger student body in the light of the institution's mission. Enrollment growth will improve the quality of the institution's academic programs, allow faculty members to focus more attention on their areas of expertise, and enhance the College's ability to contribute to the growth of the New Church.

Nevertheless, recent discussion regarding the financial models has led to questions regarding suitable levels of future investment in three key areas: facilities, programs, and faculty. The concern is that significant upfront spending on new buildings and facilities may preclude the availability of adequate resources to expand and strengthen academic programs or provide appropriate compensation for faculty. The Dean of the College plans to establish a committee of faculty and administrators this summer to review, assess, and recommend key strategies, including financial elements, to ensure the success of the strategic plan. Issues of facilities, programs, and compensation will be the focus for discussion over the next few months as physical foundations are laid for new buildings, and over the next four years as the College prepares for its decennial report. Academic programs, student life, and growth initiatives will all need to progress in step for the College to carry its religious mission confidently and effectively into a new phase.

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[21] A Copy of the development office's report to the board of trustees from May of 2008, which describes the institution's capital campaign strategy, is available upon request.