

Assurance Argument
Bethel College - North Newton - KS

Review date: 3/25/2024

1 - Mission

The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

1.A - Core Component 1.A

The institution's mission is articulated publicly and operationalized throughout the institution.

1. The mission was developed through a process suited to the context of the institution.
2. The mission and related statements are current and reference the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development and religious or cultural purpose.
3. The mission and related statements identify the nature, scope and intended constituents of the higher education offerings and services the institution provides.
4. The institution's academic offerings, student support services and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.
5. The institution clearly articulates its mission through public information, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans or institutional priorities.

Argument

1.A.1 The current Bethel College [mission statement](#) was approved by the Board of Directors in April 2019 alongside revised vision and values statements. The statements were consolidated by President Jonathan C. Gering from the recommendations of a Mission Proposal Working Group, consisting of faculty, staff, students, and members of the Futures Committee of the Board.

This group was tasked with submitting a recommendation for consideration by the Board of Directors. They completed their work by offering a set of affirmations of institutional identity, along with a recommendation for further exploration of a "work college" model. President Gering consolidated this committee's work into a proposal and invited faculty and staff for ongoing discussion.

This process energized the community and fit Bethel College's standard of shared governance ([Faculty Handbook](#) Section 1.6). The new proposal created the possibility for the college to pursue a "work college" model while maintaining continuity with the current statements of institutional identity (see 1.A.2).

Implementation of the new mission, vision, and values statements began in 2019. President Gering created two task forces: Career Pathways Task Force (CPTF) and Faith Formation Task Force (FFTF). The purpose of the [CPTF](#) was to develop Bethel College's approach to the work college model. The purpose of the FFTF was to evaluate the ways faith formation takes place in the Bethel College community and make recommendations for future faith formation activities at Bethel College that would ensure "that [faith formation efforts](#) at Bethel College are relevant, effective, and peerless."

1.A.2 The College's pursuit of a [work college model](#), known as [Employment Experiences](#), aligns with its current statements of institutional identity, which are:

Mission Statement

"Bethel College prepares students for meaningful lives of work and service through faith formation, the liberal arts, and practical experience in career pathways."

Vision Statement

"Bethel College graduates students who increase human flourishing (shalom) in society by owning and enacting their faith, demonstrating compassion for the powerless, engaging in critical thought, and bringing value to the workplace."

The vision statement expresses the aspirations of the College and indicates the direction the College is headed as it fulfills its mission.

Values Statement

- **Creative approaches** for living harmoniously within a constantly changing world and workplace.
- **Vocational discernment** that helps students identify their calling and God's purpose for their professional lives.
- **Dialogue** that transforms conflict within communities where there are differences in opinion and understanding.
- **Holistic wellness** through a balance of mental, physical, and spiritual practices.
- **Peace and justice** that seek fair and equitable treatment for all members of society.
- **Community with global consciousness** that cherishes social connectivity, shared endeavors, and intergenerational living.
- **High standards and expectations** for behavior and performance in all dimensions of campus life.

The values statement describes concrete markers of how the College carries out its mission.

The Thresher Way

"The Thresher Way" is the shared, integrated set of experiences that define student life at Bethel College. These shared journeys include: [Academic Experiences](#), [Employment Experiences](#), [Faith Experiences](#), [Service Experiences](#), and [Community Experiences](#).

This statement highlights the unified nature of the Bethel experience and shows how the mission, vision and values of the College are interwoven to create that experience.

Religious Identity and Welcoming Statement

"Bethel College is rooted in Christian theology, sustained by Anabaptist distinctiveness, and guided by Mennonite values. We welcome all people to our campus and prize individuals for their unique personalities, talents, and life experiences."

The religious identity and welcoming statement express the College's particular religious identity and—at the same time—indicates that all people are welcome at Bethel.

Scholarship and instruction. The mission statement demonstrates the importance of the liberal arts as a way for preparing students for meaningful lives. The vision statement calls students to engage in critical thinking and “The Thresher Way” includes the academic experience in the shared journey of Bethel students.

The general education goals adopted by the College faculty ([2023-24 Course Catalog](#)) align with the liberal arts through the distribution requirements and through the Common Ground core, six distinctive elements shared by all students (the first five are part of general education; the sixth is a distinctive feature of majors):

- First-Year Seminar course
- Vocation Seminar course
- Convocation, an all-school assembly
- Travel and study experiences in Cross-Cultural Learning
- Courses across the curriculum in Peace, Justice and Conflict Studies
- Integration of faith and learning, including the capstone course Basic Issues of Faith and Life
- URICA project or Senior seminar research project

Research, creative works and application of research. A prominent component of the Common Ground curriculum is URICA (Undergraduate Research, Internship and Creative Arts), a culminating active learning experience. [The URICA Symposium](#) was designed as an opportunity to showcase a variety of forms of research and creative endeavor across campus. The forum includes senior thesis presentations across the curriculum, along with culminating recitals and art shows, or lecture-performances with digital recordings or images.

Senior seminar research projects. Many Bethel students participate in a senior seminar course, some as part of URICA, in which each student works with a faculty member to develop and implement an original research project. Research topics may be related to summer research projects, internships, a culminating art show or performance, or other experiences.

Summer research awards. Study and research awards ([undergraduate research](#)) are granted through a competitive process for study and research to be done in the summer following the sophomore or junior year. Students collaborate with faculty on a topic of potential interest for their senior seminar or that they might wish to pursue in graduate school.

Clinical service. In addition to traditional liberal arts disciplines, the College offers majors in accredited professional programs, including nursing, social work and teacher education. These accredited programs have specific clinical requirements.

In the nursing program, each semester students augment classroom learning with clinical practicums in local health-care facilities with either a rural or urban focus. During their final semester, their clinical practice culminates in a capstone experience, following the schedule of a practicing nurse and working full-time for just over a month under the supervision of a nurse preceptor in a local hospital.

Junior and senior social work students serve practicums with **licensed social workers** in settings such as hospitals, mental health facilities, schools, nursing homes and social service agencies.

All teacher education methods classes include field experience. Field experience, including student teaching, takes place in settings that range from large urban to small rural public school systems,

from Christian and other private schools to multicultural (multiple-language) institutions and one-on-one or small-group tutoring situations. All Bethel education licensure candidates complete a semester of student teaching.

Public service. Bethel aspires to graduate students who “increase human flourishing (shalom) in society” by demonstrating compassion for the powerless, finding “creative approaches for living harmoniously,” seeking peace and justice by providing “fair and equitable treatment for all members of society” and creating community with “global consciousness that cherishes social connectivity.”

- Bethel seeks to make the study of **peace, justice and conflict management** part of every student’s experience by requiring coursework in this general education category. These courses provide students the opportunity to engage questions and develop practical skills to actively pursue peace and justice.
- The **GAP Year Service Learning Program** recognizes the learning experience gained through participating in service and affirms the Mennonite heritage of concern for one’s neighbor. Students can earn academic credit for the experience through GAP Year service learning which recognizes the experience in service under the auspices of the Mennonite Mission Network.
- The Bethel community fosters and provides regular opportunities for students of all religious backgrounds to practice service on campus, in the community, and around the globe. Annually, classes are cancelled, and the entire campus participates in a variety of service projects during [Service Day](#) (e.g. [nursing service project](#)).
- Students find many ways to serve others and the world around them. Service may include outdoor landscaping care or indoor painting projects. They may serve and support their fellow students on campus through clubs and other student organizations or connect with community partners off campus. Some students voluntarily **serve throughout the school year** with organizations such as Big Brothers/Big Sisters, [prison ministries like M-2](#), local homes for troubled youth, persons with disabilities or retired folks, the local homeless shelter, and after school programs. Some of these community relationships are being reestablished as we continue to navigate the ways COVID-19 impacted our community and community partners.

Religious or cultural purpose. Bethel is affiliated with Mennonite Church USA and continues to base its mission on its Anabaptist identity. Through a commitment to encouraging students to own and enact their faith, Bethel strives to provide intellectual, cultural and spiritual leaders for the church and society.

In addition to the aforementioned courses and activities related to peace, justice and conflict studies and service, Bethel’s Anabaptist values are emphasized through the Common Ground course requirements, including:

- **Convocation** is a regular assembly of the campus community to engage Bethel’s vision, mission, and values through shared experiences and meaningful interaction. Through programming that aims to broaden understanding of the social and natural world, members of the community critically and civilly explore basic value issues and multiple points of view ([2023-24 Course Catalog](#)).
- Bethel students engage different cultures through **Cross-Cultural Learning**. These courses are designed to provide students with cross-cultural learning and an understanding of the global nature of human community. Cross-cultural sensitivity and a global perspective are critical to working and living productively in diverse communities ([2023-24 Course Catalog](#)).

- Bethel requires students to explore the relationship between value structures, basic convictions, and personal and professional life. Bethel's **Integrating Faith and Life** initiative allows students to choose from a wide variety of perspectives, be it through focused biblical study or classes investigating the world's major religions. In the senior year, the course [Basic Issues of Faith and Life](#) brings together students and faculty for a common educational experience before graduation to study issues of historical and contemporary significance.

1.A.3 The mission statement identifies a commitment to preparing students (intended constituents) for meaningful lives of work and service (scope) through faith formation, the liberal arts, and practical experience in career pathways (nature). The religious identity and welcoming statement further clarify that the College welcomes a diverse community as its constituency.

Nature. The vision statement language reflects the immersive nature of the Bethel experience as it seeks to encompass all aspects of human life to increase human flourishing (shalom). The values statement further clarifies this. Peace and justice is reflected in the "Peace, Justice, and Conflict Studies" requirement in the Common Ground curriculum. Community with Global Consciousness connects with the "Cross-Cultural Learning" requirement in the Common Ground. Vocational discernment connects with "Employment Experiences," the College's approach to providing practical experience in career pathways and bringing value to the workplace.

Scope. The vision statement expresses this through language related to increasing human flourishing. The values indicate the breadth of the education provided.

Intended constituents. Bethel College seeks a diverse constituency as reflected in its Welcoming Statement: "We welcome all people to our campus and prize individuals for their unique personalities, talents, and life experiences."

1.A.4 Academic programs at Bethel align with its mission as its offerings of majors and minors represent both liberal arts and pre-professional (e.g., Business, Education, Nursing, and Social Work) areas of study.

Student support services align with the mission, as demonstrated in 3.D.

The enrollment profile represents a diverse community of learners. As discussed in 1.C., the diversity of learners at Bethel continues to increase. In Fall 2022, more than [40% of the student body were students of color](#). Bethel also has significant [religious diversity in its enrollment profile](#).

1.A.5 The College's mission, vision, and values statements are clearly articulated publicly, readily available and highlighted in a multitude of Bethel College's public documents used to communicate to prospective students, current students, faculty and staff, alumni and other constituents.

Publication of mission through multiple means. The mission statement, including values and vision, is publicized through multiple means:

- The mission, vision, and values statements are accessible through our [website](#)
- The academic [catalog](#) (posted publicly) lists the mission statement several times, including in its full form with the vision and values statements
- Recruitment literature has a QR code that links to [the Thresher Way webpage](#) with its focus on the five shared, integrated experiences
- The [Student Handbook](#) prominently displays the full mission statement in introductory

pages

Statements of institutional identity appear around campus. The values, vision, and mission statements greet all who enter the cafeteria. The entrance to the Will Academic Center contains the Bethel College seal. The entrance to the Administration Building has the mission statement prominently displayed. The Student Center features an Alumni Spotlight wall to highlight alumni who embody the College's mission and values.

Communications staff frequently post **social media** connections to Bethel's mission, vision, and values, including expressions of local and global service, promotion of social justice and global awareness, peacemaking, and discipleship (e.g. [Stephens documentary](#), [UNICACH](#), [Juneteenth](#), [BCCJP](#), [Peace Lecture](#), [Adaptive PE track meet](#), [BIFL](#), [Student Chaplains](#), [Convocation series](#)).

Bethel's alumni magazine, *Around the Green*, is mailed to nearly 10,000 constituents and regularly highlights the mission, vision, and values of the College ([Summer 2019](#); [Summer 2023](#)).

Sources

- 01 Board of Directors Composition by Term Ending Date Updated September 2023.pdf
- 02 Board of Directors Committees with Reps January 2024.pdf
- 02 Career Pathways Task Force Final HLC Documents
- 03 Final Faith Formation Task Force Report and Recommendations.pdf
- 04 Employment Experiences Program Summary updated.pdf
- 04A Employment Experiences Program Handbook updated.pdf
- 06 The Thresher Way _ Bethel College
- 07 2023-2024 Course Catalog
- 07 2023-2024 Course Catalog (page number 33)
- 07 2023-2024 Course Catalog (page number 36)
- 07 2023-2024 Course Catalog (page number 37)
- 08 URICA Symposium Program 2023
- 09 Undergraduate Research _ Bethel College
- 10 2023 Service Day Open Signup
- 11 Nursing students service project
- 12 M2 Volunteer program
- 13 BIFL syllabus
- 14 IPEDS Race and Ethnicity Summary
- 15 IPEDS Religion Summary
- 16 Bethel College Mission Vision Values
- 17 Bethel College Student Handbook (2023-2024)
- 18 Facebook_Caleb_Stephens_Documentary
- 19 Facebook_UNICACH_28_May_2023
- 2.A.2-4 Faculty Handbook 10-2023
- 20 Facebook_Juneteenth_2022
- 21 Facebook_BCCJP
- 22 Facebook_Fall_2021_Peace_Lecture_McCormick
- 23 Facebook_Adaptive_PE_Track_Meet
- 24 Facebook_BIFL_Class
- 25 Facebook_Student_Chaplains

- 26 Facebook_Convo_Series_Faith_Formation_Guyton
- 27 ATG - Summer 2019
- 28 ATG - Summer 2023

1.B - Core Component 1.B

The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.

1. The institution's actions and decisions demonstrate that its educational role is to serve the public, not solely the institution or any superordinate entity.
2. The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.
3. The institution engages with its external constituencies and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

Argument

Bethel College's commitment to serve the public good through its educational mission is rooted in the College's origins. In 1887, the makeup of the Bethel College Corporation and the signatories of the charter of Bethel College included persons who were not Mennonite. The first annual report in 1887 declared that the new college sought to "pay the debt of gratitude to other denominations by opening wide the doors of the institution, so that all may have an opportunity to partake of whatsoever advantages may be offered by it."

That commitment is still expressed in our official statements of institutional identity, a declaration of Bethel College's continuing commitment to the public good.

1.B.1 The institution serves the public good by preparing students in accordance with its mission (as discussed in Criterion 3 and 4). In addition to fulfilling its educational mission for students, Bethel serves the public through other affiliate programming as well.

Affiliates. The Bethel College Academy of Performing Arts, Kauffman Museum, The Kansas Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, and the Sand Creek Trail are four affiliates of the College whose missions and service complement the educational program but extend beyond the College's core business in undergraduate education and serve a broader community.

- **The Bethel College Academy of Performing Arts (BCAPA).** The mission of [BCAPA](#) is "to enhance the quality of life in Newton and surrounding communities through expert, dedicated education in music, dance, and the expressive arts. Catalyzing lifelong learning, BCAPA empowers students of all ages and levels of experience to derive meaning from personal and cooperative artistic expression. BCAPA provides unique performance opportunities in a nurturing, community-focused environment."
- The mission of [Kauffman Museum](#) is to create learning experiences rich in artifacts that promote aesthetic appreciation, critical thought, and reflection of the people and the natural environment of the central prairies with emphasis on the stories of Mennonites.
- [Kansas Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution \(KIPCOR\)](#). KIPCOR "endeavors to strengthen conflict resolution and peacebuilding capacities in the communities and institutions it serves. KIPCOR encourages research, education, skill development, and dialogue to enhance the understanding and practice of managing conflict, and to prepare individuals and groups to be peacemakers in an evolving, complex, and often troubled world."

- [The Mennonite Library and Archives \(MLA\)](#). The purpose of the MLA is to help answer questions about the Mennonite past. MLA collects, preserves, and makes available personal papers, documents, periodicals, books, and other media related to Mennonite studies. It serves as the official archives of Bethel College, and as a research center promoting the study of Anabaptist and Mennonite history. The MLA adjoins the College Library, both of which are open to the public.
- [Sand Creek Trail](#). The trail adjoins the Bethel campus and provides visitors a three-mile-long trail loop that offers a variety of plant, animal, and bird life. The trail also connects with a biking-walking trail that connects to the city of Newton. The trail was designated a National Recreation Trail by the U.S. Department of Interior in 2011. Maintenance is overseen by the Sand Creek Trail Committee, comprised of Bethel employees and community members.
- Bethel hosts the [Life Enrichment Series](#), a program for adults aged 60 and over. It features speakers, performers, films, and a variety of other campus presentations each Wednesday morning during the academic year.
- The [Sand Creek Community Garden](#) provides peaceful and inviting gardening spaces for the Bethel College community and beyond, with an intergenerational mix of students, families, and other individuals gardening together.

Bluestem U. Kidron Bethel Village, a retirement community located one-half mile from the College, hosts this [lifelong learning program](#) for individuals aged 55 and up. Its initial offerings in Spring 2023 featured courses taught by three retired Bethel College faculty members.

Faculty Expectations. The Faculty Handbook clearly articulates the expectation that all faculty members will provide meaningful service to the College and the community, among other expectations. Section 2.5.3.4.2 of the Faculty Handbook offers various ways in which faculty might consider service to the larger community (i.e. participation in non-profit organizations; offering professional services within a faculty member's area of discipline; accepting leadership roles in church and community organizations). As stated in the [Faculty Handbook](#), “[f]aculty evaluation shall include data on teaching and advising effectiveness, professional competence and growth, and service to College and community,” underscoring the College's commitment to serving the public good.

1.B.2 Bethel College is an independent, non-profit institution of higher education committed primarily to its educational mission. See 3.A.3 for information regarding contractual or consortia relationships.

1.B.3 Bethel College engages with its identified external constituencies in various ways.

First, administrators, faculty, staff, students, and alumni are actively connected to the community.

- The college is a member of the **Newton Area Chamber of Commerce**. Staff members and alumni often serve on its board. The college sponsors and staff members participate in chamber meetings and other local business events.
- Annually, the college welcomes thousands of community members as well as alumni and friends of the college to its campus for [Fall Festival](#), an event organized by the Alumni Office. The broad participation in the festival exemplifies the cooperative spirit between the college and area communities.
- The Alumni Office collaborates with the Newton Area Chamber of Commerce to plan [Taste of Newton](#), the annual kick-off to Fall Festival.
- A 12-member **Social Work Advisory Council** includes representatives from professional

social work and human services in nearby communities. The council provides advice and support to the Social Work Program.

- A **Nursing Advisory Council** of 12 community members informs and promotes Bethel's nursing program.
- A number of academic departments, including **Business, Bible and Religion, Biology, Communication Arts, English, Mathematics and Software Development, Psychology, and Visual Arts** arrange **student internships**, providing opportunities for students to interact with companies in the community as they provide helpful services and learn in the job setting.
- Student and faculty musicians play alongside community members in the **Newton Mid-Kansas Symphony Orchestra**, which often performs on the Bethel campus. The Music Department also invites local musicians to join students in instrumental and vocal ensembles and perform in a **Masterworks Concert** each spring.
- **Facilities** are used by area constituents as can be accommodated, such as Thresher Stadium being used for a public school adaptive PE track meet, tennis courts being available to the public, hosting church conferences on campus, etc.

Second, the College continues to relate to [Mennonite Church USA](#) (MC USA) and its regional conferences, including the Western District Conference, in which it is located.

- Bethel College operates in consultation with the [Mennonite Educational Agency](#) (MEA), which serves and promotes Mennonite education, including primary, secondary, undergraduate, and graduate programming, along with the Mennonite Higher Education Association (MHEA), a member-driven federation of Mennonite higher education schools. The President's Office maintains primary contact with MEA and MHEA.
- College personnel and students engage with church members and leaders attending **MC USA national conventions** and [regional conference sessions](#). Faculty and staff give seminars. Personnel listen and share information at a gathering for alumni and friends.
- Bethel students have the opportunity to participate in MC USA's **Ministry Inquiry Program** (MIP) which allows them to explore pastoral ministry through a summer internship in a [MC USA](#) congregation, camp, or denominational agency.
- Bethel College maintains relationships with local congregations by providing Sunday morning **speakers and musicians for worship services** while classes are in session.

Third, Bethel College communicates with its alumni — informing, listening, and responding as appropriate.

- The [Bethel College Alumni Association](#) includes all former students who earned 24 or more credit hours. The College also engages donors and friends in groups, inviting them to participate in activities and to support the college as volunteers, in prayer, or financially.
- A 25-member [Alumni Council](#) represents the Alumni Association, advises alumni office staff, and implements special projects and programs to support the college. The council meets six times a year. Three major events supported by the council are Fall Festival, an annual fund-raising phonathon, and Alumni Weekend. Additionally, the council facilitates class reunions, conducts fundraisers, and supports the Student Alumni Association.
- The **African-American Alumni Association** interacts with African-American students, supports a scholarship fund, and holds occasional meetings on campus and elsewhere in the United States.
- Members of the [Bethel Deaconess Hospital/Bethel College Nursing Alumni Association](#) gather annually at Fall Festival and promote the college's nursing program.

- The [Bethel College Women's Association](#) (BCWA) supports Bethel College through special projects, educational events, and donations. Additionally, the BCWA sponsors on-campus presentations as part of the Carolyn Schultz Speaker Fund.
- A **STEM Advisory Council**, consisting of alumni professionals, serves departments related to Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics. The council links Bethel faculty with those who are in graduate school or employed directly in an academic field.
- The [Bethel College Booster Club](#) supports Bethel College athletics by providing financial, emotional, and community support for Bethel College athletic programs. The club helps ensure the success and sustainability of athletic programs while fostering a sense of pride and camaraderie among fans and supporters through fundraisers and attendance at athletic events. Membership is open to all alumni, community members, businesses, families and friends of Bethel College.
- Internationally, [Friends of Bethel College in Germany](#) includes German participants in the historic student exchange program with the Bergische-Universität-Gesamthochschule-Wuppertal and Bethel alumni in Germany. They meet several times a year to fundraise and support Bethel students studying in Wuppertal by providing basic needs for Bethel students.

In addition to interaction through more defined entities, Bethel College engages constituents in other ways:

- Personnel from the President's Office and the Advancement Office, including Development and Alumni Relations, invite **alumni and friends to support the college financially**. In fiscal year 2022, [donors](#) gave \$14.7 million to the college, including \$1.4 million to the Bethel Fund (general fund).
- **Faculty members interact with former students** by phone and email and at departmental reunions at [Fall Festival](#).
- Staff from the President's Office, Advancement Office and Alumni Office give updates, answer questions, and hear concerns at [reunions](#) on campus at Fall Festival and Alumni Weekend.
- Representatives of the college attend **gatherings** organized by the Alumni Office for alumni and friends throughout the U.S. and beyond.
- Alumni, students, and other volunteers conduct an annual **Phonathon**. The project serves as a fundraiser as well as person-to-person alumni relations project.
- The Student Life Office invites community members to serve as [host families](#) to provide students "a home away from home."

Bethel College communicates via print and electronic media, including the following:

- [Around the Green magazine](#), produced by Institutional Communications and Marketing (ICM)
- An [annual donor report](#), produced by the Advancement Office and ICM
- [THRESHERview](#), a monthly electronic **newsletter** produced by the Alumni Office and ICM
- The college's **website**, overseen by ICM's Institutional Media Services (www.bethelks.edu)
- The college's [news service](#), part of ICM
- Engagement through [social media](#), overseen by ICM

In addition to the programming noted above, the college invites alumni and community members to [lectures](#), [concerts](#), [sports competitions](#), and [other events](#) of interest.

Bethel engages with its external constituencies and communities of interest, former students,

the local populace, donors, and other friends of the college, all of whom are stakeholders in the institution. Through educational programming, established entities, informal gatherings, campus activities, and media outlets, the college responds to their needs while guided by its [vision and mission](#).

Sources

- 01 BCAPA webpage
- 02 Kauffman Museum
- 03 KIPCOR webpage
- 04 Mennonite Library and Archives webpage
- 05 Sand Creek Trail webpage
- 06 Life Enrichment webpage
- 07 Sand Creek Community Gardens _ Bethel College
- 08 Bethel College Faculty Handbook
- 09 2023 Fall Festival _ Bethel College
- 10 Newton Chamber of Commerce 2023 Taste Of Newton
- 11 MCUSA webpage
- 12 MEA webpage
- 13 MennoCon23
- 14 MiP-Flyer-v3
- 15 Alumni Association webpage
- 16 Alumni Council webpage
- 17 Nursing Alumni invitation Fall Fest 2023
- 18 BCWA webpage
- 19 Booster Club
- 20 Friends of BC in Germany
- 21 2022 Donor Report
- 22 Reunions
- 23 Host family
- 24 ATG - Summer 2023
- 25 THRESHERreview – September 2023
- 26 News service webpage
- 27 Social Media
- 28 Convo _ Lectures
- 29 Who we are
- 30 BluestemU

1.C - Core Component 1.C

The institution provides opportunities for civic engagement in a diverse, multicultural society and globally connected world, as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

1. The institution encourages curricular or cocurricular activities that prepare students for informed citizenship and workplace success.
2. The institution's processes and activities demonstrate inclusive and equitable treatment of diverse populations.
3. The institution fosters a climate of respect among all students, faculty, staff and administrators from a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas and perspectives.

Argument

1.C. Bethel provides opportunities for civic engagement in a diverse, multicultural society and globally connected world.

1.C.1 Bethel's academic departments include classes that promote [civic engagement](#):

- The **Biology Department** takes students to Costa Rica (BIO495 - Tropical Biology Field Course) and Mexico (BIO303 - Biological and Cultural Richness of Mexico) where students learn about environmental justice and the effects of climate change on ecosystems and people's livelihood.
- The **Education Department** has multiple classes that require students to observe/aid in a variety of elementary and secondary school settings.
- In the **Social Work Department**, classes from the introductory level through upper-level seminars engage in a variety of experiences including learning about poverty by using grocery gift cards to purchase items for the community food pantries; writing to legislators or agency decision-makers about policies; and collaborating with the Harvey County Health Department to research local food insecurity and food access.
- The **Business Department**, together with **Employment Experiences**, offers a course, [Pathway to Purpose: Vocational Discernment in the 21st Century](#), for students who are internship and/or career-seeking.
- **Internships** are supported by a variety of academic departments. In addition, nursing clinicals, field experiences in social work, and student teaching also prepare students for workplace success.
- [Service Day](#) is held every fall semester in September. Daytime classes are canceled, and all full-time students are expected to participate.
- [Athletic teams participate in service opportunities](#) throughout the school year. Activities include High Five Fridays at the local elementary schools and playing bingo with retirement center residents. Every summer for the last 15 years, the golf team has traveled to Kids Across America Camp in Golden, MO, for a 4-day service project.
- [Employment Experiences](#) (EE) hosts [career-oriented workshops](#) addressing topics such as resume and cover letter writing, and interviewing strategies. EE posts employment opportunities for students, provides career counseling, and sponsors [job fairs](#).

1.C.2 Student body profile includes significant racial/ethnic diversity. In Fall 2022, 40% of the student body were students of color.

Coordinator of Student Activities and Engagement. This member of the Student Life staff advises several student groups that foster cross-cultural engagement.

- **Diversity Council (DivCo)** is a chartered organization of the Student Government Association and focuses on promoting and celebrating diversity on campus.
- **Bethel College Community for Justice and Peace (BCCJP)** student group, whose mission is to foster thought and build community among students to organize action that seeks justice, builds peace, and is in solidarity with marginalized and oppressed people. BCCJP has sponsored peace vigils, encouraged participation in racial healing circles, presented a convocation and created podcasts on Bethel's Black history, and created a Substack titled "Survival."
- **FEMCORE, BeLonGTo and Gay Straight Alliance** are student organizations that seek to create a safe and welcoming environment on campus for women and femmes, LGBTQIA+ persons, and their allies.

Campus Ministries programming fosters multicultural life. Voluntary chapel on Wednesdays is another expression of Bethel's values. In October 2022, a service co-sponsored by DivCo celebrated Hispanic Heritage month and included readings in Spanish and English. In January 2023, a service focused on reflections on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and his legacy.

Cross Cultural Learning (CCL) and Peace, Justice and Conflict Studies (PJCS). These two elements of the "Common Ground" core of general education are part of the experiences of every Bethel student. The CCL requirement is designed to prepare students for working and living in a diverse and global community by exposing them to a cross-cultural experience in a culture significantly different from their own. The PJCS requirement is designed to create critical engagement with issues of power, violence, and social justice; foster a capacity for understanding conflict from diverse perspectives; and develop skills to analyze and/or manage conflicts and practice peacemaking.

Students may choose to meet the CCL requirement through travel courses that immerse them in new cultures and environments. There are also on-campus courses that integrate field trips and other content that invite students to an understanding of their own culture and environment and analyze it in comparison and contrast with cultures different from their own.

Convocation. A requirement in the general education program for all full-time students, Convocation is one key program for addressing a multicultural society. Each year, the Convocation fall and spring program includes speakers/topics that address diversity and multiculturalism.

UNICACH Partnership. The agreement for student and faculty collaboration between Bethel College and Universidad de Ciencias y Artes de Chiapas in Mexico was signed in 2018 and refreshed post-pandemic in 2023.

1.C.3 The most fundamental way that Bethel seeks to foster a climate of respect to diversity is to respond to the diversity within its own community.

The [Nondiscrimination Policy](#) in the employee handbook extends anti-discrimination protection to a wide range of categories including religion, sexual orientation, parental or marital status, gender identity, gender expression, medical or genetic information, citizenship status, veteran or military status, or disability.

In Fall 2021, Bethel College became a designated '[Truth, Racial Healing & Transformation \(TRHT\) Campus Center](#)' as approved by the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) in collaboration with the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. The TRHT Campus Center "seeks to identify opportunities for and to provide spaces for healthier conversations among students, professionals, and community members." One of the primary tools being used is a facilitated experience called a Racial Healing Circle. A variety of internal constituencies have participated in [Racial Healing Circles](#), including classes, teams, organizations, faculty, staff and administrators as well as circles for students, led by students.

Bethel College became an inaugural member of [Belong: An Inclusive Learning Community](#) in Spring 2023, which is part of a network of the Council of Independent Colleges (CIC) that partners with the Association of College and University Educators (ACUE) in offering [professional development resources](#) for faculty and staff to support student belonging in classes and across campus.

These institutional programs and events operationalize the values and practices that are part of everyday life at Bethel College that are attentive and responsive to human diversity:

- Diversity Council programs
 - [Asian Pacific American Heritage Month](#)
 - [Women's Fair](#)
 - [Black Barber and Hair Stylist](#)
 - [Pride Week 2022](#)
- KIPCOR Peace Lectures
 - [Mark McCormick](#) (2021)
 - [Leonard Pitts, Jr.](#) (2021)
 - [Sarah Smarsh](#) (2020)
- Staley Lectures
 - [Phuc Luu](#) (2023)
 - [Karen González](#) (2022)
- [Racial Healing Circles](#)
- [Bethel Black History Podcast](#)
- [Pride Flags and 'Let's Go Brandon' Incident, and Nondiscrimination Statement](#)
- [Bethel faculty participation - Social Justice in Higher Education](#)
- BIFL common text selections: *The God Who Sees: Immigrants, the Bible, and the Journey to Belong* (2021-2022), *Jesus of the East: Reclaiming the Gospel for the Wounded* (2022-2023)
- [Annual MLK Day Celebration 2023](#)

Sources

- 01 Course-based activities that promote civic engagement
- 02 2023-2024 Course Catalog
- 02 2023-2024 Course Catalog (page number 67)

- 03 Service Day email
- 04 Bethel College Athletics Service 2021-23
- 05 Employment Experiences Community Partner flyer
- 05 Job Fairs
- 05.1 PREP Slides (1)
- 06 IPEDS Race and Ethnicity Summary
- 07 Coord of Student Activities _ Engagement job description
- 08 Clubs and Organizations _ Bethel College
- 08 UNICACH agreement dated 2023-05-19
- 09 BCCJP Survival webpage
- 10 Hispanic Heritage Month Chapel
- 11 MLK Chapel
- 12 PJCS and CCL from 2023-24 catalog
- 13 Fall 2021 Convocation Schedule
- 14 Spring 2022 Convocation Schedule
- 15 Bethel and UNICACH have first exchange post-pandemic
- 16 2024 updated final Employee Handbook.pdf
- 17 Truth Racial Healing and Transformation Bethel College
- 18 Upcoming Racial Healing Circles Faculty_Staff_Students
- 19 SP5_ Support students by engaging in Belong_ An Inclusive Learning Community
- 20 CIC Belong Overview
- 21 Asian Pacific American Heritage Month Flyer
- 22 Womens Fair
- 23 Black Barber and Hair Stylist
- 24 Pride Week April 18-22
- 25 McCormick to make Peace Lecture appearance on campus _ Bethel College
- 26 Popular speaker and columnist to make return Peace Lecture appearance
- 27 Best-selling author to give Peace Lecture on culture and class in America
- 28 Trauma and healing essential to Staley speaker's theology
- 29 Speaker calls Christians to a more biblical view of land
- 30 Bethel Black History Podcast on Survival
- 31 Pride Flags and _Let_s go Brandon_ Incident
- 32 Bethel faculty to participate in national social justice symposium
- 33 Ground-breaking college administrator will speak on MLK Day

1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

Summary

Bethel College is performing its new mission and embodying its values, sustaining its traditions of strong academic, faith, service, and community experiences while developing and growing the employment experiences so that students are prepared for meaningful lives of work and service that contribute to human flourishing. The College is consonant in its commitment to be a diverse community of learners, and seeks to foster multicultural life in new ways. Administrators, faculty, and staff are working together toward this vision, while sustaining Bethel's tradition of excellence.

Sources

There are no sources.

2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

2.A - Core Component 2.A

The institution establishes and follows policies and processes to ensure fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty and staff.

1. The institution develops and the governing board adopts the mission.
2. The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, human resources and auxiliary functions.

Argument

2.A.1 The institution develops and the governing board adopts the mission. The Board of Directors adopted the [mission statement](#) in April 2019. A [committee](#) comprised of faculty, staff, board members, and students developed the statement.

2.A.2 The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, human resources and auxiliary functions.

Governing board. Established policies and processes of the governing board ensures it operates with integrity (see 2.C).

Financial integrity. Bethel College demonstrates integrity in its financial functions as evidenced by the unqualified opinions in the [2020](#), [2021](#), and [2022](#) Auditor's Reports.

Strategic priorities. The institution has [demonstrated](#) integrity in the development, approval, and implementation of the seven strategic priorities that make up the strategic plan, "[Knowledge Is Not Enough.](#)"

Faculty and staff operate with integrity. College faculty and staff follow ethical policies as prescribed in the [Faculty Handbook](#) and [Employee Handbook](#). We recognize the disparity between the Faculty Handbook and current practice on retirement, but there has been [working dialogue](#) to address this issue.

The Consumer Information page of the website contains a wide variety of disclosures and policies, including state law compliance, FERPA, other privacy issues, institutional database, costs, accreditation documents, gender and ethnicity statistics, financial aid, retention and graduation rates, health and safety, etc.

- FERPA information is included in both the [Student Handbook](#) and the [Employee Handbook](#) (p. 506) and a [paper brochure](#).
- [Social media policy](#) is included in the Employee Handbook.
- Title IX policy is described in the [Employee Handbook](#) (p. 600), in the [Student Handbook](#) and

on the [website](#).

Beginning July 1, 2024, [Sheryl Wilson](#) will serve as the College's **VP for Culture and Belonging** to focus on a range of diversity, equity, and inclusion issues.

Student Life expects all students to act with integrity while enrolled at Bethel College, in accordance with policies outlined in the [Student Handbook](#).

The athletic department participates in the **National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) Champions of Character program**, earning a five-star institution award at the gold level in 2022-23 for the sixth straight year.

The Institutional Advancement Office operates its fundraising and other development activities in accordance with [ethical policies](#) to ensure the integrity of its work. That office follows a consolidated book of standards including those from the Association of Fundraising Professionals and the Council for Advancement and Support of Education, and [internal policies](#) such as its Gift Annuity Policy, Gift Solicitation Acceptance Policy, Auxiliaries Fundraising Policy, and Naming Policy.

The Admissions Office and Financial Aid Office perform all recruitment and admission activities in accordance with [admissions policies](#) (pp. 2-11). Financial aid policies are outlined in the [Financial Aid Policies and Procedures](#) manual and the [Student Handbook](#).

Sources

- 2.A.1-1 2019 April 4-6 Bethel College Board of Directors Minutes
- 2.A.1-2 Affirmations from the Mission Working Group Fall 2018
- 2.A.15 Advancement Policies.doc
- 2.A.2 10 Fall 2023 Strategic Plan Update email
- 2.A.2 11 Knowledge Is Not Enough - Infographic
- 2.A.2 FWC minutes 1.12.24
- 2.A.2-1 2020 Audit Report
- 2.A.2-10 Advancement Policies
- 2.A.2-11 Catalog 23-24
- 2.A.2-11 Catalog 23-24 (page number 9)
- 2.A.2-12 Bethel College Social Media Policy
- 2.A.2-12 Financial Aid Policies
- 2.A.2-13 NAIA-COC_Five-Star-Institutions-2022-23
- 2.A.2-14 Title IX web page
- 2.A.2-2 2021 Audit Report
- 2.A.2-3 2022 Audit Report
- 2.A.2-4 Faculty Handbook 10-2023
- 2.A.2-5 Employee Handbook Jan 1 2024
- 2.A.2-5 Employee Handbook Jan 1 2024 (page number 51)
- 2.A.2-5 Employee Handbook Jan 1 2024 (page number 53)
- 2.A.2-5 Employee Handbook Jan 1 2024 (page number 57)
- 2.A.2-6 Consumer Information – Bethel College
- 2.A.2-7 Student Handbook
- 2.A.2-7 Student Handbook (page number 16)

- 2.A.2-7 Student Handbook (page number 26)
- 2.A.2-7 Student Handbook (page number 54)
- 2.A.2-7 Student Handbook (page number 56)
- 2.A.2-8 FERPA brochure
- 2.A.2-9 VP Culture and Belonging news release

2.B - Core Component 2.B

The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public.

1. The institution ensures the accuracy of any representations it makes regarding academic offerings, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, governance structure and accreditation relationships.
2. The institution ensures evidence is available to support any claims it makes regarding its contributions to the educational experience through research, community engagement, experiential learning, religious or spiritual purpose and economic development.

Argument

2.B.1 The institution ensures the accuracy of any representations it makes regarding academic offerings, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, governance structure and accreditation relationships.

[The Catalog](#) is the primary source for this information. The Office of Academic Affairs is responsible to annually update the catalog and [Consumer Information page](#) in an accurate and timely manner.

Requirements. Academic program requirements are outlined in the [Academic Catalog](#) (pp. 23-34). Policies regarding academic good standing, probation, and suspension, as well as residency and enrollment requirements, are also included in the Catalog (pp. 40-43).

Faculty and Staff. The [Academic Catalog](#) (pp. 142-147) includes information on year of hire and degrees for all Bethel College faculty and administrators. Students and the public can find the catalog in multiple places on the website. An [employee directory](#) is on the website.

Costs to Students. Annual costs are outlined in the [Academic Catalog](#) (pp. 9-10). Costs are also available to the public on the [website](#).

Control. Bethel is clearly defined in its mission statement, found in the [Catalog](#) (p. 12) and on the [Guiding Principles](#) website as an “independent institution of higher education.” A list of the members of the Bethel administrative cabinet is in the [Catalog](#) (p. 142) and a list of [Board of Directors](#) is on the website.

Accreditation Relationships. Bethel’s accreditation relationships and standings are listed in the [Academic Catalog](#) (pp. 20-21) and are also summarized on the Accreditation page of the [website](#) that lists and displays the HLC accreditation as well as the program accreditation for Education, Nursing, and Social Work.

Employment Experiences is the label Bethel uses for implementing a work-college model. This is documented in an [Employment Experiences brochure](#) and an [Employment Experiences Program Handbook](#). The program features relationships with [community partners](#) who provide a number of these employment experiences.

2.B.2 The institution ensures evidence is available to support any claims it makes regarding its

contributions to the educational experience through research, community engagement, experiential learning, religious or spiritual purpose and economic development.

- The results of the educational experience are publicly demonstrated in many ways. Fine arts events include [art gallery exhibits](#), [theater](#) and [music performances](#). [Choir tours](#) extend this engagement beyond the campus itself.
- A major focus of demonstrating academic results is the [Undergraduate Research, Internships and Creative Activity \(URICA\) program](#). An annual [symposium](#) offers student academic presentations to the broader campus and community.
- [Lectures](#) and [symposia](#) offer academic engagement outside the classroom.
- The [Summer Science Institute](#) extends academic engagement to the wider community.
- The college directly invites the community onto campus for an annual [Fall Festival](#).
- Two study abroad programs specific to Bethel College are the [Wuppertal Exchange Program](#) with the Bergische-Universität-Gesamthochschule-Wuppertal in Germany, and biology study opportunities with the [Universidad de Ciencias y Artes de Chiapas](#) in Mexico.
- Opportunities for community engagement via media include the student newspaper, [The Collegian](#), and the campus radio station, [KBCU](#).
- Spiritual life activities connect with some of the lectures and fine arts events noted above. On-campus religious engagement includes a voluntary weekly chapel service and a [Student Chaplain program](#).

Sources

- 02.B.2-8.5 Summer Science Institute
- 2.A.2-11 Catalog 23-24
- 2.A.2-11 Catalog 23-24 (page number 16)
- 2.A.2-11 Catalog 23-24 (page number 19)
- 2.A.2-11 Catalog 23-24 (page number 27)
- 2.A.2-11 Catalog 23-24 (page number 30)
- 2.A.2-11 Catalog 23-24 (page number 47)
- 2.A.2-11 Catalog 23-24 (page number 149)
- 2.A.2-11 Catalog 23-24 (page number 151)
- 2.A.2-6 Consumer Information – Bethel College
- 2.B.1-1 Affordability page
- 2.B.1-3 Guiding Principles
- 2.B.1-4 Board of Directors.pdf
- 2.B.1-5 Accreditation page
- 2.B.1-6 Employment Experiences flyer
- 2.B.1-7 Employment Experiences Program Handbook
- 2.B.1-8 Community Partners
- 2.B.2-1 Art gallery poster fall 2023
- 2.B.2-10 Fall Fest poster
- 2.B.2-11 Wuppertal
- 2.B.2-12 Collegian
- 2.B.2-13 KBCU
- 2.B.2-14 Spiritual Life page
- 2.B.2-2 Addams Family poster Oct 2023
- 2.B.2-3 Masterworks program Apr 30 2023

- 2.B.2-4 Choir tour program spring 2023
- 2.B.2-5 URICA page
- 2.B.2-6 URICA list
- 2.B.2-7 Worship and the Arts Symposium 2022
- 2.B.2-8 Senses and Aging Symposium
- 2.B.2-9 Biology study abroad

2.C - Core Component 2.C

The governing board of the institution is autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution in compliance with board policies and to ensure the institution's integrity.

1. The governing board is trained and knowledgeable so that it makes informed decisions with respect to the institution's financial and academic policies and practices; the board meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.
2. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.
3. The governing board reviews the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.
4. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties.
5. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the institution's administration and expects the institution's faculty to oversee academic matters.

Argument

2.C.1 The Board provides a systematic [orientation](#) for new members. Board meeting time is also devoted to a variety of [Board development](#) topics.

The Board operates on the basis of a [Board Policy and Guideline Book](#).

The [Compliance and Ethics Committee](#) of the Board [regularly reviews](#) legal responsibilities.

Nearly every [Board meeting](#) addresses the [Board's](#) fiduciary [responsibilities](#).

2.C.2 The deliberations of the Board of Directors focus on preservation and enhancement of the institution. A review of the minutes from any meeting of the Board of Directors will reflect ongoing discussions related to how best to grow the College while recognizing the realities of current budget constraints.

In Fall 2019, the Board established benchmarks for a [Board-designated contingency fund](#) and faculty-student ratios and mandated the creation of a financial contingency plan to respond to budget shortfalls.

Of particular significance is the Board's approval of a new [Strategic Plan](#) in Fall 2022.

Additional support for this argument is integrated in 2.C.4.

2.C.3 The Board of Directors follows the College's [bylaws](#) to ensure that it fulfills its governing responsibilities to serve the best interests of Bethel College and assure its integrity.

The governing board takes ultimate responsibility to guide institutional purpose: "The Board of Directors shall require and approve a complete current statement of institutional purpose, goals, and objectives which will provide direction for institutional planning and management" (Article I).

Article I also articulates the board's ultimate duty to organize the administration and structure of the

College in order to fulfill its mission: "The institution shall consist of such personnel, departments, and administrative structures as the Board of Directors deems necessary and appropriate to the functioning of an academic program which embraces the liberal arts and sciences and such other studies as the Board may approve, and to confer academic degrees, certificates, and honors as may be approved."

Bethel College identifies by history and by choice with Mennonite Church USA, and is an independent legal corporation governed by the Board of Directors. Membership in the Bethel College Corporation is widely representative, including delegates from area conferences of Mennonite Church USA, representatives from the Bethel College Alumni Association, Bethel College Women's Association, congregational representatives, and all annual contributors of \$100 or more to the College. The Corporation holds an annual meeting, which typically includes presentations by the board's Chair and the College President to update these stakeholders on the state of the College, including mission, strategic planning goals, fundraising, and other campus developments. This structure ensures that Bethel sustains its relationship with individual constituents, church congregations, and denominational bodies.

The Board of Directors is representative of its interested constituents, including various area conferences of Mennonite Church USA, the Bethel College Alumni Association, the Bethel College Women's Association, the Corporation, the Mennonite Education Agency, and the Board itself.

Article III of the [bylaws](#) enumerates for the governing board its: 1) Powers, 2) Membership, 3) Appointments, 4) Meetings, 5) Officers, and 6) Committees.

Bethel College relates to the Mennonite Church USA through the [Mennonite Education Agency \(MEA\)](#), the denomination's office for educational relationships. The relationship is consultative and Bethel College continues to be an independent legal corporation and educational institution.

Discussions remain ongoing with MEA about additional revisions to the Statement of Arrangements which accurately reflect the relationship between them. These discussions reveal the Board's firm stance that it will continue to maintain its independence.

Despite its autonomous decision-making authority, the Board regularly reviews and considers the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations. The Board devotes time at each of its meetings to hearing from and [interacting with students, faculty, staff](#) and administrators. Examples can be seen in the [meeting agenda cited herein](#). The annual Bethel College Corporation provides a regular formal opportunity for interaction with the [broader college constituency](#), also Article II of Bylaws.

Furthermore, the Board endeavors to engage all relevant members of constituent groups in critical decisions related to the institution. For example, members of faculty, staff and the wider community were asked to serve on the most recent Presidential search committee. The more recently formed Mission Proposal Working Group consisted of Board members, faculty, staff, students, and members of the Cabinet. The current [Strategic Priorities](#) leaders include Cabinet members, faculty, and staff.

2.C.4 The **Board of Directors** preserves its independence from undue influence when such influence would not be in the best interest of the institution.

As articulated in its [Conflict of Interest Policy](#), the governing board ensures that: "Members of the Board of Directors work in service to the College for its exclusive benefit and welfare and are

expected to fulfill their responsibilities in a manner consistent with this charge. All decisions of each member relating to the College must be made in a manner that discharges his or her duty of loyalty and fidelity to the College."

The bylaws give the Board sole authority to appoint its members (Article III, Section 2). The Board retains its representative nature and consults with constituent organizations regarding Board appointments; however, ultimate authority for appointment rests solely with the Board itself.

Membership in the [Kansas Independent College Association \(KICA\)](#) "develops and enhances the competitive standing of its 21-member independent, non-profit, regionally accredited, degree-granting colleges and universities and strives to assure opportunity and choice in higher education for all students." Bethel is a member of this association for advocating independent higher education in the state of Kansas. Through KICA the member colleges teach cooperative courses in teacher education, offer an online course consortium, and have cost sharing agreements in administrative software and health insurance.

In 2018, KICA absorbed the assets and programs of the Associated Colleges of Central Kansas (ACCK) of which Bethel was a founding member in 1966.

2.C.5 The College bylaws **make explicit that the governing board delegates day-to-day management** of the institution to the administration (Article IV) and expects the faculty to oversee academic matters (Article V). For instance, Article IV states: "The President shall be the chief executive officer and administrative head of the college and be responsible to the Board for the management of the college." Article V lists items that fall under faculty oversight, for instance: "The faculty shall have primary responsibility for retention of students, for initiating, developing and implementing the instructional program of the college..."; and, "The faculty shall prescribe admissions and retention standards, courses taught and course requirements, revision or deletion of courses, and requirements for graduation."

Sources

- 01 Agenda Fall 2023 Bethel College Board Meeting
- 01A. Lunch and Learn Rosters
- 2.C.1-1 Agenda - New Board Member Orientation - January 20 2023
- 2.C.1-2 Board Development and Training Document Nov. 2023
- 2.C.1-3 Book Index for Board Policy and Guideline Book-Jan. 2023
- 2.C.1-4 BOD Compliance and Ethics Committee Meeting Minutes March 27 2023
- 2.C.1-5 BOD Compliance and Ethics Committee meeting minutes - August 29 2023 (1)
- 2.C.1-6 2022 March 31-April 2 Board of Directors Spring 2022 Meeting Minutes Approved and Signed
- 2.C.1-7 2022 Oct. 5-7 Board of Directors Fall Meeting - Approved _ Signed (1)
- 2.C.1-8 2023 March 30-April 1 2023 Spring Bethel Board of Directors Meeting Minutes- Approved and Signed
- 2.C.2-1 2019 Oct 9-11 Board of Directors Fall 2019 Meeting Minutes - Approved and Signed
- 2.C.2-1 2019 Oct 9-11 Board of Directors Fall 2019 Meeting Minutes - Approved and Signed(2)
- 2.C.3-1 Bethel College Bylaws - Approved 2013
- 2.C.3-2 4 23 Sept 22 Corporation Meeting Agenda

- 2.C.3-3 Strategic Priority list
- 2.C.3-4 March 2018 Higher Education Task Force Final Proposal
- 2.C.4-1 Conflict of Interest Policy of the Board of Directors
- 2.C.4-2 KICA web page

2.D - Core Component 2.D

The institution is committed to academic freedom and freedom of expression in the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.

Argument

2.D Bethel College is committed to freedom of expression, a commitment formalized in several documents.

The [Faculty Handbook Statement on Academic Freedom](#) articulates the college's commitment to freedom of expression. That commitment to freedom of expression is reinforced elsewhere in the Faculty Handbook. For example:

- In a statement regarding the Board of Directors' right to set aside temporarily provisions of the handbook in an institutional emergency: "The Board, in making such changes, shall be mindful of institutional values of academic freedom and fairness in procedures" (Section 1.8.6.b).
- An explanation of probationary contracts notes, "During the probationary period a teacher should have academic freedom just as all other members of the faculty have" (2.7.1).
- An articulating philosophy of tenure states that the College recognizes "the value of tenure as promoting...academic freedom" (2.2.2).

The College Library adheres to the position governing censorship and intellectual freedom adopted by the Council of the American Library Association and published in the [Association's Library Bill of Rights](#).

Faculty members are not required to be Mennonite church members or sign a statement of faith. New faculty members are familiarized with the college's Mission, Vision, and Values statements and are asked not to contravene them as a condition of employment. New faculty and staff also attend a presentation about the history of Mennonites and of the college as part of their orientation.

Sources

- 2.D-1 Faculty Handbook 10-2023
- 2.D-2 ALA Library Bill of Rights

2.E - Core Component 2.E

The institution's policies and procedures call for responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge by its faculty, staff and students.

1. Institutions supporting basic and applied research maintain professional standards and provide oversight ensuring regulatory compliance, ethical behavior and fiscal accountability.
2. The institution provides effective support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff and students.
3. The institution provides students guidance in the ethics of research and use of information resources.
4. The institution enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

Argument

2.E.1 Students conducting major research projects are given guidance by faculty. [Undergraduate Research, Internship, and Creative Activity](#) (URICA) projects begin with an application form that briefly outlines the requirements and guides the student applicant in proposing a project. In the [STEM Learning Community](#) (SLC) course, students are assigned to work with a senior (and in a few cases, junior) science major. The junior/senior acts as a research mentor under supervision of a science faculty member. The SLC students assist their mentors with reading and searching the literature, data collection and analysis, and proofreading the final research thesis. SLC students are expected to present their work in poster format at the URICA symposium.

In the [Nursing Leadership and Management course](#), students develop a paper which is presented in a poster session at the URICA symposium.

2.E.2 Bethel College has an Institutional Review Board (IRB) to ensure the integrity of research, specifically to deliberate the ethical considerations of proposed research projects. That process considers possible risks (physical, psychological, social, legal, etc.) to the participants, clarifies possible benefits, and weighs whether benefits exceed the risks. If the proposed research involves human participants, an [informed consent form](#) is required. Other approved documents include [Informed Consent for Parent](#) and an [IRB Modification Form](#). An [Institutional Animal Care and Use](#) application has also been approved for research involving animals.

2.E.3 Through required courses in the general education program, all Bethel students are provided instruction in the ethical use of information resources. All freshman students take [First-Year Seminar](#), which includes instruction in documentation and writing evaluated with a rubric that requires appropriate documentation. The [freshman composition course](#) required to meet writing competency further reinforces that instruction with additional research writing.

2.E.4 Bethel College communicates and enforces a policy on academic honesty and integrity. The College communicates academic policies including [Intellectual Honesty and Plagiarism](#). That policy is included on the [Syllabus Template Form](#) used by all faculty for their course syllabi. When that policy is violated, instructors report those cases of plagiarism, and the Office of the VP for Academic Affairs maintains a file of those reports.

Sources

- 2.E.1-1 IDS 281 syllabus Spring 2024
- 2.E.1-2 Final Syllabus Nursing L and M 23-24 New
- 2.E.1-3 URICA Grant Call For Proposals
- 2.E.2-1 New IRB document with informed consent
- 2.E.2-2 Informed Consent for a parent
- 2.E.2-3 IRB Modification Form
- 2.E.2-4 Institutional Animal Care form
- 2.E.3-1 FYS Syllabus FA23
- 2.E.3-2 ENG103 Syllabus Spring2024
- 2.E.4-1 Intellectual Honesty and Plagiarism Policy
- 2.E.4-2 2024 Course Syllabus Template

2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

Summary

Bethel College operates with integrity in its primary and auxiliary functions, following professional standards and policies to assure its integrity. Bethel College presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public through its website and print materials. The governing board of Bethel College fulfills its authority and responsibility to protect the best interest of the institution and assure its integrity. Bethel College demonstrates explicit commitment to freedom of expression, and it ensures that knowledge is being acquired and applied responsibly.

Sources

There are no sources.

3 - Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources and Support

The institution provides quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

3.A - Core Component 3.A

The rigor of the institution's academic offerings is appropriate to higher education.

1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of student performance appropriate to the credential awarded.
2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for its undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate and certificate programs.
3. The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements, or any other modality).

Argument

3.A.1 The **Academic Program Structure and Purposes** in the Academic Catalog articulates the standard requirements and level of performance for programs of study, including majors, concentrations, minors and certificates. A minimum of 120 credit hours is required for each of the bachelor's degrees offered (B.A., B.S., B.S.N.). Specific requirements and learning goals for individual departmental programs are enumerated in the [Academic Catalog](#).

Currency of the academic program is ensured by annual oversight of the curriculum conducted through [faculty governance](#) (Educational Policies Committee, Common Ground Steering Committee, the Bylaws, Article 1.3 Article V.2.a-b in the Faculty Handbook, monthly divisional meetings, [bi-monthly faculty meetings](#)).

The **Educational Policies Committee** supervises a five-year cycle of comprehensive academic program review (4.A.1). Additionally, external validation is provided for the pre-professional programs by their respective independent accrediting bodies in [Education \(Kansas Department of Education\)](#), [Nursing \(Nursing Accreditation Letters\)](#), and [Social Work](#). The faculty completed a comprehensive revision of the [general education program](#) in 2009-10 with additional revisions in 2014 and a new assessment in 2022.

- In 2020-2021, the Educational Policies Committee, faculty, and Board of Directors approved a new program in [Software Development](#). The program launched in 2022-2023. It offers a 41-hour major and 16-hour minor. The major includes an optional track designed to prepare students for graduate study in Computer Science or Computer Engineering.
- In 2022-2023, [faculty approved](#) a multi-track Health and Human Performance degree that offers concentrations in Exercise Science, Health and Fitness, or Health and Physical Education Teaching. That program launched during the 2023-2024 school year.

3.A.2 Bethel College articulates and differentiates learning goals for each of the academic programs

it offers. Learning goals for each program appear in the [Academic Catalog](#) with each program's description (pp. 50-143).

3.A.3 With very few exceptions, the Bethel College academic program is delivered on its main campus so the consistency of program quality and learning goals can be ensured by this singular focus on traditional, undergraduate, and primarily residential education.

Kansas Independent College Association (KICA). As a member of the KICA, Bethel College and the other member institutions maintain oversight of some shared academic programming, concentrated in a Special Education endorsement program that supplements the on-campus Elementary Education major and the on-campus Secondary Education licensure program. Some secondary methods courses are also taught through [KICA](#) and shared by the other KICA colleges' education programs. Assurance of program quality is monitored by the Kansas State Board of Education and the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation.

Council of Independent Colleges Online Course Sharing Consortium (CIC-OCSC). Bethel is a member of the [CIC-OCSC](#), which allows shared access with other institutions to online courses, tuition exchange, and best practices. This option provides Bethel students options with online equivalent courses that are approved to transfer back to Bethel College upon completion of the course.

Wuppertal Exchange Program. The Department of Languages at Bethel sponsors a [student exchange program](#) with the [Bergische Universität in Wuppertal, Germany](#). This program has run continuously for nearly 75 years, the [longest running program](#) of its kind in the world. Each year, one or two Bethel students exchange for students from Wuppertal, who spend a year on the Bethel campus. Bethel has also had numerous students participate in a variety of other study abroad programs over the years.

UNICACH. In January 2018, Bethel College and [Universidad de Ciencias y Artes de Chiapas](#) (University of Sciences and Arts of Chiapas) (UNICACH) signed a memorandum of understanding that formalizes academic cooperation between the two institutions. The program has resulted in joint courses, joint teaching sessions, new research experiences for students, and a faculty sabbatical opportunity.

Amizade. Bethel has a long relationship with several study abroad programs, such as Council on International Educational Exchange and International Partners for Service Learning. Its closest relationship is with Amizade, formerly known as [Brethren Colleges Abroad](#), which offers undergraduates a summer semester, or year of study in numerous international locations.

Kansas Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (KIPCOR). Located on the Bethel College campus, KIPCOR offers a variety of resources in conflict resolution and peacebuilding, as well as an extensive networking system for consulting and intervention. KIPCOR is an integral part of Bethel's PJCS courses, which are part of the college's Common Ground GE Curriculum.

Semilla. Bethel College has a reciprocal arrangement with Semilla, an Anabaptist seminary in Guatemala City, Guatemala. Bethel students can receive theological and seminary training through the seminary and cultural immersion through [Semilla's Central American Study](#) and Service ([CASAS](#)) program.

Washington Community Scholars Center. Through an arrangement with Eastern Mennonite

University's Washington Community Scholars Center, Bethel students are able to spend a semester studying and interning in Washington, D.C.

Chicago Center for Urban Life and Culture. The Bethel College Social Work Department coordinates with the [Chicago Center for Urban Life and Culture](#) to offer student practicum placement opportunities in an urban setting.

AIFS Abroad. Bethel College partners with the American Institute for Study Abroad (AIFS) to offer interested students additional opportunities to study abroad.

LCC Lithuania. Bethel College is in a consortium agreement with [LCC International University in Lithuania](#) where students can have the opportunity to study abroad.

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3.B - Core Component 3.B

The institution offers programs that engage students in collecting, analyzing and communicating information; in mastering modes of intellectual inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings and degree levels of the institution. The institution articulates the purposes, content and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements.
2. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.
3. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity and provides students with growth opportunities and lifelong skills to live and work in a multicultural world.
4. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their offerings and the institution's mission.

Argument

3.B The exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to the educational programs at Bethel College.

3.B.1 (Integrated in text below for 3.B.2)

3.B.2 The **general education program** reflects the College's mission and values statements, its commitment to liberal arts and career preparation, and its church affiliation. In alignment with Bethel College's mission to prepare students for meaningful lives of work and service through faith formation, the liberal arts, and practical experience in career pathways, the College faculty has adopted the following general education goals:

- Students will develop effective communication skills.
- Students will develop the ability to gather, interpret and evaluate information from a wide range of sources and to integrate knowledge from various disciplines.
- Students will acquire a broad understanding of the social and natural world.
- Students will acquire experience in cross-cultural learning and an understanding of the global nature of human community.
- Students will acquire experience in examining basic questions of faith and life.

The general education curriculum is structured into three components – **competencies, core, and distribution** requirements. Because Bethel only confers baccalaureate degrees, this general education program is required of all graduates. The only difference in general education requirements between B.A. and B.S./B.S.N. degrees is the foreign language competency required for the B.A.

Competencies. In order to graduate, students must demonstrate the following competencies: fundamentals of reading and study skills, fundamental English, writing, oral communication, and

mathematics. As mentioned previously, B.A. degree-seekers must also meet foreign language competency prior to graduation. Competencies as found in [the Academic Catalog](#) (pp. 26-28) can be met through a variety of approved methods: high-school transcript analysis, ACT or SAT scores, placement exams, and college courses. These foundational competencies enable further academic achievement in the core and distribution components of the GE program and in major program study.

Core. The five "[core](#)" [general education requirements](#) reflect Bethel's distinctive approach to liberal arts education. These requirements, described in the Academic Catalog, explore questions of value and meaning beyond the classroom, and foster personal and community growth.

- **[First-Year Seminar](#)** for all first-time freshmen entering fall semester improves writing and oral communication skills and acclimates new students to the college community.
- **[Convocation](#)**, a weekly, all-school assembly designed to help build community, broaden horizons and explore basic value issues, is required for eight semesters to graduate. Accommodations are available for students whose off-campus courses (e.g. internships) prevent them from attending. The faculty reaffirmed its commitment to Convocation in Spring 2023 after a task force retained it while preparing curricular changes for the college's strategic plan.
- **[Integrating Faith and Learning](#)** is accomplished through Bible and Religion courses which foster objectivity in [understanding and interpreting religious perspectives](#) and empower students to develop their own worldviews and ethical orientations. To graduate, all students must take Vocation Seminar, [Basic Issues of Faith and Life](#), and a third three-credit-hour Bible and Religion course of their choosing.
- **[Peace, Justice and Conflict Studies \(PJCS\)](#)** courses reflect the College's mission and its (Mennonite) peace church tradition ([SSC235 Syllabus](#), [SSC250 Syllabus](#)). The PJCS requirement is designed to generate critical understanding of structures of power and violence, foster engagement on issues of social justice from different perspectives and develop skills across disciplines for managing conflict and practicing peace-making. Students select one course from an approved list of courses offered by numerous departments.
- **[Cross-Cultural Learning \(CCL\)](#)** courses prepare students for working and living in a diverse and global community by exposing them to a cross-cultural experience in a culture significantly different from their own. As with the PJCS core requirement, a variety of courses across the curriculum meet this requirement. Some courses are primarily on-campus with 15 or more hours of immersion activities in the local area. These courses combine field experiences with readings, discussion, films, etc. to explore and increase understanding of cultures. Other courses involve travel and extended stays, including a [visual arts trip to Italy](#), a [biology trip to Mexico](#), and a [European choir tour](#).

Distribution. As a liberal arts institution, Bethel prepares graduates to become critical thinkers and engaged global citizens through study in the arts and humanities, sciences and mathematics, and social sciences. The distribution requirement specifies that students complete a minimum of six credit hours from two or more disciplines in each of the three academic divisions. A set of courses is identified by faculty in each of the divisions as designed for meeting [GE outcomes](#).

In addition to being explained in the catalog, the general education program is articulated to students in other ways. Students learn about the College's liberal arts philosophy and general education program during their recruitment process. Most campus visits on Mondays include attendance at Convocation. At enrollment, first-time freshmen are given a copy of the GE Requirements and the Liberal Education Advisers (freshmen advisers) use that as a guide during the enrollment process. Transfer students are also made aware of the general education requirements in their orientation

sessions, enrollment process, and Thresher Transitions course.

Courses that meet various general education requirements are identified in the course schedule for [Fall 2023](#) and [Spring 2024](#) and the course description section of the Academic Catalog. Faculty advisers in majors also monitor students' progress toward meeting general education requirements, particularly during enrollment advising meetings. The degree checks conducted by the Registrar's office also report progress on general education requirements. The [syllabus template](#) distributed to faculty includes a placeholder for the general education learning objectives. These objectives are also included in end of semester course evaluations completed by students.

The general education program – competencies, core, and distribution – is consistent with Bethel's mission and provides a comprehensive foundation for extended study in a major. The five goals/outcomes of the general education program are assessed regularly through course evaluations, rubrics applied to student work, exam questions, and surveys. Details of the general education assessment process and results are provided under Criterion 4.

3.B.3 All majors at Bethel College require a senior-level project that engages students in at least one of the following areas: 1) collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; 2) mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; 3) developing skills adaptable to changing environments. In most degree programs other than the fine arts and pre-professional programs, this [senior-level project](#) is an [extensive research paper](#) and [public presentation](#).

All senior seminars submitted to the College library are cataloged and accessible through the College library catalog. In the arts, music seniors perform a solo recital and art seniors exhibit an extensive collection of their own artwork. In pre-professional programs, the culminating project is a semester-long internship or practicum experience. Many of these senior projects are highlighted at the annual [URICA Symposium](#).

Underclass students also are involved in these types of activities, including the opportunity to present at the annual [URICA Symposium](#) (2023 [Call for Proposals](#), [Announcement Posters](#), [Symposium](#)). Each year, the campus art gallery has an exhibit of artwork produced by non-senior Visual Art and Design and Graphic Design majors. Music ensembles, consisting of students from all grade levels and many majors, perform concerts each semester. Sophomore/junior music majors and seniors not majoring in music often [perform recitals](#). Several majors have junior-level internships. Education licensure candidates begin developing their skills in 100- and 200-level courses through micro-teachings and field placements. The sciences encourage freshmen, sophomores and juniors to work with seniors and faculty on research projects through the STEM Learning Community. Junior nursing students present research posters at a noon-hour session open to the campus community. Most courses require some research and writing.

3.B.4 As detailed in 1.C, according to its mission and values statements found in the Academic Catalog, Bethel College values diversity and multiculturalism, and recognizes the importance of providing an education that prepares students to live and work in a diverse world.

UNICACH. See 3.A.3.

Cross-Cultural Learning (CCL). See 3.B.2. Bethel's commitment to human and cultural diversity is made explicit in the general education goal that prepares "students for working and living in a diverse and global community by exposing them to a cross-cultural experience in a culture significantly different from their own." [CCL](#) is a college-level, guided, reflective experience in which

students meet the people of another culture within their social and physical environmental context. As one of the five "core" Common Ground requirements, CCL highlights that commitment. Learning objectives for CCL courses are: 1) I understand that living in a diverse and global environment is challenging; 2) I experienced a culture different from my own; 3) I better understand my own culture, comparing and contrasting it to the culture of others; and 4) I am prepared to live and work in a global community.

Faculty continue to develop new courses that meet the CCL requirement. In Spring 2020, faculty approved a May Term Languages course titled, "[Mexican Immigration and Latino Communities in the U.S.](#)" Each year, the Faculty Welfare Committee awards professional development grants and instructional development grants for the development of CCL courses. Topics related to human and cultural diversity are common in other areas of the core Common Ground curriculum. This programming applies what students have learned about power and privilege, and thus reflects and recommends improvements for engaging diversity in our community. Another example of such integration between core general education and promotion of diversity is in the freshman-seminar course, [First-Year Seminar](#), where faculty have often selected texts such as *Outcasts United*, *In the Country We Love: My Family Divided*, and *The Hate U Give* as common texts, in part because of their emphasis on issues of diversity.

'Truth Racial Healing & Transformation (TRHT) Campus Center'. In Spring 2021, Bethel became one of only 78 institutions of higher learning — and the only such institution in Kansas — to be designated an [Institute on Truth, Racial Healing & Transformation Campus Center](#). TRHT Campus Centers pursue the shared goal of preparing the next generation of leaders and thinkers to break down racial hierarchies and to dismantle the belief in a hierarchy of human value.

Multicultural committees, organizations, and training. Bethel [hosts a number of faculty committees](#), student organizations, and training initiatives devoted to issues of multiculturalism, diversity, equity, and inclusion. Faculty committees include an **Anti-Oppression Committee** and an **Anti-Racism Coalition**. Student groups include **BeLongTo**, an organization devoted to creating a safe and welcoming environment for the LGBTQIA+ community; **Community for Justice and Peace**, an organization for organizing social action, seeking justice, building peace, and standing in solidarity with marginalized and oppressed people; **Diversity Council (DivCo)**, an organization promoting and celebrating diversity; **Environmental Action Club (EAC)**, an organization dedicated to making the campus more environmentally friendly; **Femcore**, an organization devoted to creating a safe space for women and femmes while promoting intersectional feminism; and **Gay Straight Alliance (GSA)**, an organization for straight allies of the LGBTQ+ community. Training initiatives have included faculty training on DEI issues and a Diversity Seminar for students.

3.B.5 Bethel faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate for an undergraduate, liberal arts college.

Undergraduate Research, Internships, and Creative Arts (URICA). The College awards [URICA grants](#) each year to 5-10 students. These students conduct research with a faculty mentor and present their findings at convocation in the fall and at the [URICA Symposium](#) in the spring. In addition to the [URICA grant winners, students from a variety of majors present papers/research](#) projects, reflect on internships/field placements, and [showcase art/drama](#) at the [URICA Symposium in late April](#). The faculty URICA committee also provides some monetary support for student participation in conferences, poster presentations, etc.

[Research, Internships, and Careers in Health and the Environment \(RICHE\) Initiative](#) was originally designed to provide support to students and faculty in two broad interdisciplinary areas of science, but it has evolved into a program to support all STEM areas at Bethel. The rationale was to defray partially students' pursuit of non- or minimally-paying internships so that participation in an internship did not come at the expense of earning money for college. This program is funded through a combination of yield from an endowment and some additional designated donations, including a recent gift of \$100,000. Since 2013, the program has supported 28 students as well as several Bethel science faculty. All recipients report on their activities to the STEM Learning Community (a group of 50-60 first-year through senior science students) during the fall semester.

The Eldon Rich Endowment was given to the college "to be used for full-time students, either a junior or senior, as stipends to help defray expenses for special research projects." Although the most common use of funds from the endowment is for STEM students to attend research conferences, the funds are available for students in all academic disciplines.

In 2014, the college's literary magazine [YAWP!](#) was reinvigorated and developed into a course Literary Magazine Production. This course offers students hands-on experience producing Bethel's undergraduate literary magazine. Coursework includes applied training in all stages of production. Students also have the opportunity to interview nationally published writers who come to Bethel as part of the Literary Studies Department's Visiting Writers Series.

The Collegian is the Bethel College student-run newspaper. Published in print six times per semester (bi-weekly) with online content published daily, it is circulated to all faculty, staff, and students, and nearly 200 subscribers. The organization is operated and staffed by 20 students and a faculty advisor. The outlet is funded through student fees and advertising dollars. Some students choose the option to receive academic credit for their journalism participation, developing skills in one or more areas of journalism-related responsibility: reporting, photography, editing, or managing.

Students in all programs are invited to submit peace-related lectures to the [C. Henry Smith Oratorical Contest](#), an event open to anyone enrolled in Mennonite- or Brethren in Christ-related colleges. Contestants submit their lectures both in written form and in DVD recordings. Winners receive [cash prizes and scholarships](#) to attend peace-related conferences and seminars. In both 2017 and 2018 the winner of the bi-national contest was a Bethel student. In 2023, a Bethel student took third place.

Forensics. Bethel has a long and excellent tradition in [forensics](#). Bethel is one of only five colleges and universities in the nation to compete every year at the American Forensic Association National Individual Events Tournament (AFA-NIET) since it began in 1978. In 2015-2018 Bethel qualified every member of the team for the AFA-NIET. In 2017, one student was named to the American Forensic Association All-American Team.

Fine Arts. The departments of Communication Arts, Music, and Visual Arts and Design actively contribute to the enrichment of students' education at Bethel. Student performances, recitals, and exhibitions are presented on a regular basis ([2020 Arts and Humanities Report](#), [2021 Report](#), [2022 Report](#), [2023 Report](#)). The Visual Arts and Design department has developed a robust visiting artist program, bringing artists to campus (both in-person and virtually) to present about and/or exhibit their artwork, conduct workshops, and facilitate critiques and discussions with students. Incorporating visiting artists as part of Bethel's pedagogy enhances student learning, and the department is grateful that its visiting artist program is made possible by endowment funds as well as by alumni donations. The Music Department brings in guest artists, has students perform recitals,

and holds masterclasses.

STEM Symposium. The annual STEM Symposium in October is a two-day program that brings speakers, alumni, STEM faculty and STEM students together to highlight scholarship, creative activity and the discovery of knowledge in one of the STEM programs. Each year the symposium highlights a different STEM theme ([STEM Symposium 2019 Program](#), [2020 Program](#), [2022 Program](#), [2023 Program](#)).

Business partnerships. The Bethel College Business Department frequently collaborates with area businesses. For example, an advertising class created advertising portfolios for local businesses and events, and a small business management class consulted with area business owners to evaluate business plans.

Faculty Scholarship and Creative Work. Faculty model scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge. They publish books, present at conferences, perform recitals, etc. as evidenced by activity reported in the alumni magazine, and [submitted as part of annual faculty reports](#). According to the Faculty Handbook, “[Faculty members at Bethel College are expected](#) to be effective teachers, to be practicing scholars, and to provide meaningful service to the College and community.” Regular faculty evaluation (Three-Year Reviews, Promotion and/or Tenure Reviews, and Post-Tenure Reviews, as discussed in 3.C.3) encourage scholarship and creative work. In 2022, Bethel hosted an intercollegiate symposium with Eastern Mennonite University, Goshen College, Conrad Grebel University College, and Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminaries.

Another opportunity for faculty development is the **Mennonite Higher Education Faculty Conference**, hosted every other spring. Funding is provided for new and veteran faculty members to present research and network with colleagues from other Mennonite institutions in the United States and Canada.

Mennonite Life journal often features articles by Bethel faculty, and faculty have often served as editors of the journal. Faculty are often invited to give a presentation at the Bethel College Women’s Association Annual Meeting. Further examples of scholarly activities from the Arts and Humanities faculty may be found in their reports to the Board of Directors. While scholarship is an expectation of the faculty, exceptional scholarship on the part of a faculty member may be recognized through a Distinguished Scholar Award.

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3.C - Core Component 3.C

The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.

1. The institution strives to ensure that the overall composition of its faculty and staff reflects human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.
2. The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance, assessment of student learning, and establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff.
3. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual and consortial offerings.
4. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.
5. The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.
6. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.
7. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising and cocurricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained and supported in their professional development.

Argument

3.C.1 In the current academic year, there are [37 faculty in ranked](#), full-time positions (0.50 FTE or greater). Supplementing those 37 full-time faculty are 21 adjuncts, totaling 39.42 FTE. Changes in the size of the Bethel College faculty (FTE) and the [ratio of students to faculty](#) are shown in the Student to Faculty Ratio document. Since 2018, total FTE has dropped from 46.19 to 39.21, and the student-to-faculty ratio has risen from 9.6 to 12.8.

As the [Faculty Degrees, Rank, & Tenure](#) document shows, the [Bethel faculty](#) has the [appropriate credentials](#) and sufficient continuity to carry out its educational mission. Of the 37 full-time, ranked faculty, 24 (63%) have terminal [degrees](#) and one is in a doctoral program, for a total of 25 (66%) holding terminal degrees and/or working to complete terminal degrees. A total of 14 (37%) are tenured, with an additional 10 on tenure tracks, for a total of 24 (63%) either tenured or on tenure track lines. By choice, Bethel elects to retain strong faculty who do not have terminal degrees or were not hired on tenure track lines, using the Renewable Three-Year Appointment ([Faculty Handbook, Section 2.2.4](#)). Thus, the nine faculty on non-tenure track are still core faculty. They remain eligible for renewable appointment and promotion at least to the Associate Professor rank.

The **faculty's [committee structure](#)** consists of a Faculty Executive Committee, three other major committees, five additional standing committees, and ad hoc committees or appointments as needed. The Faculty Executive Committee consists of a faculty chair, the faculty deans of each of the college's three academic divisions, and the chairs of each of the three major committees.

The three major committees are:

- Educational Policies Committee
- Faculty Welfare Committee
- Admissions, Scholarships, and Financial Aid Committee

The five standing committees are:

- Assessment Committee
- Common Ground Committee
- Nursing Advisory Board
- Teacher Education Committee
- Undergraduate Research, Internship, and Creative Activity Committee

In 2023, one ad hoc committee was formed, the Anti-Oppression Committee. While it consists mostly of faculty, individual faculty members serve on numerous other ad hoc committees as well.

3.C.2 Bethel College articulates policies and procedures for ensuring the **appropriate credentials for instructional staff**. [The Faculty Handbook](#) defines faculty, faculty rank, and faculty titles (Section 2.1). Revisions to the handbook in the recent past have made substantive improvements to those policies and procedures, designed to enhance the College's ability to recruit and retain the best qualified instructors possible.

Language in the [Faculty Handbook](#) reads: "In the criteria for rank articulated below, a doctoral or terminal degree is upheld as the aspirant standard for full-time College teaching faculty, but the College recognizes that some disciplines have special degrees and programs of advanced study that might be considered equivalent to master's or doctoral degree programs. For example, in some fine arts, the MFA may be regarded as a terminal degree. Similarly, in some pre-professional programs and applied disciplines, significant professional achievement or notable performance might be considered as comparable preparation for advanced rank. Due consideration is given to such patterns of equivalent preparation." This language provides guidance to the VP for Academic Affairs and the Faculty Welfare Committee regarding initial appointment and eligibility for promotion.

All faculty appointed to full-time teaching positions meet the [minimum requirements](#) articulated in the Faculty Handbook for appointment to the lowest rank as Instructor, which requires "possession of a master's degree from a graduate institution of recognized standing or equivalent experience and professional recognition as determined pursuant to Section 2.1.2." [Exceptions](#) to the master's degree minimum requirement have occurred in the nursing program, whose [accreditation bodies](#) expressly permit instructors with a B.S.N. degree as long as those instructors are [progressing in a plan](#) of study toward completion of the M.S.N.

Online faculty are also vetted and follow the same process for hiring as other college faculty. They submit a CV, visit campus for an interview with the department chair and other faculty, and interview with the VP for Academic Affairs and the President of the College.

The **Faculty Qualifications** [section in the Faculty Handbook](#) summarizes our implementation of the Higher Learning Commission's Criterion 3 guidance on faculty qualifications and includes a sample [academic credentials chart](#). Explanations on how to use the credentials chart is provided to faculty. All instructors, including adjunct instructors, meet qualification criteria either through credentialing or through tested experience.

3.C.3 Instructors at Bethel College are **evaluated regularly** following established institutional

policies and procedures. [The Faculty Handbook](#) articulates institutional policies and procedures for faculty evaluation, promotion, and tenure (Sections 2.5, 2.6, and 2.7). They include first- and second-year faculty reviews, instructional development teams for all full-time faculty in their third semester, and a post-tenure review process.

In coordination with the Faculty Welfare Committee, the VP for Academic Affairs developed and implemented the [Enhanced Evaluation & Development Procedures](#) for First and Second-Year Faculty in 2009-10. This move created formal review processes in years one and two consistent with the handbook's stipulation that the VP "has the discretionary power to specify the nature and frequency of evaluation of specific faculty" in addition to the three-year reviews, and promotion and tenure reviews conducted by the Faculty Personnel Committee.

In addition to the preceding evaluation policies, individual departments may have [additional faculty evaluations](#).

3.C.4 Bethel College provides **professional development** to all new full-time faculty through a [New Faculty Handbook](#) and orientation at the beginning of their first year. As discussed in that orientation, new faculty participate in a first- and second-year evaluation process. The process includes participation in an [Instructional Development Team](#) that pairs the new faculty member with his/her department chair and another colleague outside of the department for a process of mutual class observations and pedagogical collaboration.

A [Faculty Mentor Program](#) has been established to help new faculty acclimate to Bethel culture and their new positions. In this annual development program new faculty are paired with returning faculty who assist them in meeting people and feeling welcome, especially at August Prologue Days and beginning-of-school activities. They are encouraged to share lunch or coffee breaks together occasionally throughout the first year to see how things are going. Mentors also serve as confidants, with whom new faculty can feel free to speak openly about matters about the college and their experience at Bethel.

Bethel College supports the professional development of its instructors with several funding sources that sustain faculty's active engagement in their profession. Much of that professional development support is described in the [Faculty Handbook](#). That includes:

- The [sabbatical leave policy](#). Since 2004, 47 sabbatical leaves have been [granted](#) by the governing board.
- Annual funds available to all faculty at 0.75 FTE or higher. That funding provides \$100 annually for professional membership fees and \$500 annually for attendance at professional meetings (Sections 2.10.4 and 2.10.5).
- In addition, instructors also can apply for [Faculty Development Grants](#) administered by the Faculty Welfare Committee (Section 2.10.6). The College currently budgets \$3000 for those additional grants. Since 2010, 46 grants have been awarded.

Another significant funding source for faculty development is a restricted endowment that supports a number of monetary awards yearly. The [Franz Endowment](#) supports Teaching Development Grants and Awards to support work by a faculty member to improve or upgrade teaching skills or to develop or upgrade a course, and a Community Service Grant to reward broader faculty activities such as advising, program development or recruiting that go beyond classroom teaching or scholarship. Since 2010, 13 Teaching Development Awards and 34 Teaching Development Grants have been awarded, and one Community Service Grant has been awarded.

A new grant, the [Keith Sprunger Faculty Research Fund](#), is a restricted endowment awarded annually to faculty. A faculty member will qualify using the following criteria: proposals related to research, writing, and creative activity that have the potential to result in noteworthy contributions to the college classroom; or activities related to instructional improvement that have the potential to result in contributions to the college classroom.

Yet another form of faculty development is the Graduate Loan Forgiveness Program, which appears in the Faculty Handbook section on Administrative Policies (Section 3.0) but is an important form of faculty development. Originally designed to help recruit and retain faculty who had "incurred student loan debt in pursuit of a terminal degree and have completed the terminal degree," the policy has been adapted to support current faculty who are pursuing advanced degrees. Six current Bethel instructors have received a total of \$52,500 in additional professional development support through this program.

An award that is prized by the Bethel faculty is the [Ralph P. Schrag Distinguished Teaching Award](#). This endowed award recognizes a [Bethel College faculty](#) who has made an outstanding contribution to teaching. The \$1,000 award is presented at commencement as a way of affirming the importance that Bethel places on excellent teaching by the faculty and learning by the students. Exceptional contributions to scholarship are recognized by the [David H. Richert Distinguished Scholar Award](#).

In January 2022, [Kevin Gannon](#) of Grand View University was invited to speak to the faculty about teaching strategies for an increasingly diverse student body. A week after Dr. Gannon presented a half-day event, Bethel faculty participated in a series of [conversations](#) about his book *Radical Hope: A Teaching Manifesto*.

In August 2022, Bethel [invited Network for Vocation in Undergraduate Education](#) (NetVUE) campus consultant Dr. Carter Aikin of Blackburn College to [speak to the faculty](#) about integrating the concept of vocation into the curriculum. After receiving his [report](#), the Office of Employment Experiences facilitated faculty and staff discussions in [Fall 2021](#) and [Spring 2022](#) of the first two volumes of a three-volume series of books published by NetVUE. These conversations prepared faculty and staff to reflect on vocation as a theological concept compatible with Bethel's mission to combine faith formation, the liberal arts, and career preparation.

3.C.5 Under the [Faculty Handbook](#), all instructors are expected to be accessible for regular student inquiry. The section reads: "A full-time faculty member shall be regularly available to students and is expected to post and keep eight (8) office hours per week. A part-time faculty member shall be available to students, and post and keep office hours, in proportion to the percentage of time for which he or she is employed. Part-time per course faculty are expected to be available at least 1-1/2 hours per week for each course taught to advise students regarding their coursework."

Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI). In [2018](#), [2021](#), and [2023](#) (the last three times the SSI has been administered), the Noel-Levitz report interpreting Bethel students' satisfaction levels identified numerous "Strengths" in those results that attest to the quality and accessibility of faculty.

Each April on Assessment Day the faculty work on assessment practices and initiatives and included in that work is a workshop to address the consistency of level and quality of instruction. In 2022, the faculty developed a [comprehensive assessment plan](#) with common objectives for all General Education courses. In 2019, the faculty received a report on [co-curricular assessment](#) and worked on its writing assessment rubric. The faculty also reconsidered [Certificate programs](#). In 2021, the faculty

focused on [general education requirements](#) in each of its three divisions. In 2022, the faculty examined three other general education requirements that affect all graduates: [PJCS](#), [CCL](#), and [BIFL](#). In 2023, the faculty reviewed its [oral communication rubric](#). Further information on assessment practices is included in Criterion 4.

3.C.6 Office of Student Life. All five professional staff members in Student Life have bachelor's degrees, one has a Ph.D., three have master's degrees, and a fourth is working on a master's degree. Experience and/or transferable experience with programs related to the appropriate position have been desired qualifications for hiring. Applicants for [positions in Student Life](#) are reviewed by the Vice President for Student Life and other search committee members.

[Student staff positions](#) include Community Assistant (Resident Assistants at many institutions), Cafe Events Hospitality Coordinator, Cafe Events Host, Cafe Events Manager, Cafe Events Promotion Coordinator, Student Life Office Assistant, Intramurals Media and Outreach Coordinator, Orientation Leader, Student Chaplain, Student Director of Intramural Sports, Summer Student Life Assistant, and Thresher Pantry Student Assistant. All are part of the college's Employment Experiences program. These positions are selected by the staff member primarily responsible for their development/supervision.

Training and professional development are integral to the goals of the Office of Student Life. Internal training sessions occur each year, particularly in the summer.

Staff members are encouraged to look for professional development opportunities to improve their skills and job satisfaction. All staff members are encouraged to seek membership in appropriate state and national professional organizations and to attend one to three professional development opportunities each year including national and regional conferences and webinars.

Tutoring Services. See Section 3.D.1.

Academic Coaching. See Section 3.D.2.

Personal Counseling. See Section 3.D.1.

The following counseling resources are free and available to students. The variety of resources includes both internal and external options.

- Percy Turner, Student Wellness Counselor (for students)
- Michael Unruh, Campus Pastor (for students)
- Safehope 24-hour hotline: (for students and community members)
- Counslr.com - online 24/5 counseling service available (for students)
- Prairie View Mental Health 24-hour hotline (for students and community members)
- The National Sexual Assault 24-hour hotline or visit at rainn.org (for students and community members)

Financial Aid Advising. [Financial aid advising](#) under the direction of the Director of Financial Aid meets all Department of Education and audit requirements for training. That includes annual attendance at the Kansas Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators conference, webinars, and daily updates provided by the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators, and the U.S. Department of Education Annual Conference. In addition to one-on-one counseling, the Director of Financial Aid has also initiated seminars for students to keep them informed about

FAFSA, financial aid practices, and deadlines.

Academic Advising. See Section 3.D.3.

Coaching. Coaches for all intercollegiate athletic teams are [appropriately qualified](#) through minimum education standards (at least a bachelor's degree) and relevant professional experience in their respective sport. Coaches are encouraged to seek opportunities for professional development.

International students. [Students](#) are [supported](#) in part by the Primary Designated School Official (PDSO) who works in coordination with the Student and Exchange Visitor of the U.S. The PDSO is the Vice President for Enrollment Management. In addition, two other Enrollment Management staff are Designated School Officials (DSO). The team assists students who seek to earn their [F-1 status](#) and obtain a Form I-20 to enter the United States. In addition to maintaining appropriate certification through the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVP), the Bethel team has completed training through SEVP and participated in the Kansas International Educators annual conferences. In addition, the team meets with the Homeland Security SEVP Field Representative at least once a semester to review internal processes and receive updates on federal policies and procedures.

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3.D - Core Component 3.D

The institution provides support for student learning and resources for effective teaching.

1. The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.
2. The institution provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. It has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared.
3. The institution provides academic advising suited to its offerings and the needs of its students.
4. The institution provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning (technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites and museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).

Argument

3.D Bethel College is committed to helping its students become successful in the classroom with an integrated program that provides and oversees academic support services, ADA accessibility, freshman and transfer seminars, and academic advising.

3.D.1 Center for Academic Development (CAD). CAD offers academic support and a wide range of services free-of-charge to all students. The director of CAD gives oversight to the academic support services, which are coordinated to enhance the teaching programs of the college. The CAD is strategically located to provide convenient access to students and to demonstrate its importance in the academic life of the students. The CAD averages over 6,500 people passing through its doors each academic year, and even more students are served in other locations around campus ([2016-2017](#), [2017-2018](#), [2022-2023](#)). Student [evaluations](#) of CAD services have been extremely positive.

In addition to being a comfortable and convenient setting for individual study, small study groups and private tutoring, CAD offers computer access and free printing. During the academic year, CAD is [staffed Monday-Friday](#). Students may come to the CAD office for help during the tutors' scheduled hours or call to request an appointment. Student tutors are available for all disciplines, and all tutors are upper-level majors recommended by their department chair. To make tutors more accessible to students who may be hesitant to ask for help, CAD stations its evening tutors both in the CAD office and in the freshman residence hall.

[Student feedback](#) suggests that minority and first-generation students may be hesitant at times to seek academic assistance from both their professors and their peers. In an attempt to address this situation, the director of CAD has been intentional to ensure that students of color and first-generation students constitute at least 20% of the tutoring staff.

While CAD has been an important resource for athletic teams over the years, in the past year CAD has worked more intentionally with the football team and men's basketball team. Tutors are now hired from within the ranks of the teams to be present at team study halls and on call for team members.

Students are invited to consult the director of CAD about study skills and strategies such as test-

taking, test anxiety, and time management. Printed materials are also available to check out. The director of CAD is also available for consultation and help with preparation for exams (i.e. GRE, PPST, TOEFL).

Writing Center. CAD serves as Bethel's Writing Center, which plays an integral role in several courses, including Fundamentals of Reading Study Skills, Introduction to College Writing, First-Year Seminar, and Critical Writing. CAD writing tutors are majors and other students trained to tutor writing. The lead writing tutor is the CAD "writing consultant," an English major who has been awarded a fellowship for demonstrated excellence in writing. The writing consultant is available to work with all students and is also integrated into the curriculum by serving as the assistant for Introduction to College Writing. In addition to their weekly classroom activities with the instructor, students in the course meet regularly with the CAD writing consultant for one-on-one tutorials.

Americans with Disabilities Act. Bethel College is committed to providing equal educational access for [individuals with disabilities](#) under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1998, and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments (ADAA) of 2008. Bethel will make reasonable modifications to its policies, practices, and procedures unless doing so would fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program, or activity, or pose an undue administrative or financial burden. CAD provides reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals with physical or learning disabilities (upon request). The director of CAD serves as the ADA Service Provider and coordinates accommodations for students with both permanent and temporary disabilities, keeping records of their documentation and serving as the liaison between students and faculty.

Health and Wellness. The [Office of Student Life](#) informs students of resources, both on and off-campus, that promote mental/emotional as well as physical wellness. These include professional counseling services, healthcare services, and fitness facilities.

Student Fitness/Wellness Center. As part of the *Engage the Future: Strengthening Minds, Bodies, and Communities* capital campaign, Bethel College will construct a student fitness/wellness center. Originally, a 43,000 square-foot center was envisioned. Due to significant inflationary changes in the cost of building, however, plans for the building were scaled back to a 26,000 square-foot facility that will include a gymnasium, weight room, walking track, multipurpose room, climbing wall, locker room, and storage space. The fundraising goal for the new plan is \$11.1 million, and [\\$5 million has been raised](#).

Host Families. In Fall 2023, 42 students and 30 families participated in the Host Family Program. Student Life is actively involved in recruiting local families to offer a home away from home to students who come to Bethel from a distance.

The Office of [Employment Experiences](#) oversees the College's employment programming initiatives, including the transition to a work college model, and provides assistance and resources to the campus community in the area of Career Development. The mission of the department is to prepare students for meaningful lives of work and service through practical experiences in career pathways via the following goals:

1. Support the academic programming at Bethel College through experiences that develop skills associated with the work environment.
2. Provide and encourage opportunities for students to reduce their education expenses while providing meaningful work within the surrounding community and on campus.

3. Prepare students for meaningful lives of work and service beyond their college years.
4. Strengthen students' work ethic and service to the community.

Students are offered personalized service along with the opportunity to prepare for post-graduation success. Using a wide variety of career-related resources, tools, and web-based links, students can actively participate in the career development process. Assistance is available in self-assessment and career exploration, career plan development, resume or cover letter writing, conducting a job search, preparing for an interview, seeking internships or admission to graduate schools, and preparing teaching credential files. Workshops, career fairs, and employment opportunities, both on and off-campus, are coordinated and/or advertised through this office.

Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) Data. Based on the most recent student satisfaction data from [2016](#), [2018](#), [2021](#) and [2023](#), our students report a high level of satisfaction with academic advising and support services. While the figures regarding Campus Support Services are strong, the Assessment Committee's report on SSI data concluded that when compared to National 4-Year Privates, Academic Advising (+.31, statistically significant at the .05 level) the Bethel figure is significantly higher.

3.D.2 The Director of the CAD typically serves as the instructor for [IDS100: Fundamentals of Reading and Study Skills](#). This course is required of first-time freshmen whose high-school GPA is less than 3.0 and were admitted to college by committee approval. The course is also open to all students who desire assistance in reading and study skills. The course uses the "Reading Plus" program to give students individualized, computer-aided instruction to assess and improve students' reading skills.

In response to the need for additional writing instruction for underprepared students, the college offers ENG101: Introduction to College Writing. This course is designed to help students master the foundational skills in critical reading and writing that they will need so they can successfully meet college expectations for academic writing success. This course is required of all first-time freshmen whose ACT English score is less than 17 (or 420 SAT) or whose Accuplacer Writeplacer score is less than 5. It is also required for all first-time freshmen whose high-school GPA is less than 3.0.

In addition to classroom instruction, students in ENG101 are required to meet regularly with student "Writing Consultants." Writing Consultants are upper-class English majors vetted and assessed by the English Department faculty and the CAD Director.

Student Success and Retention. In 2021, the Director of Student Success and Retention (DSSR) position was moved from Academic Affairs to Enrollment Management. This move was part of an effort to improve student retention. The DSSR meets with struggling students to discuss their study habits and helps them improve their time management skills.

First-Year Seminar. Upon admittance to the college, each freshman is assigned to a Liberal Education Advisor (LEA). Each LEA is assigned 12-15 diverse students, who thus comprise an advising group and a section of the freshman seminar course, [First-Year Seminar](#), for which the advisor also serves as instructor. They receive training at an [LEA Workshop](#) each August and meet bi-weekly to discuss pedagogies and advising strategies.

First-Year Seminar is a 3-credit hour course required of all first-time freshmen at Bethel College. It is designed to help new students adjust academically and socially to Bethel College, and to enhance the skills of liberal education: to think critically and cogently, and to communicate in writing and

speech with grace and precision.

Turnitin Software. Bethel College purchased Turnitin Software in the summer of 2020. Turnitin detects plagiarism and the use of artificial intelligence in student work. Many faculty use the software and assignments are turned in directly through Turnitin on Moodle. The last faculty training was in September 2022.

Vocation Seminar. In March 2023, the faculty approved a new two-hour course titled Vocation Seminar to be offered beginning in Fall 2024. The course is required of all sophomores (students transferring to Bethel as juniors or seniors may be excused from it). Vocation Seminar was added as a new requirement in the Common Ground Common Core, alongside First-Year Seminar; Convocation; Integrating Faith and Learning; Peace, Justice, and Conflict Studies; and Cross-Cultural Learning. The [Bible & Religion Department was given ownership](#) of the course, and a new full-time faculty position was created in that department to accommodate the additional teaching load. The Common Ground Steering Committee has oversight of the additional GE requirement.

Vocation Seminar offers students an opportunity to explore their openness and response to the vocation (or "calling") of increasing "human flourishing (shalom) in society" (from Bethel College Vision Statement) in the overall story of their lives and communities, as well as in specific [meaningful expressions of work and service](#). Students are challenged to understand their undergraduate education at Bethel (and their vocation) not just as preparation for success in work and career, but also as preparation for a meaningful life seen as connected and contributing to the well-being of others.

Thresher Transition. While Bethel has actively incorporated best practices in first-year experiences over the years, many transfer students also benefit from programming suited to their specific needs. In addition to programming through Student Life, begun in Fall 2014, a one-credit course entitled [Thresher Transition](#) is available to help transfer students adjust to their new academic and social environment.

Early Alert System. The [Early Alert system](#) is used by the faculty and staff to identify students who are experiencing difficulty. An online alert form, located in a secured portal in Thresher Connect, is used to indicate areas of concern (academic, behavioral, performance, or other) for individual students. These alerts go to the Director of Student Success & Retention (DSSR) for evaluation. The DSSR contacts the student within 24 hours to offer assistance, including the contact information for the appropriate student support office or service. The DSSR may also forward the concerns to key individuals such as the academic advisor, athletic coach, or student wellness. These key individuals are asked to also contact the student within 24 hours to assess the problem and implement appropriate measures to support the student to alleviate the situation. The Behavior Intervention Retention and Threat Assessment Committee (BIRT) monitors the Early Alert system and convenes as necessary to address specific situations involving severe concerns.

Early Graded Experiences. Within the first 15 days of the fall semester, instructors of courses in which freshmen are enrolled give a [graded assignment](#) (quiz, essay, project, etc.) that is significant enough to be considered in the determination of the final course grade. These 15th-day grades are reported to the LEAs, who then meet with each of their freshman advisees to discuss the grades, determine any problem areas, and develop strategies for improvement, if necessary.

Mid-Term Grades. Mid-term grades are given to all students enrolled in courses at Bethel College. Instructors are encouraged to incorporate a significant graded experience (exam, paper, major

project, etc.) in all courses at a mid-semester date determined each semester by the Registrar. These grades should constitute at least 25% of the calculation of the final course grade and are reported to the Registrar's Office. The Registrar then sends mid-term grades to both the students and their advisors. All freshman advisors (LEAs) meet with their advisees to discuss the midterm grades, determine any problem areas, and develop strategies for improvement, if necessary. The CAD director is notified of all students who receive lower than a C- in any course and contacts them, offering academic support. The Director of Student Success also is notified of all students who receive lower than a C- in any course. The development of such strategies is crucial for student success, since Bethel [research has shown](#) a correlation between students' mid-term grades and their eventual semester course grade.

3.D.3 Bethel College values a developmental approach to academic advising that both encourages and challenges students in their educational experience. All students are assigned a faculty advisor not only to help them achieve academic goals through selection of courses appropriate to their individual goals, skills and interests, but also to assist them in achieving personal goals through frequent interaction and personal concern. Bethel views the academic advisor as a primary figure in helping students in their efforts to make their academic experience as successful as possible.

National studies of undergraduate institutions have found that 50% to 75% of freshmen have undeclared majors or change their majors within the first two years of their undergraduate experience. In response to such studies, Bethel has developed a comprehensive advising program that is designed to give freshmen a supportive and challenging experience in and out of the classroom.

Freshman Advising. Upon admission, freshmen are assigned to [Liberal Education Advisors](#) (LEAs) (see Criterion 3.D.2). Freshmen who are relatively sure about their major will also be assigned to a Major Exploration Advisor (MEA) in their major field. In these cases, the LEA serves as the student's primary advisor but works cooperatively with the MEA to provide the best possible advising for their students.

Since 1999, Bethel has used the "College Student Inventory" (CSI) by Noel-Levitz. The CSI is currently administered to all first-time freshmen during orientation, and the results of this instrument are discussed in private advising sessions in conjunction with a review of each student's 15th-day grades. The reports generated by Noel-Levitz include a variety of motivational assessments (academic, social, coping, and receptivity to support services), which help advisors identify at-risk students early in the semester and determine students' strengths and challenges.

Major Advising. At the point when a student is ready to declare a major, the MEA or other [major advisor](#) (if a different major is chosen) becomes the student's primary advisor. Students and advisor work together closely in a mentoring relationship to equip students to realize academic, personal, and career goals.

Numerous studies have shown that students who are satisfied with the quality of their advising tend to be satisfied with college as a whole. Bethel has devoted many institutional resources into developing an advising system that has many unique features, especially concerning the first-year experience. The result is a developmental advising model that is effective and appealing to students.

Student satisfaction with advising has been corroborated by the results of the Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) by Noel Levitz, which was most recently administered in [Spring 2023 \(2016, 2018, 2021\)](#). In the report, satisfaction with Academic Advising exceeded the national averages by the largest gap of the twelve areas and with high statistical significance. Indeed, Academic Advising at

Bethel has compared favorably to private college peers each of the last four times the SSI has been administered.

Student Fellowship Program. A Student Fellowship Advising Committee consisting of three faculty members seeks to identify and nurture promising Bethel students for [prestigious fellowship](#) programs. Since its inception in 2014, several Bethel students have applied for competitive awards, including [Truman Scholarships, and Goldwater Scholarships](#).

3.D.4 Adequacy of Physical Facilities. Bethel [campus buildings](#) total 507,277 square feet of space designed for a variety of purposes, including administrative offices, student residence halls, [classrooms and laboratories](#), athletic facilities, performing arts spaces, maintenance shops, storage, and auxiliary space. The Administration Building, the oldest structure on campus, celebrated its 135th anniversary in 2023. The most recent academic addition is the James A. Will Family Academic Center in 2012, a \$5 million renovation with an addition to the former Science Hall. It contains faculty offices and classrooms for Bible and religion, business, history, social work, mathematical science, teacher education, and nursing education; student and faculty lounges; the Center for Academic Development; a Student Wellness office; administrative offices; and computer labs for students. Bethel College has sufficient classroom capacity on campus to accommodate its current educational programs. However, to encourage intergenerational learning, the College began offering a few courses at a nearby retirement community in Fall 2023. These classes occur in newly completed state-of-the-art classrooms within the retirement village providing a unique and enriching learning environment.

Bethel's buildings provide excess capacity for the current student enrollment. There are 25 lecture classrooms, four music ensemble rooms, three fine arts labs, one athletic training lab, eight STEM labs, three nursing simulation rooms, two social work interview rooms, and two computer labs. Of the 25 classrooms, 21 are multimedia capable with fully integrated classroom technology. These rooms include projection capabilities and audio from an installed workstation, connections for laptops, document cameras and DVD/Blu-ray players. Control systems are integrated into the instructor's position for intuitive manipulation of classroom technology equipment. There are also two computer labs with similar configurations designed for instructional use.

Residence halls can house 469 students: Voth Hall (91), Haury Hall (180), and Warkentin Court (198). 370 residential students lived on campus in Fall 2023.

Each spring, faculty and staff are invited to take an Employee Satisfaction Survey which includes questions about infrastructure and resources. The survey asks employees to rank the following statement on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree): "My work environment is physically accommodating." Since 2021, the average score has been that 82.4% of employees have agreed or strongly agreed with that statement. While this would suggest that generally faculty and staff are satisfied with their work facilities, the College is aware of areas in which continued improvements are necessary.

Another survey statement includes: "I have the necessary equipment to accomplish my work." Since 2021, 64.7% of employees have indicated they agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. When employees were asked to elaborate on this in a narrative form, most responses had to do with updating hardware and tech support.

The Bethel College Library provides resources that enable students to use information effectively to support their learning. [The Library](#), along with the Mennonite Library & Archives, offers more than

165,000 print volumes, 197,000 electronic books, as well as archival resources and material in other formats. The Library provides LibGuides and subscribes to multiple electronic databases that, together with print volumes, connect students, faculty and staff to more than 110,500 journals. The transition to new library software in the summer of 2023 improved this connection to resources with the addition of a discovery layer search function and a more user-friendly search interface. Interlibrary loan allows for quick access to a variety of materials. The Library continues with a daily courier service that connects it with libraries in Kansas, Colorado, Texas, Wyoming, and more.

The Library has computers for student use and wireless Internet access throughout the building. The Library furnishes spaces that allow students to learn in a supportive environment. Recent improvements include new furniture in a ground floor lounge space that both increases the number of flexible study space options and is accessible to students outside of regular library hours. Librarians also rearranged existing furniture to accommodate student needs and desires for space to study in groups. The Library employs several [assessment strategies](#) to gauge the quality of its services and support of student learning, including surveys, informal conversation, various types of usage statistics, and comparisons with peer institutions.

Athletic Facilities. In 2023, the College completed the construction of the Thresher Stadium Locker Room at a cost of approximately \$2.7 million. The new facility includes a conference room, two film viewing rooms and a second-level view out area for spectators. In 2018 the College replaced the artificial turf and replaced the scoreboard in the football stadium. A refurbishing of the track was completed in the summer of 2022. The turf field and track are heavily used for football practices and games, soccer practices and games for women and men, track meets for college and high school, classes, intramural sports, and fitness for students and the public. The cost of the turf field and track refinishing was more than \$1 million. In 2018, a new tennis building was completed next to the tennis courts. In addition to its use at tennis meets, practices, and team meetings, the facility also includes restrooms and office space. In 2020, a new softball clubhouse was completed which serves as a space for team meetings, restroom facilities, coaches' offices, and locker room storage.

Kauffman Museum is an award-winning museum that has been a vital part of the Bethel campus for many years. With richly varied collections, professional staff, and dedicated volunteers, the [Museum](#) has provided award-winning educational and visual-didactic services to generations of college students, scientists, media workers, environmentalists, and diverse civic constituencies.

Past and present fields of skills-based entrepreneurial praxis offered to accommodate student internships include office management, customer service, business administration, marketing, graphic design, information technology, nonprofit organization, facility maintenance, and museum operation.

Sand Creek Trail. See 1.D.1.

3.D.5 Throughout their academic career, Bethel College students can receive support and guidance in their use of research and information resources. The College Library provides a variety of instructional and informational services, including:

- **Formal Library Instruction.** Library staff offer instruction either in professors' classrooms or in the library. This instruction ranges from a basic introduction to advanced strategies for senior students working on senior seminars and capstone assignments. Librarians also teach students about the broader concepts of the scholarly information landscape and provide students with discipline-specific research instruction.

- **Reference Instruction.** Library staff are readily available to answer students' questions, either in person or virtually through email or the Library's "Ask a Librarian" webpage link. Students in need of more extensive advice or consultation may also schedule appointments with Library staff for one-on-one instruction.

Institutional Review Board (IRB). In Fall 2017, the faculty completed a major review of all of its IRB policies to ensure that they are compliant with federal standards for both faculty and students. Faculty advisors work closely with students engaged in human and animal research to ensure that the highest standards of ethics, integrity, and safety are followed ([IRB Modification](#)).

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3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

The institution provides quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

Summary

Bethel College has continued to emphasize its traditional, undergraduate, primarily residential character, delivering its education almost entirely on its main campus, by a highly qualified faculty. The general education program has a coherent design of three components and a clear set of learning outcomes that direct effective teaching and learning. One prominent illustration of the high quality of a Bethel education is the annual URICA Symposium, which showcases a wide range of students' undergraduate research, internships, and creative activity. Similarly, students in every major complete an advanced senior-level project (research seminar, advanced clinical practicum, or recital/exhibit) that demonstrates a high level of achievement. Recent student satisfaction surveys corroborate claims for the strength of faculty instruction, advising, major content, intellectual growth, and commitment to academic scholarship. A full range of campus support services complement excellent classroom instruction, providing additional support for student learning.

Sources

There are no sources.

4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

4.A - Core Component 4.A

The institution ensures the quality of its educational offerings.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews and acts upon the findings.
2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.
3. The institution has policies that ensure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.
4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It ensures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.
5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.
6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution ensures that the credentials it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission.

Argument

4.A.1 Bethel College maintains a practice of regular academic program reviews through a five-year cycle. The faculty's curriculum committee has successfully executed that timetable and performed reviews that have in turn been linked meaningfully to budgeting, and resulted in curricular changes that demonstrate continuous improvement.

In Spring 2012 the Educational Policies Committee (EPC) revised earlier EPC documents for academic program review and presented at a faculty meeting [its final Program Review](#) rubric format and timetable for a new five-year cycle to include every academic program.

That process and timeline began a comprehensive cycle of program reviews, including a revision of the rubric in November 2019. The listing below details which programs were reviewed in which years, with links to sample feedback from EPC, since the time of our last submitted assurance argument. The [program review document](#) was last updated in May 2022.

- Reviews in 2018-19: [History and Conflict Studies](#), [Mathematical Sciences](#), [Nursing](#), [Visual Arts and Design](#) (EPC [feedback sample](#))

- Reviews in 2019-20: [Chemistry](#), [Languages](#), [Teacher Education](#) (EPC feedback sample)
- Reviews in 2020-21: [Bible and Religion](#), [Health and Physical Education](#), [Philosophy minor](#), [Conflict Resolution certificate](#) (EPC feedback sample)
- Reviews in 2021-22: [Communication Arts](#), [Music](#), [Natural Science](#), [Psychology](#), [Social Work](#)
- Reviews in 2022-23: [English](#), and [Business](#) (EPC feedback sample)
- 2023-24 program reviews are in progress for [Biology](#), [Nursing](#), [History and Conflict Studies](#), [Visual Arts and Design](#), [Math](#)

This cycle of regular program reviews has allowed us to better evaluate our current offerings and has led to a number of program changes across the curriculum:

Pre-Health Professions Advising. Previous Biology program reviews identified a growing interest among students in the health professions. All STEM faculty now serve as advisors for the pre-health professions, and Biology faculty, in collaboration with a Psychology professor, created a [Pre-Health Professions Moodle page](#) to provide a central location where students can get information concerning careers and graduate programs in Athletic Training, Audiology/Speech Pathology, Dentistry, Genetic Counseling, Medicine (MD and DO), Occupational Therapy, Optometry, Pharmacy, Physician Assistant, Physical Therapy, Podiatric Medicine, Public Health, and Veterinary Medicine. This resource, available to any Bethel student, includes application and scholarship advice, virtual shadowing options, summer programs and advice for international students.

Graphic Design track in the Visual Arts and Design department. From 2014-2020, the department offered majors in both Art and Graphic Design in response to widespread interest among prospective students. However, the costs associated with the program's delivery and the low number of majors the program yielded led to the elimination of Graphic Design as a separate major and the elimination of a full-time faculty position. As explained in the 2023 program review, department faculty worked last year with the Educational Policies Committee to revamp curriculum and structure such that graphic design is now a track of emphasis within the Art major. The curriculum stacks beginning, intermediate, and advanced graphic design courses such that they work together in a single classroom, reducing the FTE needed for staffing. This [overhaul of the curriculum](#) makes the new structure more financially sustainable.

Curriculum and staffing changes in the Bible and Religion department. Responding to the 2020 program review, the Bible and Religion department enacted the following changes:

1. After concerns in the program review that "a unit on ministerial ethics and healthy boundaries needs to be included" somewhere in the minor, in 2022 the faculty approved a revision of BRL 240, retitling it [Introduction to Congregational and Youth Ministry](#) and including a new learning objective: to "understand the nature and purpose of ministerial power and the importance of ethics in ministry."
2. An introductory course in religion was needed by students across disciplines. In 2022, the faculty approved bringing back the [Religion and Human Identity](#) course.
3. The impact of reducing the Bible and Religion department to one full-time position, plus adjuncts, was noted throughout the 2020 review, and recommended that the institution begin planning to restore the second faculty position to the department, even if it meant combining it with other institutional responsibilities. The College approved and appointed a second BRL faculty position while also stabilizing and [expanding the curriculum](#) in 2023.

4.A.2 Transfer students must send official transcripts in order for coursework to be evaluated and recorded. The Registrar performs all transcript analysis ([first-time](#), [new transfers with GE waiver](#),

[new transfers no GE waiver](#)). A cumulative grade point average (GPA) and the number of hours accepted in transfer are determined. Transfer hours are calculated, and a Transfer GPA is determined to provide valuable information to Admissions in determining whether an applicant is admissible.

- Academic work done by incoming students at a regionally accredited institution is accepted as transfer credit.
- Academic work that does not transfer to Bethel College includes the following: courses considered to be developmental (e.g., orientation, time management, library skills), remedial (e.g., those in English, mathematics, and reading), and vocational.
- Transfer Evaluation System (TES) by CollegeSource is used to research courses with similar titles or numbering to determine whether that course can fulfill a particular Bethel College GE or major requirement. Faculty may be consulted in making this determination. The transfer course description and syllabus may be required for faculty and registrar's office review.
- Credit is awarded for a performance at the level of four or five on AP examinations offered in high schools under the College Entrance Examination Board, unless otherwise noted in the [AP Credit Policy](#), updated in 2017-18. Credit is accepted by most, but not all, departments.
- As presented to the Kansas Board of Regents, Bethel departments accept [CLEP](#) scores of 50 or higher.
- The registrar evaluates and transcripts credit for domestic and international study centers with whom we have articulation agreements: [Brethren Colleges Abroad](#), [International Partnership for Service-Learning and Leadership](#), [Bergische University in Wuppertal \(Germany\)](#), [Chicago Center for Urban Life and Culture](#), and the [Washington \(D.C.\) Community Scholars' Center](#).
- Bethel College recognizes the [International Baccalaureate Program](#) under the following conditions: "General education credit will be granted for courses in appropriate areas of study provided the student has scored five or higher on the Higher Level exam. Credit earned will be recorded as CR. The specific credits awarded will be determined by the appropriate academic department."
- The "[GAP Year](#)" program encourages students to spend the year after high school in a voluntary service position. A Bethel College faculty member mentors and evaluates the student's work throughout that year-long experience.
- Students who present appropriate documentation can receive up to 15 hours of credit for educational experiences in the armed services. Assessment is done by the Registrar, using the [recommendations](#) of the American Council on Education.
- An internship is a supervised practical experience in a chosen profession or career. Students must propose an internship with specific learning objectives, keep a written record during the course of the internship, work at least 40 hours for each credit hour earned, maintain regular contact with faculty advisors, complete a self-evaluation, and receive an employer evaluation at the end of the experience. Internships are available for credit in every department or program at Bethel College. Students must consult with the faculty contact person in the department or with the Registrar to make appropriate arrangements for receiving credit before [fulfilling the internship](#).
- A maximum of 15 hours of experience-based credit is applicable toward the 120 total hours required for the baccalaureate degree. Experience-based credits include those earned in departmental internships, GAP Year service learning, urban studies, military credit, and other learning experiences where the student is not under the direct and constant supervision of an instructor or a professional who is acting for the instructor.
- Since Fall 2019, new students' transcripts, transfer evaluations, test scores, and other relevant documents are stored in Slate, Bethel's [recruitment software](#). These documents are printed and stored within the Registrar's office as physical files as well.

Procedures and policies for evaluating all academic credits through the Registrar's Office are reviewed and updated annually when the college catalog is revised.

4.A.3 [Credit policies](#) (pp. 31-34) are detailed in the Bethel College Academic Catalog, Credit Policies, Transfer of Academic Credit. Policies are also in the Registrar Procedure Manual available in the Registrar's office.

4.A.4 The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs.

- Prerequisites for courses are listed in the Bethel College Academic Catalog in the "Course Description" section for each academic major or program.
- [Policies maintained](#) by the faculty ensure course and program rigor. Modifications to existing courses and programs, as well as [proposals for new courses](#) and programs, must be discussed and approved by the department, division, and full faculty. Assessment of all programs, including student performance compared to their peers nationally, is addressed in 4.B.
- Major Student Learning Goals are listed in the Academic Catalog for each academic major. Each course has a syllabus that provides more detailed expectations for student learning in the course ([2D Design](#), [Introduction to Literature](#), [Public Speaking](#)).
- All students are provided access to learning resources (addressed in section 3.D.). Bethel College has made a concerted effort to update learning resources across disciplines and make them more accessible. After the forced transition to online learning in March 2020, faculty participated in [online training programs](#) in summer 2020 to gain skills in how to use [Moodle in their courses](#), to make the hybrid courses during the early pandemic as accessible as possible for students. In Fall 2020, Math faculty initiated a program of [Inclusive Access](#), whereby textbooks are charged as a fee to student accounts and then purchased by Bethel: this allows financial aid to cover the textbooks and gives students [immediate access to course materials](#). Other departments (Business, History) have adopted this practice as well. Visual Arts and Design courses use [alumni donations](#) and course fees to ensure all supplies are provided to students rather than expecting them to purchase materials.
- In August 2023, the library rolled out a new [library services interface called PRIMO](#), which allows students to conduct searches across multiple databases at once, facilitating easy access to resources and aiding them with citation protocols.
- The qualifications of faculty for all programs are listed in the [Bethel College Academic Catalog](#) for Faculty and Administration. See also [Bylaws, Article V, Section I](#) on faculty appointments. Faculty qualifications documents are stored with the Office of Academic Affairs.
- Bethel does not offer dual credit for any courses taught at area high schools. Any high school students enrolled in Bethel courses taught by Bethel faculty members must be [admitted as pre-college students](#). Any such admitted pre-college students attend class alongside Bethel students, have access to the same learning resources, and are held to the same expectations for learning.
- The Nursing department's online RN-BSN program (2016-2024) has been discontinued due to declining enrollment. During its existence, admission requirements included completion of an Associate's degree in nursing, an unencumbered nursing license, and a 2.5 GPA. Students were required to maintain a 77% (C) average in coursework to progress. Academic progression requirements were the same as the traditional BSN program.
- While Bethel College was approved by HLC in Fall 2023 to offer online programs in the

future, such programs are not yet in place. Several [online courses](#) were previously offered under the pandemic emergency waiver in a [May Term](#) format. Beginning in 2021, these courses were taught by regular faculty in a [3-week online intensive](#) after the end of spring semester. Some courses replicated existing in-person courses and expectations. Others were new temporary GE offerings to offer students more options and yield revenue. All temporary courses outlined specific learning objectives and were processed and approved by departments, division chairs, and [Educational Policies Committee](#) (EPC). With the recent approval from HLC for online programs, EPC will work to formalize expectations for content, course delivery, rigor, assessment, and evaluation across the curriculum.

4.A.5 In addition to the institutional accreditation with HLC, the following academic programs are also [accredited by specific organizations](#).

- **Education:** Kansas State Board of Education and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (now called [Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation](#)). The department's next accreditation site visit will occur September 2025.
- **Nursing:** [Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education](#) and Kansas State Board of Nursing. The department's most recent accreditation site visit was February 26-28, 2024.
- **Social Work:** [Council on Social Work Education](#). The department's next accreditation site visit will occur 2024-25.

4.A.6 As stated in the Bethel College Mission, we "prepare students for meaningful lives of work and service through faith formation, the liberal arts, and practical experience in career pathways."

To live more fully into this mission, the first two priorities of the Strategic Plan approved by the Bethel College Board of Directors in October 2022 are to "provide employment experiences for all students" and to "create a sustained ethos of service" (see Criterion 1). We encourage graduates to pursue intellectual, cultural, and spiritual leadership in both church and society. The College gathers information on the success of its graduates in three key areas (employment, advanced study, and voluntary service) through a variety of means.

Bethel College receives [accolades](#) for the rate at which its graduates earn advanced degrees. Bethel's high per-capita Ph.D. is a key reason for its high rank among all baccalaureate colleges by the *Washington Monthly*, which has consistently ranked Bethel the #4 bachelor's degree-focused undergraduate college in the nation in its research criterion since 2019. *Washington Monthly* also regularly confers high rankings on Bethel for its emphasis on service, thereby contributing to the public good. In 2022, Bethel was named #6 in the nation for its service emphasis.

Comprehensive. Each spring, the Alumni Office and Office of Academic Affairs ask seniors to complete an exit questionnaire. The questionnaire gathers information about employment, application for/admission to advanced study, and participation in voluntary service, a long-standing Bethel tradition. Information is compiled and then shared during the commencement ceremony ([2019](#), [2020](#), [2021](#), [2022](#), [2023](#)). Between 16-21% of graduates have been accepted for advanced study by the time of graduation. Knowing many graduates work or serve before attaining more schooling, we also survey graduates about their intentions: at the time of graduation, 55-73% of 2019-2023 graduates intend to pursue further education in the future. Recent years indicate 1-5% of graduates pursue voluntary service immediately following graduation. In terms of employment, graduates from these years self-report 25-43% of them had secured employment by commencement, while 42-75% were searching for employment at the time of graduation.

In addition to the senior exit survey, the Career Services office facilitates a one-year post-graduation survey. While these surveys yield only 25-40% response rates, graduates who do respond self-report high rates of employment. In 2019, 11% of respondents were participating in voluntary service, a high point for the years covered. Pursuit of advanced study dipped significantly during the early pandemic years: while 26% of respondents in 2018 reported they were pursuing graduate study, just under 9% of 2020 graduates reported pursuing advanced study one year post-graduation. Similar dips for service were self-reported. Many more graduates during these years pursued the stability of employment following graduation.

Department-Level. While the self-reporting of graduates yields only a partial database, a multipronged approach of surveying students upon graduation through an institutional survey, as well as directly from faculty who often have more information about recent graduates allows us to more accurately evaluate graduate success. Departmental assessment annual reports submitted each fall include information on employment, advanced study or service rates for graduates in each discipline for the previous academic year. Beginning with the 2018-19 cycle, departments completed the table below, allowing us to more fully track the relative success of our graduates from year to year:

Nursing, Social Work, and Teacher Education graduates, in particular, have very high rates of immediate employment.

- Among Nursing graduates between 2018 and 2023, 92-100% each year were employed or pursuing service work.
- Among Social Work graduates between 2018 and 2023, faculty were able to track 71-100% of their graduates each year. From 2019 to 2021, 100% of Social Work graduates were either employed in the field or pursuing advanced study.
- For Teacher Education between 2018 and 2022, except one 2020 graduate whose path was unknown, 100% of graduates were either employed or pursuing voluntary service.

67% of 2023 graduates are already employed, 17% are pursuing advanced study, and 4% are pursuing service work. Annual assessment reports across departments makes evident that most faculty closely track their graduates in the year following graduation. Even in the years of the early pandemic, many departments could [report](#) that 100% of their graduates were either employed, in graduate school, or doing service work.

The **Business department** is an outlier in terms of tracking graduates. They track their students after graduation via multiple email surveys. Of those who responded, 63% of 2019-23 grads were employed immediately following graduation, 31% entered a graduate program or further internship, 6% [pursued other opportunities](#) before finding employment, and none pursued service work.

Faculty turnover meant that **Health and Physical Education** did not collect 2022-23 graduate information. A [separate survey](#) found all respondents were employed and/or in graduate school this year.

Assessment Committee will continue emphasizing the importance of collecting and tracking graduate information to new faculty during orientation.

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- 4A2.2 APPENDIX F - Transfer Analysis for new transfer that earned the GE Waiver
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4.B - Core Component 4.B

The institution engages in ongoing assessment of student learning as part of its commitment to the educational outcomes of its students.

1. The institution has effective processes for assessment of student learning and for achievement of learning goals in academic and cocurricular offerings.
2. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
3. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty, instructional and other relevant staff members.

Argument

4.B Bethel College is committed to educational achievement and improvement. The College has developed a culture of assessment in which faculty and staff in all academic and co-curricular programs gathers and analyzes data related to student learning, considers related budgetary needs, makes recommendations for curriculum/programming, and creates an action plan for the following year's assessments.

4.B.1 Bethel has clearly stated goals for student learning and has processes for assessing these goals. Goals are identified and assessed for GE, majors, minors, and co-curricular programs. Assessment practices, along with some history of assessment at Bethel, are detailed in our [Comprehensive Assessment Plan](#).

The GE program is based on [five goals](#) for student learning. These goals were identified early in a GE review process by faculty in 2007-08. The GE course requirements were revised in 2009-10 as part of a comprehensive curriculum revision, but the learning goals remained the same. Following the revisions, faculty rewrote where necessary specific objectives for each of the GE requirements. These GE objectives were approved through the Educational Policies Committee and Assessment Committee in 2011, and are articulated to students via course syllabi. The five GE learning goals were revised again to emphasize critical thinking and engaged global citizenship following the adoption of a new mission statement in Fall 2014. Possible revisions were discussed by full faculty at Assessment Days in Spring 2015 and 2016, and revisions were finalized and implemented by the Common Ground branch of the Educational Policies Committee in Spring 2016. As this history indicates, our goals are not static and we continually review and revise them.

At our annual [2021 Assessment Day](#), [divisions met to discuss GE goals](#) and shared rubrics used to assess GE courses in each division. At the [2022 Assessment Day](#), the full faculty worked in small groups to review GE goals and [rubrics](#), discuss their implementation in courses, [evaluate examples together](#), and suggest possible changes.

In 2023, [faculty approved](#) slight revisions to the GE goals as listed in the catalog and intend to continue the GE review in 2024. The five GE learning goals and related objectives form the basis for the assessment of the GE program as outlined in the [comprehensive assessment plan](#). Assessment of GE is coordinated by the Assessment Committee, which is comprised of faculty, staff from Student Life and Athletics, and one student representative. The full faculty across all departments perform

assessment.

The Common Ground Steering Committee and faculty stakeholders across campus regularly review elements of our Common Ground curriculum, providing an additional layer of assessment for coursework that meets GE goals. In addition to the assessments and improvements discussed in 4.B.2, the Common Ground committee formalized a [five-year review cycle](#) in 2023 of all Common Ground courses to ensure that courses address Common Ground outcomes and align content with learning objectives. A review form was first approved by the committee in 2018 but faltered during the pandemic and committee changeover. The institution of a five-year cycle of curriculum assessment will ensure continuity while also mirroring the five-year cycle on which we conduct program reviews.

Each academic department has broad-based goals for student learning in its major(s). Since 2012, student learning goals for each major are listed in the academic catalog and assessed by departments in their [annual assessment reports](#). Academic departments are responsible for determining the objectives to be assessed, selecting assessment tools, collecting assessment data, and analyzing the outcomes. Consequently, assessment processes vary from one department to another. Departments assess at least one objective per goal and many departments measure goals in more than one way (as detailed in 4.B.2).

Annual departmental reports summarizing and reflecting on assessment data from the previous academic year and outlining assessment plans for the current academic year are submitted to the Assessment Committee for review each September/October. These reports include assessments of both majors and minors in a given department, as well as early-career students. In response to feedback from our 2019 peer reviewers, [faculty reevaluated](#) our certificate program offerings. Most [certificate programs](#) were reworked into [academic minors](#). Minors housed within a major are included in departmental annual assessment reports. Standalone minors are assessed through the five-year program review process of the Educational Policies Committee. Our one remaining [certificate program](#), offered through the Kansas Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, now completes a similar [annual assessment](#) report ([revised form](#)). Independently accredited programs (Nursing, Teacher Education, and Social Work) submit a [modified annual report form](#) to the Assessment Committee since these programs fulfill additional reporting/oversight demands to satisfy their respective accrediting bodies.

Since 2016, [public summaries](#) of departmental assessments have been made available annually on the Bethel website. In Spring 2023, the Assessment Committee revised the [form](#) to gather specific budgetary reflections and concerns that are then shared with the President for [budgetary planning](#). The President has also led important [discussions about connecting assessment](#) to budgeting, strategic planning, and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), initially by meeting with some key stakeholders and then through an interactive presentation to the full faculty at the 2023 Assessment Day.

Given HLC's recent approval for online courses and program offerings, we anticipate more faculty-wide discussions about assessment as we [plan for the future](#).

We understand that significant student learning occurs in aspects of campus life outside of the classroom. Since our last comprehensive site visit, we have greatly expanded the area of co-curricular assessment, in large part because our 2019 HLC peer reviewers found co-curricular assessment to be an area of concern. While our librarians have been consistently engaged in assessment since 2012, our efforts at co-curricular assessment in other areas, including Student Life and Athletics, had previously been inconsistent due to high rates of employee turnover and mixed messages from earlier

peer reviewers about the importance of co-curricular assessment. Following the 2019 peer reviewers' feedback, the Assessment Committee completely revamped and expanded co-curricular assessment, [working with departments](#) across campus to set measurable goals, collect data, complete annual reports, and receive Assessment Committee feedback as part of the comprehensive assessment cycle. A November 2019 [letter to President Gering](#) summarizes our [extensive revisions](#) following the site visit, along with extensive evidence ([Athletics](#), [CAD](#), [Office for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion \(ODEI\)](#), [Student Life](#), [Career Services](#), [Collegian](#), [Libraries](#), [Public Reporting](#), [Assessment Schedule](#)). HLC peer reviewers from the Focused Site Visit in March 2021 reported the College had made "great strides" in this area and that there was [no need for further monitoring](#). What follows is a summary of our current co-curricular assessment procedures and learnings.

The robust, comprehensive co-curricular assessment plan developed in Fall 2019 closely mirrors our curricular assessment practices. While previously we only measured Libraries, Student Life, and Athletics, our improved plan now addresses [four areas of Student Life](#), [Athletics](#), and [Academic Co-Curriculars](#), including the [student newspaper](#), [Center for Academic Development](#), [Libraries](#), [ODEI](#), and [Career Services](#). The [Comprehensive Assessment Plan](#) details assessment procedures for each co-curricular area. Since 2019, all co-curricular areas annually gather, review and evaluate data, and submit reports consistent with Assessment Committee timelines. In 2021-22, the Assessment Committee began offering feedback and guidance for improvement to each co-curricular area (sample 2021-22 feedback: [Athletics](#); the [Bethel Collegian](#); [Residence Life](#)).

Specific successes and areas for improvement in both curricular and co-curricular learning are detailed in 4.B.2.

More so than in curricular areas, we have faced some challenges with a few areas of co-curricular assessment. The impact of COVID-19 forced the campus to move to remote learning in Spring 2020, a move that impacted data collection. Following the 2019-20 school year, there was considerable turnover in Student Life staff. However, each new "program manager" has worked diligently to gather and evaluate data for program improvement. The departure of an athletic director in 2023 who fully participated in a culture of assessment left a vacancy as well as a teaching and learning opportunity for a new hire. The Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion has been in transition since the departure of the director in 2021, which impacted data collection and assessment of learning in that area. Without a director, various campus leaders have stepped up to offer training opportunities for students and employees, including SafeZone and Allyship trainings in 2021 and 2022, and Racial Healing Circles each semester through our designation as a Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation Campus Center as of 2021.

Since Spring 2023, President Gering and two Vice Presidents have been heading up Belong: An Inclusive Learning Community, a series of online trainings for campus employees built by the [Council of Independent Colleges](#). Two faculty members [presented](#) to the full faculty in August 2023 what they learned from the Belong courses, sharing ideas for how to make our [classrooms more inclusive](#). A new Vice President of Culture and Belonging has been hired for 2024. She and her staff will gather these disparate DEI initiatives under one umbrella, setting new goals and assessment plans for that office and bringing alignment with co-curricular assessment.

More generalized co-curricular assessment occurs regularly through the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI), which we've administered since 2010. This instrument does not specifically measure student learning but provides insight into many of the campus factors that contribute to student learning and offers specific areas for improvement, which we target with initiatives across campus (see 4.B.2).

4.B.2 We regularly review and revise our methods of assessment as we search for ways to improve student learning across campus.

GE Goal 1: Students will develop effective communication skills. Conveying ideas cogently, fostering interpersonal relationships, and cultivating collaboration are essential to professional success and to meaningful participation in community. Bethel College assesses written and oral communication skills. In addition to writing assessments at the course level, student writing has been formally assessed on a three-year cycle by faculty at Assessment Day since a [rubric](#) with defined categories was adopted in 2013. In the April 2016 formal assessment, each faculty member scored two papers, and each student paper was scored by two readers. Mean scores for four of the rubric competencies were close to the target set by the Assessment Committee and English faculty, while mean scores for the other three rubric competencies were well below the target. Results of the assessment were shared with the faculty. The Assessment Committee continues to encourage faculty to use the writing rubric across the curriculum as a cohesive approach to improving student writing. In 2019, using a similar process to 2016, students showed [overall improvement](#) across the rubric categories. In 2019, two faculty members led a [norming exercise on writing](#) prompts and thesis statements, before faculty worked in small groups to use the writing rubric to read and [assess student writing](#). [Group discussions](#) of individual assessments helped faculty ensure that they are using the rubric in consistent ways. Faculty then [reviewed](#) and [discussed](#) writing assessments during Prologue Days the following August. At the 2022 [Assessment Day](#), a group of faculty spent time discussing the writing rubric, considering possible changes to it, and sharing how they adapt it with further specifics for individual courses, before evaluating examples of student writing together. While we always wish to see students consistently meeting goals, if not improving, we also recognize that faculty development, consistency, and improvement must be part of our approach, particularly as we account for faculty turnover. Under new leadership in 2023-24, the Assessment Committee will begin compiling and analyzing past years of written communication work and working with English faculty to set new goals.

Although our writing assessment at Assessment Day focuses on senior-level writing, faculty have shared the writing rubric with students and used it to grade course assignments:

- First-Year Seminar faculty use the rubric to evaluate first-semester freshman writing.
- English faculty use the rubric in Critical Writing, the second-semester freshman writing course.
- The rubric, in whole or part, is used across academic divisions to assess writing in lower- and upper-level courses.

In Spring 2013, the Communication Arts faculty presented a rubric to the faculty for use in evaluating oral communication skills. As with the writing rubric, the intent is for faculty to use the [oral communication rubric](#), in whole or part, to evaluate presentations and speeches across the curriculum. Communication Arts faculty used the rubric in 2013-14 to assess the final speech in the two lower-level courses that meet the competency requirement. The data, submitted to and compiled by the Assessment Coordinator, demonstrated all targets were exceeded. In 2014-15, the [oral communication assessments](#) were analyzed, and the rubric categories were defined and presented to faculty based on experience using the rubric the previous year. Formal assessment of oral communication skills now takes place in odd-even academic years. Results from 2015-16, the first year of assessment with the defined rubric, show that mean scores for each of the rubric competencies met the target. Results from 2017-18 showed much higher achievement, although staffing changes disrupted how the rubric was used that year. Results from Spring 2020 are outliers since

Communication Arts faculty had to adapt their practices, asking students to analyze speeches rather than deliver their own remotely at a time when not all students had the resources to do so. The pandemic delayed our typical data collection cycle by a year. However, beginning with the 2022-23 calendar year, we anticipate returning to an every-other-year cycle of collection and analysis where we can look for trends and areas for improvement.

As with the writing rubric, the oral communication rubric is used in courses across the curriculum:

- [First-Year Seminar](#) faculty use the rubric to evaluate personal artifact presentations as well as the final oral exam.
- Visual Arts and Design faculty [evaluate](#) seniors' *pecha kucha* (a format that uses 20 slides or images that are displayed for 20 seconds each) presentations twice annually with the [rubric](#), for an early- and late-stage assessment of the senior project.
- Biology faculty modify the [rubric for individual presentations](#) in lower- and upper-level Biology courses, with more specifically [modified rubrics](#) used in [Environmental Science](#) and [Pathophysiology](#).
- As with the writing rubric, part of using the oral communication rubric involves training faculty. Most recently, at the Spring 2023 [Assessment Day](#), Communication Arts faculty led a [development session](#) on ways to use the common rubric, with time built in for discussion and brainstorming in departments and small groups.

So far, the results indicate our students are more effective communicators when presenting ideas verbally than in writing. We are addressing this disparity in multiple ways, including implementing an Introduction to College Writing class for underprepared students, continuing to emphasize writing in First-Year Seminar and Critical Writing, and encouraging the use of the defined writing rubric across the curriculum.

GE Goal 2: Students will develop the ability to gather, interpret, and evaluate information from a wide range of sources and to integrate knowledge from various disciplines. Responsible decision-making and effective problem-solving are possible only after understanding the complexity of problems and the interrelatedness of systems. An assessment undertaken by the Library as part of its strategic plan is used to measure student learning related to information literacy. With the Spring 2012 pilot, librarians evaluated Critical Writing papers from one class using the Library Skills Assessment rubric, which was [revised](#) in 2017. The process expanded in 2013 to include all spring semester Critical Writing classes. [Rubric results](#) indicate that beginning [writers score](#), on average, in the weak (2) to adequate (3) range, with [particular challenges](#) seen in how to [evaluate information](#) and then synthesize it to support a thesis. To determine if students' information literacy skills improve during college, Library staff began applying the rubric to Senior Seminar papers in Spring 2014, evaluating 38 papers voluntarily submitted by students. In 2015, librarians evaluated 54 seminar papers from across the curriculum, then 64 seminar papers in 2016. In 2017, librarians evaluated 52 seminar papers from across the curriculum, and an additional eight papers in Music History, to evaluate student writing in a major that does not require a seminar paper. In 2018, librarians evaluated 45 seminar papers from across the curriculum, 62 seminar papers in 2019, 52 seminar papers in 2020, 32 [seminar papers](#) in 2021, and 39 seminar [papers in 2022](#). We do not have an analysis to provide for 2023, as the lead evaluator was battling cancer and has since passed away.

Results from both the first-year and senior Library Skills assessments are reviewed each fall. While the results from senior seminars indicate that students' ability to gather, interpret, and evaluate information and to integrate knowledge from various disciplines improves during their college

careers, mean scores sometimes (as in 2016 and 2020), but do not always meet the target of 4.0 out of 5 on each rubric competency. Narrative analyses of recent seminar data indicate that, even at the senior level, an increasing number of students struggle with consistent citations as well as evaluating which sources are credible or not. Some departments address this challenge in their annual assessment reports as well. In 2022-23, Biology faculty reported plans to [revise seminar and upper-level courses](#) “to be more intentional in teaching our students how to properly document their sources and which sources are appropriate to use in scientific writing.” Additionally, faculty turnover may lead to changing expectations for the seminar. To address these ongoing challenges, librarians and faculty from Assessment Committee share results and observations and request feedback from faculty groups. In 2017 meetings, faculty shared specific examples of ways they have restructured deadlines and expectations for the senior seminar, as a way to ensure that students are better able to locate, evaluate, and synthesize library sources into their writing. During a 2018 faculty meeting, a librarian and faculty member discussed the results and invited faculty to submit research assignments to the librarian to better evaluate how we are scaffolding research skills across the curriculum. Although these faculty discussions faltered early in the pandemic, at Assessment Day 2022, a librarian led a [discussion with a group of faculty](#) to review the GE Goal, the Library Skills rubric, notable challenges, and possible changes to be made. This group ultimately decided not to make changes to the goal or rubric at that time, but Assessment Day 2024 will include a faculty-wide discussion of how best to teach the evaluation of information across the curriculum, the role of Senior Seminars, and a potential new library rubric-in-development for assessing this GE goal.

GE Goal 3: Students will acquire a broad understanding of the social and natural world. A foundational engagement in the liberal arts and sciences, characterized by scholarly inquiry, creativity, and methodological diversity, prepares students for in-depth study in their chosen major and for active engagement in the world beyond the classroom. This goal aligns the curriculum with a liberal arts philosophy. Revisions to the GE program in 2009-10 grouped required courses into three categories, aligned with the three academic divisions: Arts and Humanities, Sciences and Mathematics, and Social Sciences and Human Services. This structure provides more flexibility in scheduling, but also creates variation in the courses that meet this learning goal, which can be a challenge for assessment.

Between 2009 and 2011, the Assessment Committee used only student perception responses from course evaluations to measure this goal. In 2012-13, the Assessment Committee used student perception responses from a senior exit survey to measure this goal. In 2013-14, to move toward more reliable data (since the vast majority of students *believed* that they had a broad understanding of the social and natural world), the Assessment Committee and faculty divisions discussed how to more meaningfully assess this GE goal and identify tools applicable to the variety of ways students can meet the objectives set by each division. In 2014, the [Arts and Humanities](#) and [Social Sciences](#) divisions each developed a common rubric to evaluate a specific assignment in divisional GE courses. The Sciences and Mathematics division for several years embedded questions related to each of their objectives into exams, though their division’s unwillingness to share a common rubric created a challenge for analysis. In 2021, new faculty in this division were able to decide on a [common rubric](#). Every semester, division results are collected for all GE courses. The Assessment Committee regularly reviews and shares the results with faculty in division meetings.

These changes in assessment process provide better information regarding students’ “broad understanding of the social and natural world” but we continue to work toward improving our ways of meeting and assessing this goal. During Assessment Day 2017, faculty met in divisions to discuss and consider revising each division’s list of courses that currently meet this GE goal. That resulted in

including Introduction to Theater and Introduction to Literature courses to meet the Arts and Humanities distribution requirement. In Fall 2017, the Assessment Committee chair met with the core Music department faculty to discuss the challenges of assessing music ensembles within the GE requirement. Music faculty shared ideas and experiences of successful strategies for assessing individual students within a larger ensemble. During Assessment Day 2021, faculty divisions met to review rubrics for this GE goal and to consider possible revisions to the language as well as to the courses that meet the GE distribution requirement. As in other areas, we see the value in continually [reviewing these assessment processes](#) in part to bring new faculty on board with current practices, as we have had high turnover in recent years. These discussions resulted in the Sciences and Mathematics division adopting and implementing a new rubric that covers the whole division (mentioned above). They will now be better able to look for [trends](#) and see whether certain courses are successful in helping students meet this GE goal. Mean scores from 2014-23 indicate students taking Arts and Humanities and Social Science division GE courses usually meet, or are very close to, the target in rubric competencies. Despite this, ongoing discussion of [methods](#) and [results](#) is important at the division level for improved student learning as well as for faculty development.

GE Goal 4: Students will acquire experience in cross-cultural learning and an understanding of the global nature of humanity. Cross-cultural sensitivity and a global perspective are critical to working and living productively in diverse communities. In 2012-13, the Common Ground Steering Committee (CGSC) and Assessment Committee worked together to identify an external tool to assess student learning in this area. After reviewing a number of instruments and their alignment with Bethel's cross-cultural objectives, the CQ Self-Assessment from the Cultural Intelligence Center was selected. This survey was first administered in Fall 2013 to freshmen and in Spring 2014 to seniors, and continued in this manner until 2020, yielding useful comparison information, from first year to senior year and to worldwide norms in four categories of cultural intelligence: Drive, Knowledge, Strategy, and Action.

After completing a full four-year cycle, stakeholders convened in Spring 2018 to evaluate results and set new goals. Stakeholders gathered again in Fall 2018 to discuss the broader challenges of both offering and assessing cross-cultural learning in an on-campus setting for students who cannot afford domestic or international travel experiences. In 2020, Common Ground, in coordination with stakeholders, changed the assessment tool used for Cross-Cultural Learning courses. Stakeholders at that time were concerned that the CQ survey, a national instrument, was difficult to tie to course objectives or learning experiences and provided few usable insights. Instead, stakeholders [developed](#) a new assessment [tool](#) similar to the tool used for Peace, Justice, and Conflict Studies (PJCS) courses (see GE Goal 5). As PJCS and CCL are parallel requirements in our Common Core, it makes sense to have parallel assessments. During the [2022 Assessment Day](#), the full faculty participated in [discussions](#) addressing GE goals and rubrics. and stakeholders discussed learning goals and objectives for [CCL](#) as well as the new assessment instrument. In Fall 2023, CCL stakeholders [met](#) and [suggested](#) revisions to the CCL learning objectives and rubric, work now underway by the [Common Ground Steering Committee](#). Although the pandemic impacted 2020-22 off-campus CCL offerings, preliminary results indicate that the majority of students are meeting the goals set forth in the new [CCL rubric](#). A reconfigured Assessment Committee in Fall 2023 is re-focused after missing a year in 2022-23. Once Common Ground and CCL stakeholders revise the language of the learning objectives and rubric, and revise pedagogical practices alongside, results in future years will help us determine how well the new instrument measures our students' learning and allow us to look for trends in student learning related to this GE goal.

GE Goal 5: Students will acquire experience in examining basic questions of faith and life.

Within an academic community that values personal faith development, peacemaking, social justice and service—as reflected in both Christianity (e.g., the Mennonite faith) and other faith traditions—students learn to consider the moral and ethical ramifications of the personal and professional decisions they will make throughout life, and within the different communities they find themselves. The comprehensive assessment plan identifies two separate measures for this GE goal. The first assessment tool is the [Basic Issues of Faith and Life \(BIFL\) Oral Exam Rubric](#). The second tool, to measure student learning [Peace, Justice, and Conflict Studies](#) (PJCS) objectives, was developed in 2014 and has been revised and expanded several times since then.

Basic Issues of Faith and Life (BIFL) is the capstone general education course for Bethel seniors. The oral exam, a conversation between two students and two faculty members, moderated by the course instructor, provides an opportunity for students to express how their personal faith or value positions are manifested in decisions they make and actions they take. For several years, scores on the “making connections” component of the rubric were used to evaluate this general education goal. In Fall 2013, all categories on the BIFL Oral Exam rubric were defined and put into use. Assessment Committee and CGSC annually review aggregate results from the previous year and share feedback with BIFL instructors, which has resulted in revised objectives in 2014-15 and in Spring 2017. Results suggest that the “critical thinking” rubric competency has been the biggest challenge for students, and because critical thinking is specifically emphasized in our Vision statement, the “critical thinking” and “making connections” competencies are now both areas of focus for instruction and assessment. While the majority of students meet the competencies, “critical thinking” [scores](#) still tend to be the lowest so this will continue to be an area of focus. [Common Ground Steering Committee](#) annually reviews BIFL results to share with the Assessment Committee. At Assessment Day 2022, [faculty discussed](#) GE Goal 5, learning objectives, and the BIFL oral exam rubric. CGSC continued those discussions the following year in committee, alongside analyzing results, with feedback then shared with BIFL instructors. As with other areas of assessment, stakeholders of Goal 5 regularly participate in faculty development, particularly important since the examiner lineup changes every year. [Annual August workshops](#) for faculty examiners, led by BIFL instructors, discuss key points of the texts and prepare faculty how to use the rubric during oral exams.

[Peace, Justice, and Conflict Studies](#) (PJCS) requirement was approved as a "core" general education requirement in 2010. An initial PJCS rubric was developed in 2014. In 2017, PJCS stakeholders approved an expanded rubric to assess two goals and began to collect results in 2018. In 2019, stakeholders [reviewed and revised](#) some language on the rubric to make application clearer. In 2020, stakeholders implemented a rubric that fully assesses all three [PJCS goals](#). Results are collected each semester and analyzed annually by the Assessment Committee and CGSC, then shared and discussed with PJCS stakeholders. We have often, but not always, met our [PJCS goals](#). Now that we assess all three PJCS goals as of 2020, we expect the results will yield useful information to review and make improvements upon in the coming years. At [Assessment Day 2022](#), stakeholders reviewed data, [slightly revised rubric](#) language, discussed use of the instrument, and [reviewed](#) how a variety of assignments across disciplines are assessed with the rubric. In 2023, [PJCS stakeholders](#) gathered to continue this review and suggest [possible changes](#). [Common Ground](#) then revised PJCS course criteria, competencies, rubric, and course proposal form.

One additional piece of GE assessment involves Convocation, a required course in which students attend presentations, performances, and events across disciplines during all four years of study. While previous assessments relied on [quantitative surveys](#), new Convocation coordinators in 2023 proposed a [qualitative approach](#) to assessment using [focus groups](#), which will meet at mid-term and end of each semester. Students are selected at random to participate in the focus group. Coordinators

anticipate that this process will provide more useful feedback, increase student ownership in Convocation, and facilitate a nuanced conversation around a topic not easily explored quantitatively.

Finally, a new Vocation Seminar approved in 2023 will join the GE curriculum. Assessment goals, instruments, and rubrics are in process for this course and faculty have applied for a [grant from NETVue](#) that, if received, will greatly enhance course development and assessment planning.

Assessment of Majors to Improve Student Learning. Academic departments assess the learning goals for their majors regularly. Assessment decisions are made by departmental faculty, who submit annual departmental assessment reports with results from the previous academic year, as well as reflections and plans for improvement, to the Assessment Committee each fall for review. In standardized ways, each department considers whether changes are needed to pedagogy, curriculum, course content, or assessment instruments to help students better meet identified goals. The reporting form has been expanded in recent years to collect more specific results regarding graduate success and to connect assessment to budgeting. The Assessment Committee has received reports from each academic department since 2010, with the most recent years linked here: [2018-19](#), [2019-20](#), [2020-21](#), [2021-22](#), [2022-23](#). In 2022, the Assessment Committee standardized the feedback form to better document closing the communication loop and responses received ([Communication Arts](#), [Psychology](#), and [History](#)).

Student learning in the major programs is detailed in all of the departmental and three accredited programs' assessment reports (Nursing, Social Work, Teacher Education). Since Fall 2012, the Teacher Education department submits separate reports for the Elementary Education major and the Teacher Education Licensure program. Between 2016 and 2020, the Visual Arts and Design department submitted separate reports for the Art major and the Graphic Design major before the latter was discontinued. Art Education students are included within the Art major report. Since 2018, the History and Conflict Studies department submits separate reports for their two majors History, and History and Political Science. The English department offers an English Teaching major and an English major; both majors are included in the English department assessment report. Students who major in Natural Sciences are assessed in their "primary" department, so there is no separate assessment report for this major. Bethel also offers an Individualized Major that requires a primary discipline; as with the Natural Sciences major, students in Individualized Majors are assessed within their primary discipline. With those practices, all student learning for all majors is assessed through the regular cycles in place. Minors are assessed within major programs, our one certificate program reports assessment in the departmental report form, and standalone minors are assessed through five-year program reviews due to very small numbers.

All departments reflect on five years' worth of assessment reports when going through the Program Review cycle, documenting changes made to improve student learning. A "snapshot" of recent reports from programs without independent accreditation reveals the following practices and changes made because of assessment:

- Several departments use standardized national exams as one measure of learning among senior-level students. In their 2022-23 report, however, Business faculty reflected on recent years of assessment and concluded that "ETS exams no longer provide a good measure of student knowledge and content retention." They are now prioritizing finding or creating an [exit assessment tool](#) that yields more meaningful results.
- Departments assess student learning early in the major as well as in the final senior seminar. The Chemistry department includes scores from American Chemical Society exams in 100- and 200-level courses as part of its assessment of chemistry content knowledge, while the

English department uses a mid-stream writing assessment tool for sophomores and juniors. After reviewing several years of this early assessment, English faculty in 2022-23 noted “Integrative Skills” as consistently the lowest score of the three mid-stream assessment outcomes. They then made plans to increase their [use of stepped assignments](#) to give sophomore- and junior-level students more scaffolding to practice their integrative skills. In 2013-14, both Visual Arts and Music began collecting assessments through sophomore portfolio reviews and juries. In 2019, Visual Arts [shifted their early assessment](#) to a student presentation model to catch problem areas earlier and to help [sophomores](#) and juniors do better planning for their final year(s) and [senior projects](#).

- All departments use Senior Seminar/recital/exhibit/internship evaluations to assess learning outcomes (see Senior Seminar discussed in GE Goal 2). Departments continually modify curriculum and assessment techniques to aid student learning in senior-level work. In their 2020-21 report, History faculty documented plans to implement an additional, [earlier deadline for Senior Seminar writing](#). In 2021-22, Music faculty addressed in their [report](#) students’ ongoing struggles with writing program notes for the senior recital. In response, faculty revised and shared with students a handbook of expectations for the senior recital semester and implemented greater faculty involvement with students learning to format, research, and write recital programs.

Three pre-professional programs maintain extensive assessment plans in accordance with their respective accrediting agencies. Therefore, these programs submit a summary of their [ongoing assessment](#), in particular assessment related to student learning outcomes, for review by the Assessment Committee each October. Faculty in independently accredited programs modify curriculum, goals, and assessment tools not only related to assessment results but also in response to changing standards in their accrediting organizations. All three programs have high pass rates on licensure exams and are in good standing with their accrediting organizations (upcoming site visits in 2024 and 2025). Each program continually works to improve student learning through assessment. In their 2022-23 report, Nursing explained changes they have made in pedagogy and [assessment](#) to better support incoming students and to respond to the NCLEX exam that is updated every three years (while also noting a 100% NCLEX pass rate for the second year in a row). In several years of reports, Teacher Education faculty described teacher candidate shortages, at Bethel and across the state. Faculty have worked to strengthen support systems with area schools and mentor teachers, and in 2022-23, [Teacher Education reported](#) stronger candidate outlook for the next two years than seen for several years previously. In their [2022-23 report](#), Social Work faculty described piloting an exam tool as a new source of assessment to help students continue their success in the areas of: ethics, diversity, and difference, in practice, advancing human rights and social justice, and intervention; and improve learning in the areas of engagement, policy, assessment, and research.

The discontinued online RN-BSN program was assessed based on the same outcomes as the on-campus program. Nursing faculty used standardized departmental rubrics consistently across programs, used the Bethel College Writing Rubric for all writing assignments, and reported on both programs in their annual accredited program report.

Annual department assessment reports demonstrate that learning goals claimed for all programs are assessed regularly and provide a framework through which to document plans to improve student learning. Annual reports ensure that each department reflects on its current processes and challenge areas, strives for continuous improvement through changes in pedagogy, curriculum, and assessment tools, and documents requests for budgetary support to aid student success.

Assessment of Co-Curricular Programs to Improve Student Learning.

Many of our co-curricular assessments are fairly new (see 4.B.1), but we already see how more robust co-curricular assessment is prompting revisions in programs, assessments, and outcomes as we strive for improved student learning:

Athletics. The Athletics department's overarching assessment goal, "To develop the whole Thresher Athlete," takes a holistic approach to student learning. Their assessments measure participation in service projects, academic achievement, character development, rates of academic distress, and retention and persistence to graduation. While their [2021-22 report](#) showed that they met many of their goals, in cases where goals were not met, they developed clear plans to improve student learning and success.

Center for Academic Development (CAD). Since beginning to participate in assessment work in 2019-20, the CAD has made a move to link the [assessment of the writing tutors](#) to their work with students in Introduction to College Writing. The assessments indicate that the writing tutors are helping students improve their writing skills, but assessments have also indicated a need to vet tutors more carefully. In 2023-24, the English department implemented an assessment of the candidates for the Writing Fellowship. For the first time, due to the demand for writing tutors, the department awarded Writing Fellowships to two students (instead of just one). Future analysis should offer information about the effectiveness of these changes.

Student Life: Campus Ministries. Campus ministries made concrete changes based on [assessment data](#) gathered through the Faith Formation Task Force in 2021-22. Chapel times have been revised to better accommodate student schedules. Additionally, based on feedback gathered, the campus pastor has incorporated more interactive and community-building elements into weekly Chapel services. Student Life staff have also revised assessment goals related to the annual Service Day. Previous staff had set a [participation goal](#) of 100% student participation, which was consistently unmet. New staff set the goal at 90%. In 2021, participation was at 84%, and staff worked with stakeholders across campus to encourage participation and rates have risen the past two years, reaching nearly 93% in 2023.

Libraries. The libraries regularly conduct user surveys asking how to better serve their populations and track these changes in their annual assessment reports. In the Fall 2022 and Spring 2023 Library Instruction Session surveys, staff received qualitative feedback that indicated that students across disciplines and age groups appreciated the interactive activities being introduced. In response, librarians incorporated additional active-learning lessons in instruction settings that allowed students to immerse themselves in the Library's resources and have a more "hands-on" experience. In Spring 2023, Library staff received [qualitative feedback](#) from patrons encouraging staff to advertise resources more frequently. In response, librarians identified a Student Library Assistant to develop and implement marketing strategies and expand social media presence. Additionally, staff received feedback from patrons expressing the desire for a simplified search process, specifically the task of finding resources from the Library website. In response, Library staff, in cooperation with IMS, invested significant resources into updating the Library catalog system from an outdated Library Management System (LMS) to an updated, cloud-based, user-friendly LMS and redesigned the Library website to feature user-friendly design components and help patrons navigate to [needed resources](#).

Career Services. This is an in-progress area of expansion as Bethel seeks to engage all incoming students in [Employment Experiences](#) as part of the [Thresher Way](#) program. The [2022-23 assessment](#)

[report](#) reflects this transitional state. Previous goals identified under Career Services were changed to better align with the shift to the work-college model and [new goals](#) will be established and measured under the Employment Experiences umbrella. Peer reviewers in our next site visit should expect to see documentation of gathering data, analyzing results, shifts in budgeting, and changes for improved student learning as the Employment Experiences program unfolds.

For more general co-curricular assessment, we administer the **Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI)** every other spring and disseminate results across campus constituencies, using them to inform decisions in Academic Affairs, Student Life, Marketing and Communications, Admissions, Athletics, and Business Affairs and improve student learning across campus.

In Spring 2017, the President's Administrative Cabinet compiled a list of campus-wide initiatives to respond directly to concerns raised by students in the [2016 SSI](#). In Spring 2018, a member of the Assessment Committee attended an SSI conference put on by Noel-Levitz to gain insights for how better to leverage results and improve the feedback loop. In Spring 2019, after [2018 SSI](#) results were shared with Cabinet, faculty, staff, and student government, the Assessment Coordinator and the Director of the Office for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion facilitated an all-student convocation to gather additional information through student-led discussion group, offering us more clarity on specific challenges raised in the SSI.

Although our regular cycle of data collection was interrupted by COVID-19, we administered the [SSI in 2021](#) and [2023](#). The [2021 results sharing](#) was limited by social distancing: results were shared with the President, [with faculty](#) in a [virtual meeting](#) and [by email](#), with [the whole community](#) in an email summary, and with student government by their student representative. Two Vice Presidents led the [Cabinet's 2022 response](#) to SSI concerns, which the President then tied into [Strategic Planning](#).

A student member of Assessment Committee worked with the [2021-22 Student Government Association](#) to respond to SSI concerns by carrying out an initiative with Cafeteria staff to provide reusable to-go containers and better accommodate student schedules.

In 2021, faculty responded to several concerns consistently raised by students over years in the SSI by adding four new assessments to course evaluations as a way to gather responses more specific to our classrooms (faculty meeting minutes: [4/20/21](#), [5/4/21](#), [10/26/21](#)).

Course evaluations now ask students to respond to the following statements on a five-point scale:

- "This faculty member provided timely feedback about student progress in this course."
- "In this course, I found the faculty member to be fair in their treatment of individual students."
- "In this course, this faculty member took into consideration student differences."
- "In this course, this faculty member exhibited a commitment to anti-racism."

While course evaluations are not publicly available, the VP for Academic Affairs reviews all course evaluations and becomes aware of problem areas to address with individual faculty. In addition, course evaluations are reviewed by the Faculty Welfare Committee as part of tenure and promotion review processes.

In 2023, [SSI results](#) were shared in May with [President Gering](#) as well as with the [Mental Health committee members](#) for their strategic planning. In Fall 2023, presentations sharing SSI results were made to [faculty](#), [staff](#) and Student Government. While students consistently rank us highly in the

areas of advising, academic experiences, and support from faculty, student survey responses in 2023 shows increased dissatisfaction related to tuition and housing. The President shared [top SSI concerns](#) with Cabinet in Summer 2023 and Cabinet is at work on a set of initiatives for Spring 2024 to address the areas of concerns raised by students. Ongoing concerns in the SSI related to housing are being addressed in part through proposed Haury Hall renovations discussed in 5.C.

4.B.3 Bethel College faculty and staff have developed and led a campus-wide culture of assessment. [Collaborative leadership](#) is key to an effective practice of assessment in higher education. At Bethel College, assessment is owned and carried out by faculty and staff. The Assessment Committee, led by a faculty coordinator, includes faculty representatives from each academic division, staff members from Athletics, Student Life, and Institutional Research, and a representative from Student Government Association. This committee liaises with groups across campus to carry out, review, and revise yearly curricular and co-curricular assessment practices, share feedback, and coordinate annual Assessment Day activities and events.

Substantial Faculty Participation. Faculty participation is illustrated by the annual Assessment Day, a weekday in spring when classes are canceled, and all full-time faculty gather for assessment activities. Faculty members meet together in the morning, working collaboratively to carry out particular assessment activities and participating in professional development regarding assessment, led by faculty colleagues. Faculty then use the afternoon for departmental assessment work, including assessment activities for early majors and standardized exams for seniors. Assessment Day requires full participation by faculty and provides a regular forum for sharing evidence, introducing new instruments, and discussing methods for improving student learning. Since the expansion of our co-curricular assessment practices, Assessment Day now includes staff participation from Student Life, Athletics, and Institutional Research.

Faculty across campus participate in the peer mentorship form of [collaborative leadership](#) in assessment. Formal and informal faculty discussions, in departments and divisions, within teaching development teams, and with faculty mentors, offer venues to learn from the leadership of others as we review and refine curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment to improve student outcomes. In addition, faculty follow the “best practice” of assessing student learning in the moment, refining plans for the following semester, or adjusting mid-presentation or mid-activity as needed to aid student learning. Faculty in accredited programs follow good practice in their disciplines through revisions and alignment with regularly updated standards. While many of our faculty participate in discipline-specific conferences to present research, others attend conferences and workshops specific to assessment. Faculty members of the Assessment Committee attend the HLC conference to gather new ideas on how peer institutions carry out effective assessment plans. Other faculty participate in [course development workshops](#), practicing how to build assessment into curriculum from the ground up and in ways that yield meaningful data, always to improve student learning.

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4.C - Core Component 4.C

The institution pursues educational improvement through goals and strategies that improve retention, persistence and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

1. The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence and completion that are ambitious, attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations and educational offerings.
2. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence and completion of its programs.
3. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence and completion of programs reflect good practice. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)

Argument

All content provided for 3.D applies here as well.

Reports concerning retention, persistence, and completion are regularly reported to the Board of Directors and discussed by Board committees ([October 2022 Enrollment Management report](#), [Spring 2023 Board meeting minutes](#), [Spring 2023 Enrollment Management report](#)).

4.C.1 The current Strategic Plan, approved by the Bethel College Board of Directors in 2022, contains ten [Key Performance Indicator \(KPI\) areas](#) from across campus that include defined goals for retention, persistence, and completion. Each of the KPIs are identified as having multiple responsible parties, ensuring shared ownership of goals. For example, Enrollment Management, Athletics, Academic Affairs, and Student Life all have documented investment in retention goals for first-year students and the total student body. The same group oversees gathering and reporting data for retention, persistence, and completion goals for minority students. This separate goal is important because of Bethel College's changing student demographic. In 2010, 16% of the student population at Bethel College were students of color. By 2020, that number had risen to 37%, and our 2023 incoming class was the most diverse in Bethel's history. However, retention and completion rates for students of color have been consistently lower than for the majority white population. We aim to change those outcomes.

4.C.2 Bethel College has changed both systems and personnel to improve our efforts at retention, persistence, and completion. Previously, these efforts were managed primarily by a Retention Committee of staff and faculty across campus, with coordinated efforts of [information collection and analysis](#) formalized in 2018-19. In 2021, the College made a sizable investment in retention by hiring a new VP for Enrollment Management, who then hired a full-time Director of Student Success and Retention (DSSR). This new staff hire, replacing what had been a half-time retention position in academics, adapted existing processes and implemented new ones. These personnel coordinate their efforts with the Registrar's Office to collect and analyze results regarding student retention,

persistence, and completion. Each semester, they gather enrollment and retention data and compare to five-, ten-, and fifteen-year averages. The results are [shared across campus](#) and provide benchmarks for improving retention and student success. The DSSR and Registrar's Office are coordinating to more systematically analyze retention and completion reports across different populations and affinity groups. This information informs decision-making, advocacy, and support programming. The following are snapshots of work currently underway:

Early Alert System. In 2021-22, the DSSR conducted a major overhaul of the Early Alert System (EAS), through which staff and faculty submit academic, personal, or other concerns about students to address problems soon after they arise. In 2023, the DSSR created a [handout](#) for faculty and staff that explained EAS and offered guidance on when alerts should be submitted. Along with the DSSR, faculty and staff from Athletics and several areas of Student Life make up the Behavior Intervention Retention and Threat Assessment committee (BIRT), a group that oversees the early alert process and convenes to address more serious situations. To this point, reports collected for [early alerts](#) include reasons for and [risk-level](#) of the alert, as well as outcomes. It is a key retention tool as the DSSR then makes direct contact with students to put plans in place. More faculty are using the system than previously with better resolution of problems. An analysis of students on [academic probation](#) from 2018-22 indicates greater numbers of students leaving probation since the implementation of the revised EAS.

Committee Admits. Enrollment Management tracks the academic progress and retention of students who are admitted by committee when they do not qualify for automatic admission. In Spring 2023, the DSSR and Registrar met with the [Faculty Executive Committee](#) to review reports and discuss connections between failing midterm grades, retention, and students [admitted by committee](#). Enrollment Management staff also reviewed and discussed the academic success of committee admits with the Admissions, Scholarship, and Financial Aid committee in both [Spring](#) and [Fall 2023](#).

First-Generation Students. We know that first-generation students are a particular retention risk. As such, Enrollment Management has developed a First-Generation Student Scholarship program with established support systems as we begin to track this cohort's retention, persistence, and completion rates. As part of the support and retention efforts for this program, the DSSR meets one-on-one with each of the students. In Fall 2022, the DSSR organized a [social event](#) for this student cohort, intentionally introducing them to peers of like experience as part of a broader retention effort.

Transfer Students. Those who transfer between institutions bring a heightened retention risk. Since 2014, transfer students enroll in Thresher Transition, a one-hour course designed to introduce them to the school and to faculty expectations at Bethel as well as to ease their transfer experience. A faculty transfer advisor guides them in their initial enrollment before they declare a major. In 2018-19, the previous Retention committee compiled a list of initiatives to aid the [retention of transfer students](#). With the restructuring of our staff and processes, we are beginning anew to collect results and develop initiatives to aid the retention, persistence, and completion of this population.

Student Athletes. Since 2018-19, the Athletics department has included a retention goal in their annual assessment of student-athletes. One of their major goals is for students to become "Purpose-Driven Athletes." Athletics defines this goal in three ways, one being that students will demonstrate persistence during their college career. Their departmental goal is a four-year average retention rate of 60%. Their 2021-22 reporting directly links lower retention rates with academic struggles, and they outline plans to train coaches in using the Early Alert System and by offering [academic support systems](#).

Exit Interviews. In 2022-23, as part of our overhaul of retention strategies, Bethel changed processes for students who signal a desire to leave Bethel. Previously, this process was housed in Student Life, with [interview results gathered](#) and shared with a Retention Committee. Now, any student considering an exit meets with the [DSSR](#), who counsels them in their transition. Additionally, the DSSR and the Registrar [gather responses about students' experiences](#) on campus as well as reasons for leaving. Grouped into categories, this student feedback will inform improvements in intervention and retention strategies over time.

4.C.3 Bethel College has made an institutional commitment to provide support, feedback, and to provide opportunities for involvement. While these are implicit in the retention efforts outlined above, several targeted efforts are highlighted since particular groups are more at-risk than others for retention, persistence, and completion.

First-Year Plan. In 2023, the DSSR developed a [planning document](#) for first-year students that both gives them the opportunity to set academic, co-curricular, and career goals, and offers them support resources of faculty, staff, and support departments around campus. Across the course of the first semester, students engage in meetings to determine which resources are most needed to help them succeed. This semester-long work is bookended by [meetings with the Student Success office](#). The first-year plan seeks to aid student success in a holistic approach, directly connecting to the five elements of the Thresher Way: Faith Formation, Academic Excellence, Community, Employment Experiences, and Service Opportunities. Data collection from this opt-in pilot program began in Fall 2023, with planned expansion through all First-Year Seminar courses in 2024.

First-Year Seminar. Bethel's commitment to fostering student success is seen in its long-standing freshman seminar program. First-Year Seminar is incorporated into the freshman advising system and is a cornerstone of its student success and retention efforts (see 3.D.2).

Early Graded Experiences. For students in all courses, faculty provide a graded experience within the first fifteen days of the semester. While this is particularly important for first-year and transfer students, it gives an early indicator of potential academic distress for all students, which is also linked to the Early Alert System changes detailed in 4.C.2.

Bounce-Back Program. In 2022-23, Bethel implemented a [new program](#) to aid students in recovering from academic distress. The Bounce-Back Program involves weekly or bi-weekly meetings with the DSSR and the creation of an [action plan](#) to guide academic improvement. Bounce-Back is a success program geared toward all students. So far, results show sophomore and junior students are most often pursuing this form of academic support. As this is a new program, the DSSR is in the early stages of considering future program modifications.

Center for Academic Development. This on-campus organization of tutors and peer mentors works closely with potentially at-risk populations and annually evaluates their programs through an academic co-curricular report submitted to the Assessment Committee. Since 2019, CAD tutors have worked alongside students in Introduction to College Writing, a fundamental competency class required for first-time freshmen whose ACT English score is below 17 or whose high-school GPA is below 3.0, to improve writing abilities. The CAD also set a goal of hiring at least 20% of tutors who are students of color and/or first-generation students, since research suggests BIPOC and/or first-generation students may be more willing to seek help from peers of similar background. The 2022-23 [CAD assessment report](#) provides an analysis and details future plans for improvement.

Curricular Changes. Over the past decade, Bethel has implemented curricular changes to address

increases in the under-preparedness of incoming students and to help these students persist and succeed. Introduction to College Writing was introduced in 2015 and Basic Algebra in 2018. These “onboarding” courses are designed to help students achieve readiness for Critical Writing and Intermediate Algebra, respectively, each of which meet competencies in the general education curriculum.

Transfer Student-Specific Changes. Coordinating with the Registrar’s Office and Enrollment Management, faculty committees in recent years have made multiple revisions to catalog language related to transfer students, how their transcripts are evaluated, and what Bethel-specific [GE requirements](#) they need to meet. These changes and [proposals](#) are intended to help with the retention and persistence of transfer students. Most recently, the Common Ground, [Admissions, Scholarship, and Financial Aid](#), Educational Policies committees, and the full faculty have all discussed proposals, passing one in [Spring 2023](#), to [modify catalog language](#) and the GE curriculum for transfer students.

Support Systems for Physical and Mental Health and Wellbeing. We aim to help students succeed by supporting not only their academic success but also their physical and mental health and overall wellbeing. In a partnership with Health Ministries Clinic, medical staff are on campus weekly to treat student health concerns. Since the pandemic, students have self-reported the need for increased mental health services. A Mental Health Committee of faculty and staff [collects information](#) to guide improvements to services on campus. Student Life facilitates weekly Wellness Wednesday activities, the presence of an on-campus mental health professional, and connections to local off-campus mental health resources, as well as virtual counseling options introduced through an app, [Counslr.com](#), in Fall 2023. As referenced in the [chart](#), eighty-nine users have created Counslr accounts, and thirty sessions have been booked. The majority of sessions have taken place during evening hours when mental health providers are not traditionally available. Eighty percent of individuals who had sessions reported that they never previously sought mental health support. The 4 most common topics selected to discuss in sessions were in the categories of other, anxiety, depression, and relationships.

In community-based support options, Student Life also coordinates a Host Family program for students far from home. Student Life-directed resources are listed in the [Student Handbook](#). The Student Success office coordinates programming and [support](#) for international students, particularly needed since Bethel has seen a dramatic rise in international students over the past few years. International students receive [communications](#) and [support](#) directly from the DSSR and resources for this target demographic are listed in the [International Student Handbook](#).

Diversity Support. A related form of student support that will also aid retention and student success more generally addresses support for diverse identities. As detailed in 4.B.1, co-curricular efforts across campus (Belong; student-led Diversity Council; the Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation campus center) provide trainings, coordinate activities, and offer support to an increasingly diverse student population. The President hired a new [VP for Culture and Belonging](#) who will begin work in 2024, setting new goals and initiatives to aid student retention, persistence, and completion.

Improvements to Facilities. For many years on the Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI), our students have raised conditions in the residence halls and amenities in the cafeteria as challenges that negatively affected their satisfaction rates. Significant efforts have been put toward deferred maintenance and facilities improvements on campus. Responding to 2021 SSI results, the [Cabinet](#) coordinated areas of concern with [Strategic Planning initiatives](#) and Student Government worked with Cafeteria management to facilitate improvements (see 4.B.2). Dissatisfaction related to

residence halls is being addressed in part through renovation plans for Haury Hall (see 5.C). A new Student Wellness Center, part of the current Capital Campaign and slated for construction in 2024-25, will be a key facility improvement.

4.C.4 Bethel College follows IPEDS definitions in its reporting of graduation rates. IPEDS official retention is calculated for full-time, degree seeking students. Some key features of that process for calculating retention include:

- 20th day: The official reporting census date is required for all post-secondary institutions. Bethel College uses 20th day of the fall and spring semesters ([FA 21](#), [FA22](#), [SP22](#), [FA23](#), [SP 23](#)). Results collected on this day are used for all government reports and other surveys.
- For IPEDS retention reports, students in the freshman cohort are tracked from one semester to a subsequent semester, as well as fall to fall. The student is considered a retention candidate if they are enrolled on the official census date of the 20th day. For example, a student enrolled on the 20th day of fall semester is a candidate and will be included in the count provided they are enrolled at the census date of the subsequent semester. For internal and budgeting purposes, the College tracks retention of all students (beyond just the freshman cohort), applying the same 20th day methodology.
- Excluded from the count are those who graduate or complete licensure requirements or student teaching and have no reason to return.

Sources

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4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

Summary

Bethel College has sustained the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, with stakeholders across campus heavily invested in assessment and improvement of student learning. Our commitment to continuous improvement is evident in the changes we have made in key areas of assessment since the last HLC Comprehensive Visit in 2019. We have directly responded to the recommendations of peer reviewers by: 1) greatly expanding upon our co-curricular assessment programs and formalizing their annual review cycles; 2) transitioning all but one of the previously-named Certificate programs into academic Minors, all of which are included in regular assessment reviews; and 3) connecting assessment to budgeting and strategic planning. In addition, we continually review and revise general education and departmental learning goals and assessments to improve student learning, as presented throughout 4B. Beyond making significant progress on each of those items, Bethel College has further made important leadership shifts in the area of Enrollment Management, with articulated retention, persistence, and completion goals/assessments directly tied to strategic planning.

Sources

There are no sources.

5 - Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning

The institution's resources, structures, processes and planning are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

5.A - Core Component 5.A

Through its administrative structures and collaborative processes, the institution's leadership demonstrates that it is effective and enables the institution to fulfill its mission.

1. Shared governance at the institution engages its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff and students—through planning, policies and procedures.
2. The institution's administration uses data to reach informed decisions in the best interests of the institution and its constituents.
3. The institution's administration ensures that faculty and, when appropriate, staff and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy and processes through effective collaborative structures.

Argument

5.A.1 The Board of Directors convenes biannually each fall and spring, facilitating the engagement of the administration, faculty, staff, and students in Bethel College's governance. Board meetings include general sessions with senior administrators, faculty, staff, and student representatives present and are open to all employees and students to attend. The [biannual meetings](#) include administrative reports by members of the President's Cabinet. Students, faculty, and staff provide reports at one of the general sessions each year (students in fall, faculty and staff in spring).

Administrators, faculty, staff, and students also have representation on two of the [three Board committees](#): [Financial Affairs and Risk Management Committee](#) and [Academic and Student Affairs Committee](#). At these committee meetings, administrators, faculty, staff, and students are provided opportunities for input on more focused areas of interest. In addition to these formal procedures by which the Board of Directors engages other constituencies, each [bi-annual session](#) includes a luncheon at which board members, faculty, staff, and students converse informally.

In both its structure and its practice, the College's administration engages internal constituencies in the institution's governance. This inclusive approach is reflected in the [Bethel College Organization Chart](#), which outlines the administrative hierarchy and represents the structure whereby the administration engages faculty and staff in governance. To foster collaboration and ensure that all constituencies have a voice, members of the President's Cabinet regularly meet with their respective departments. These meetings serve as a platform for gathering input, discussing relevant matters, and sharing important developments. Cabinet members engage in regular one-on-one meetings with their direct reports to further obtain input and foster communication. Through these ongoing interactions, the administration ensures various stakeholders have the opportunity to contribute to the decision-making process.

Prologue Days is an annual event held at the start of the academic year for all faculty and staff. Planned by the President and administrative cabinet, the program is designed to foster engagement and collaboration among faculty and staff through shared training and reporting. Faculty, staff, and administration have the opportunity to discuss a range of important topics, including strategic priorities, health and safety precautions, Title IX training, enrollment reports, and budget concerns.

The shared governance structure at Bethel College is further strengthened through **committee participation**. For example, the VP for Business and Finance actively contributes as a member of the [Staff Welfare Committee](#). Similarly, the VP for Academic Affairs is a member of several significant [faculty committees](#), including the Educational Policies Committee, Common Ground Steering Committee, Faculty Welfare Committee, and Faculty Executive Committee. Administrative participation in both the Staff Welfare Committee and the various faculty committees fosters a sense of accessibility and ensures that staff and faculty have opportunity to connect and share their perspectives with administration.

Curricular changes exemplify the nature of shared governance at Bethel College. Faculty at the College are in charge of the curriculum through the **Educational Policies Committee**. This [committee votes on all curricular and academic policy changes](#) and advances the proposals to the Faculty Assembly for final approval. Recent examples of this process include the addition of the Health and Human Performance Program and the introduction of a Vocational Seminar.

The VP for Academic Affairs regularly attends the two **faculty meetings** held each month. When appropriate, the faculty agenda includes administrative reports from other Cabinet members along with time for questions. [Student Government Association \(SGA\) leadership](#) meets regularly with the VP for Student Life, facilitating ongoing communication and collaboration. The Student Life Department provides office space for SGA, which creates routine opportunities for communication and interaction between students and staff.

The **Staff Welfare Committee** hosts monthly staff forums, which all staff are invited to attend. These forums serve as valuable platforms for both formal and informal communication, facilitating interactions not only between administrators and staff, but also across various departments. A notable feature of these forums is the provision of administrative updates by the President and cabinet members following each biannual Board meeting. These administrative reports include [communication](#) regarding recent Board meetings and departmental announcements, followed by time for questions. This ensures that staff members are regularly informed and reflects an environment of transparency within the College.

Each semester, the VP for Business and Finance holds a **budget presentation meeting** for faculty and staff. These presentations offer insight into the College's financial landscape, including details about current enrollment, revenues, and expenses providing a comparative analysis against budgeted amounts. This meeting ensures that faculty and staff members are well-informed about the financial aspects of the College and have an opportunity to engage in discussions related to budgetary matters. In October 2023, the President and the Vice President for Business and Finance hosted three open forums for faculty and staff regarding budgetary and financial matters, which were well attended.

Bethel College has developed a **Strategic Plan** outlined by seven distinct priorities. Each of the seven strategic priorities involves a team of various levels of faculty and staff, and each of these teams has a leader. The leaders representing all of the teams regularly meet with the President to work collaboratively toward the strategic objectives. This collective effort ensures that all employees are actively involved in the pursuit of the strategic goals.

In Spring 2023, Bethel College had an opportunity to **reimagine the campus coffee shop management arrangement**. To ensure having included all appropriate constituencies in the planning of the new coffee shop, the College held in-person open forums and an online forum for students, faculty, staff, and community members to provide input. This input was critical in the determination of the future of the coffee shop.

5.A.2 Financial results and policies are reviewed by the Board of Directors at each meeting, as evidenced in the Board Meeting minutes for the last three years ([October 2020](#), [April 2021](#), [October 2021](#), [March 2022](#), [October 2022](#), [March 2023](#)). The Financial Affairs Committee utilizes historical results and information from other institutions to reach well-informed decisions ([Fall 2020](#), [Spring 2021](#), [Fall 2021](#), [Spring 2022](#), [Fall 2022](#)). For example, when deciding on tuition, room and board fees, the Board considers historical pricing from Bethel College alongside pricing for other small private colleges in Kansas, as evidenced in the [Fiscal Year 2025 Preliminary Budget](#) (pp. 2-7) proposed at the October 2023 Financial Affairs and Risk Management Committee meeting. Similarly, the Cabinet relies on data to inform decision-making. For example, the Cabinet reviews Key Indicator Tools and Financial Indicator Tools provided by the Council for Independent Colleges each year to measure performance indicators both externally against other institutions and internally, measuring progress against prior years.

Faculty at Bethel College routinely incorporate students' evaluations of teaching to refine their courses and enhance their teaching methods. The VP for Academic Affairs utilizes the insights derived from these evaluations in his discussions with new faculty leading up to their application for tenure and promotion. The College conducts a bi-annual satisfaction [survey](#) for students, the results from which is used by administration to enhance the student experience. For example, the [feedback](#) from these surveys has prompted initiatives for improving residence halls. Similarly, employees at Bethel College participate in an annual satisfaction survey. The [survey responses](#) have resulted in administrative decisions, such as [recognizing Martin Luther King Jr. Day](#) and Juneteenth as paid holidays, as well as aligning our spring break dates with local schools. Through the systematic use of surveys, Bethel College fosters a culture of improvement and responsiveness to the needs and preferences of both students and staff members.

Faculty members and administrators make decisions regarding program development and curriculum offerings through data-driven analysis. In-depth research and analysis were conducted to support the addition of the Software Development Program, as evidenced by the [proposal](#). Similarly, data-driven insights supported the decision to introduce a Health and Human Performance degree. Furthermore, data played a role in informing the decision to discontinue the RN to BSN program. Bethel College ensures that informed decisions are made to enhance the College's educational offerings and align them with the evolving needs and demands of students and the market.

5.A.3 [The Faculty Handbook](#) (Section 1.6) articulates the structure by which administration, faculty, staff, and students are involved appropriately in shared governance and communication regarding the academic program and campus life.

[The Faculty Handbook](#) (Section 1.7) articulates the composition of committees, including the role of the [Student Government Association](#) (SGA) in appointing student representatives. SGA has the authority to appoint a student representative to serve on the Assessment Committee, the Educational Policies Committee, and the Common Ground (General Education) Steering Committee. Additionally, the Teacher Education Committee appoints a student representative each year. The Director of Admissions, Director of Financial Aid, Vice President for Enrollment Management, and

Athletic Director all serve as ex-officio members of the Admissions, Scholarship, and Financial Aid Committee. The Vice President for Academic Affairs is an ex-officio member of the Faculty Welfare Committee, Educational Policies Committee, and the Faculty Executive Committee. The Faculty Welfare Committee Chair and the Staff Welfare Committee Chair also work together for the benefit of all employees. The Vice President for Student Life and Athletic Director both serve on the Assessment Committee.

Curricular changes are implemented through a shared governance process. Faculty members may propose a curricular change by completing a Curriculum Change Form, which is given to the appropriate department chairperson. After the change is approved by the chairperson, it is considered at the division level. Then the proposal is advanced to the Educational Policies Committee, which is composed of faculty members and the VP for Academic Affairs. Following careful review and consideration, if the Educational Policies Committee approves the proposal, it advances to a faculty forum. When the faculty has approved the change, then it becomes an official curricular change. However, if the proposal involves the creation or significant revision to a program, it must receive additional approval from the Board.

Through its administrative structures and collaborative processes, the leadership at Bethel College demonstrates that it is effective and enables the institution to fulfill its mission by utilizing shared governance including the Board, administration, faculty, staff, and students in its planning, policies, and procedures. This commitment to shared governance is exemplified in several areas, such as our committee and organizational structures, as well as our planning process. The College uses results to inform decisions that best serve the institution and its constituents as is evidenced by our Board, committee, and President's Cabinet meeting minutes. Furthermore, faculty participation in setting academic requirements is ensured through policies in our faculty handbook. By embracing shared governance, leveraging collected data, and ensuring faculty participation, Bethel College fosters a collaborative environment that aligns with its mission and serves the best interests of the College.

Sources

- 01 Agenda Fall 2023 Bethel College Board Meeting
- 02 Board of Directors Committees with Reps January 2024.pdf
- 03 Agenda Financial Affairs and Risk Management Fall 2023 Final
- 04 Agenda Academic Student Affairs Committee Meeting October 12 13 2023
- 05 Bethel College Organization Chart - November 2023
- 06 Prologue Days Agenda - Fall 2023
- 07 Various Staff Welfare Committee Minutes 2021 2022 2023
- 08 2023 Faculty handbook
- 08 2023 Faculty handbook (page number 18)
- 08 2023 Faculty handbook (page number 24)
- 08.1 EPC Operating Processes March 2012
- 09 Bethel College Mail - Fwd_ [staff-announce] Staff Forum on Thursday
- 10 Fall 2022 Budget Information Meeting
- 11 Strategic Priorities
- 13 21 April 8-10 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes- Approved _ Signed
- 14 Board of Directors minutes October 2021
- 15 22 March 31-April 2 Board of Directors Spring 2022 Meeting Minutes Approved and Signed

- 16 Board of Director minutes October 2022
- 18 Fall 2020 Financial Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes
- 18.1 Spring 2021 Financial Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes
- 18.2 Fall 2021 Financial Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes
- 18.3 Spring 2022 Financial Affairs Ccommittee Meeting Minutes
- 18.4 Fall 2022 Financial Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes
- 19 FY25 Proposed Budget
- 20 Proposal for Software Development Major
- 20 Sept 30 Oct 2 Bethel College Board of Directors Meeting Minutes Approved and Signed.pdf
- 21 New SGA Constitution
- 22 SGA Registered Student Organization Manual
- 23 March 30 April1 2023 Spring Bethel Board of Directors Meeting Minutes Approved and Signed.pdf
- 24 2022 Employee Satisfaction Survey results
- 25 2023-24 Employee Satisfaction Survey results
- 36 2021 SSI Results
- 93- 4B2 SSI 2023 Report slides

5.B - Core Component 5.B

The institution's resource base supports its educational offerings and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

1. The institution has qualified and trained operational staff and infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.
2. The goals incorporated into the mission and any related statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources and opportunities.
3. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring its finances.
4. The institution's fiscal allocations ensure that its educational purposes are achieved.

Argument

5.B Bethel College has increased its resource base to support its educational offerings and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future. At its last site visit in November 2019, Bethel College met the five Criteria for Accreditation with concerns. The accreditation team had a concern with Core Component 5.B (formerly 5.A). The team determined that several years of significant supplemental draws from the endowment to address budgetary shortfalls, combined with low enrollment numbers, had posed a potential risk to Bethel College's long-term sustainability. To address these concerns, the team recommended that the College bring its financial ratios back into the zone and develop a balanced budget without relying on supplemental endowment draws. The team further recommended that enrollment levels be brought back to a level necessary to balance the budget.

Since November 2019, Bethel College has focused diligently on securing and maintaining the fiscal and human resources, as well as the physical and technological infrastructure, necessary to sustain its operations effectively. Through proactive measures, the College has successfully improved its financial ratios while ceasing supplemental endowment draws and consistently developing balanced budgets. Student enrollment is steadily trending upward reflecting the College's efforts to attract and retain students. Additionally, Bethel College has made substantial strides in enhancing both its physical and technological infrastructures, aligning them with the needs of its operations and academic programs.

Fiscal Resources

As stated in the November 2019 letter from HLC, the Commission was concerned that our [Composite Financial Index \(CFI\) score](#) had been below the zone for three consecutive years, which had resulted in heightened cash monitoring by the U.S. Department of Education. In response, Bethel College elected the Provisional Certification Alternative and obtained a [letter of credit](#). However, there has been positive progress since 2019.

In 2021, The [Department of Education](#) indicated the College would no longer be required to obtain a letter of credit due to improved scores for fiscal years (FY) June 2020 and June 2021. Additionally, the Department of Education has determined that Bethel College is now considered financially responsible and has discontinued the heightened cash monitoring.

The financial health of Bethel College has improved since 2019 as is evidenced by the Composite Financial Index (CFI) scores in the following table and [chart](#):

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Fiscal Year Ended	6/30/2018	6/30/2019	6/30/2020	6/30/2021	6/30/2022
Primary Reserve Weighted Avg	-0.38	0.69	1.20	1.20	1.20
Equity Weighted Avg	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.20
Net Income Weighted Avg	-0.03	0.00	-0.20	0.60	0.32
Composite Financial Index Score	0.79	1.89	2.20	3.00	2.72

The financial indicators for Bethel College have improved since 2019. The key points regarding the weighted average scores are as follows:

1. **Equity Weighted Average Score:** This score has consistently remained at 1.20 for the past five years due to the College maintaining low levels of debt. This signifies a stable and healthy equity position.
2. **Primary Reserve Weighted Average Score:** Following improvement from 2019 through 2021, this score has remained constant at 1.20. The improvement in the Primary Reserve Ratio can be attributed to an increase in expendable net assets, indicating a strengthened financial position.
3. **Net Income Weighted Average Score:** This score experienced significant improvement in 2022, reaching 0.60. The improvement was partially driven by the forgiveness of the Paycheck Protection Program loan received in 2020. The extinguishment of this debt contributed to a favorable change in net assets without donor restrictions, leading to an improved net income weighted average. The overall trendline for the past five years signifies improvement for the Net Income Weighted Average.

Since FY2019, Bethel College has made a concerted effort to eliminate the use of supplemental endowment draws. The Board has taken decisive action in stating that it will not approve a budget without a surplus after FY2020. In October 2020, the Board of Directors approved a revised operating budget for FY2021 that included a surplus of \$957,000. This was adjusted from the original budget approved in the spring of 2020 to account for revenues and expenses directly related to the actual number of students enrolled for the fall semester. Although the projected enrollment for the fall of 2020 was 495 students, the impact of COVID-19 led to a lower actual enrollment of 456 students. The limitations imposed by the pandemic, such as the absence of on-campus visits and students' concerns and uncertainties, resulted in a decrease in enrollment.

At the Spring 2022 Board of Directors meeting, the Board authorized the use of contingency funds to cover any deficit in the operating budget at the close of FY2022. At the same meeting, the Board

voted to adopt the [FY2023 budget](#) with a projected surplus of \$20,000. This budget was based on the assumptions of 507 students in the fall and 451 students in the spring. Furthermore, the budget incorporated a 3% increase in tuition prices with a 59% discount rate.

At their Spring 2023 meeting, the Board adopted the [FY2024 budget](#), which featured a surplus of \$130,380. This budget was based on 507 students in the fall and a 59% discount rate. A 6% increase in tuition was incorporated. Additionally, the budget included a 5% increase in board rates and a 3% increase in room rates. These rate adjustments primarily aimed to accommodate inflationary factors and increased utility and compliance costs.

The financial well-being of the College is greatly impacted by four crucial revenue components:

1. student tuition revenue generated through enrollment
2. tuition discounts
3. contributions to the annual fund
4. the value of the endowment fund.

The College acknowledges the immense importance of each of these components and has prioritized strategic initiatives to maximize revenue from each source.

Enrollment. Gross student tuition revenue is directly tied to enrollment and retention. Over the past five years, the enrollment at Bethel College (as recorded on the 20th day in the fall semester) has displayed a consistent upward trend. Beginning with a low of 456 in the fall of 2019, the enrollment numbers have steadily risen, reaching a peak of 503 in the fall of 2023. This positive trajectory is represented in the table and [chart](#).

	Number of Students	Full-Time Equivalent Students
FY2020	456	473
FY2021	469	504
FY2022	484	527
FY2023	495	543
FY2024	503	530

The increased enrollment has been the result of strategic recruitment efforts and a resourced retention focus. The deployment of a new CRM system, the targeted use of outside vendor services, expanded promotional efforts in digital, print and multimedia venues, and other tactics have all contributed to this upward trend. Additionally, a new athletic scholarship framework has increased the number of student athletes, and a focus on utilizing endowed scholarship funds in the performing arts improved [student matriculation](#). New and revised academic programs in high-demand fields have also assisted in attracting [new students](#).

For the past two years, the Admissions team has been expanding their [recruitment territory](#) to include

bordering states to Kansas and areas with Mennonite affiliated populations. These expansions are intentional in combating the decline of high school graduates in the coming decade. Additionally, the presidents of all 21 Kansas Independent College Association member institutions collaboratively entered a [universal transfer agreement](#) with presidents of all 19 of the public Kansas community colleges in 2022. This agreement will make transferring from a 2-year college to a private college in Kansas easier than ever before, thereby providing an opportunity to increase enrollment through transfer student recruitment.

In tandem with the launch of the Strategic Plan, [Knowledge Is Not Enough](#), the College has been leaning into quantifying the value of an education at Bethel College. This focus has culminated in the launch of "The Thresher Way," a tangible account of the five experiences that have been and continue to be the hallmarks of a Bethel College education. Our conversations with recruits have been enhanced by this intentionality of both mission and value proposition.

"[The Thresher Way](#)" includes a four-year, structured student employment experience. This unique learning experience allows students to master a set of measurable career-ready skills, creating a value-added niche for Bethel College.

Overall enrollment growth requires both the addition of new students and the retention of current students. To improve retention, the College invested in a full-time [Director of Student Success and Retention](#) (DSSR) position in 2021. Reporting to the Enrollment Management department, the DSSR manages the College's early alert system, serves on the behavior intervention team, provides success coaching to domestic and international students, and designs and implements programming for historically underserved students including first generation, first time, transfer, and academically underprepared students. While the position is a recent addition to the College, the initial impact has been positive. A pilot project called [Bounce Back](#) involving students on academic probation has resulted in increased term-over-term student GPAs by 1.296 points or a 96.5% increase.

Our VP for Academic Affairs reports the following strategies for academic programs to help the institution meet the enrollment goals in the strategic plan:

1. Grow partnership with Universidad de Ciencias y Artes de Chiapas (UNICACH) in Chiapas, Mexico
2. Develop an undergraduate program in software development
3. Develop and grow Health and Human Performance major

In addition to our academic program strategies, the College has expanded its athletic programs. Since the HLC visit in 2019, athletics has made notable growth by introducing Women's Flag Football, which completed its inaugural season in spring 2023. Bethel College plans to further enrich its athletic offerings by incorporating Women's Golf, set to commence in the fall of 2024.

Discount Rate. The recent history of the discount rate is:

- FY 2019: 58.8%
- FY 2020: 61.44%
- FY 2021: 64.4%
- FY 2022: 63.7%
- FY 2023: 64.1%

Bethel College recognizes the trend of an increasing institutional discount rate, a pattern prevalent

among private colleges within the higher education sector. Of note is the decrease in the acceleration of the rate resulting from two particular initiatives launched in recent years; 1) an in-depth evaluation of endowed scholarship funds and 2) an athletic scholarship averaging structure. Despite the positive impact of these initiatives in moderating the rate, they have not fully alleviated the necessity for Bethel College to employ a strategic discounting strategy to remain competitive in a highly contested Kansas and regional marketplace. While Bethel College is monitoring closely, it is important to recognize that future demographic shifts will likely intensify the pressures on scholarships.

Contributions to the Annual Fund Bethel College boasts a strong alumni community, with over 11,000 living alumni. Historically the College has been one of the leading colleges within the Kansas Independent Colleges Association (KICA) for its fundraising efforts to support the operating budget. The Bethel College Annual Fund plays a crucial role in revenue generation, with annual goals that regularly constitute 11% of Bethel College's operating budget. Alumni demonstrate remarkable generosity, consistently prioritizing contributions to the annual fund. The annual fund goals and actual funds received for the past four years are as follows in the following table and [chart](#).

	Annual Fund Goal	Actual Funds Received
2022-23	\$1,500,000	\$1,270,000
2021-22	\$1,500,000	\$1,429,087
2020-21	\$1,725,000	\$1,511,105
2019-20	\$1,734,000	\$1,595,347

The Advancement office has proactively intensified its efforts to foster alumni engagement and support by enhancing alumni gatherings, visits, and communications. To ensure consistent outreach and maintain meaningful connections, the office plans to continue its visits and contacts at the same locations. This approach aims to establish continuity in alumni relationships and further encourage giving.

In addition to annual fund contributions, unrestricted estate gifts are allocated to a contingency account designated for special projects or addressing budget shortfalls.

Endowment Fund. The value of the endowment fund at Bethel College has experienced significant growth between June 30, 2019 and June 30, 2023, attributed to generous contributions and market returns. To guide the allocation of endowment funds, the College has a spending policy that entails transferring 5% of the average December 31 endowment balance for the previous three years to its operating and restricted funds, aligning with the intentions of donors. However, at their November 2021 meeting, the Financial Affairs Committee decided to suspend the endowment spending policy for fiscal years 2023 and 2024. Instead, the committee authorized spending based on the endowment balance as of December 31 of the most recent year. Since 2019, the College has ceased supplemental transfers from the endowment.

The market value of the Bethel College endowment has increased over the past four years as reflected

in the table below. The \$12.9 million dollar increase in FY2021 reflects a substantial gift and positive market returns. The decrease in FY2022 was due to market downturns. See table below and [chart](#).

	6/30/2019	6/30/2020	6/30/2021	6/30/2022	6/30/2023
Endowment Fund Value	\$18,919,196	\$18,716,767	\$31,624,566	\$27,577,842	\$30,554,329

Additional Financial Statements. Unaudited interim financial statements as of [Dec. 31, 2023](#), are included with this report along with audited financial statements for the last three years ([2021](#), [2022](#), [2023](#)). We are proud to report that we have received unqualified opinions from our auditors for each of these years. Audit government standards letters are also included ([2021](#), [2022](#), [2023](#)) along with the single audit reports on financial aid ([2021](#), [2022](#), [2023](#)).

Human Resources. The largest expense component for Bethel College is salaries, wages, and benefits. More than 60% of operating fund expenses is composed of salaries, wages, and benefits. Bethel College enjoys the presence of dedicated faculty and staff. To aid in our financial recovery, no increases in salaries and wages were included in the FY20 budget. A 1% increase in salaries and wages was provided to employees in FY24, FY23, and FY22. Due to unusually high inflation in recent years, the Board authorized an additional inflationary supplemental payment to all full-time employees in both FY23 and FY24. The Board of Directors is cognizant of the need to offer competitive salaries in order to attract and retain high quality faculty while being mindful of budget constraints. Employer contributions to employee retirement funds have remained at 1%.

5.B.1 Qualified and Trained Staff

Job descriptions for faculty and staff positions clearly outline the required qualifications for each role. These descriptions undergo thorough revision prior to the posting of any new job openings. Furthermore, during each employee's annual performance review, staff job descriptions are assessed to identify any supplementary qualifications or related training that may be necessary.

Bethel College's employees possess the necessary education, skills, and experience to effectively fulfill their job responsibilities. Each academic year begins with an all-employee meeting called Prologue Days where important policies, procedures, and significant matters pertaining to the College are addressed and discussed.

Faculty and staff engage in ongoing professional development throughout the year. Examples of training offered to all employees in the past year include:

- Kansas Active Shooter Mitigation Training
- Annual Cybersecurity, Sexual Harassment, DEI, and Title IX - video course trainings
- Leadership training through the Kansas Leadership Center
- "Stand and Deliver" team building hosted November 2021
- THRT racial healing circles offered throughout the year
- Belong DEI webinars (e.g., "It Takes a Village: Part 1")

Personnel from the Admissions Office and Registrar's Office regularly participate in the annual Kansas Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (KACRAO) conference.

Additionally, the VP for Business and Finance, Controller, Human Resource Officer, Director of Business Services, and the Director of IMS attend the annual Kansas Independent College Association's Business Affairs and Operations Conference. The VP for Business and Finance and the Director of IMS participated in multiple training events focused on the Gramm Leach Bliley Act and cybersecurity. Furthermore, the VP for Business and Finance attended the FORVIS R3 Summit held in Wichita.

The athletic coaches at Bethel College participate in **Champions of Character training** as well as Title IX training. The Title IX Coordinator and committee members attend specialized training sessions focused on Title IX. Numerous employees from various departments are currently undergoing Jenzabar training in preparation for our conversion to the Jenzabar One student information system. This continued training ensures that the institution's staff are appropriately qualified and trained to support the mission of the College.

Physical and Technological Infrastructure. Bethel College has sufficient classroom capacity on campus to accommodate its current educational programs. In addition to its on-campus classes and to encourage intergenerational learning, the College began offering a few courses at a nearby retirement community in Fall 2023. These classes occur in newly completed state-of-the-art classrooms within the retirement village providing a unique and enriching learning environment.

Recent additions to the physical infrastructure of Bethel College include the construction of a softball locker room and restroom facility, as well as a football facility that includes a locker room and film-viewing rooms. Notably, the football facility also features a second-floor indoor seating area, offering spectators a remarkable view of the field during games. The inclusion of this view-out space presents a unique opportunity for the College to host fundraising events, promoting engagement and connection with valued donors. These recent additions provide modern facilities for both our student-athletes and the broader community while supporting our fundraising efforts.

To ensure seamless and reliable technological support for our educational programs, Bethel College has undertaken significant efforts to **enhance its infrastructure**. In Summer 2022, the **internal network** at Bethel College transitioned from a publicly-addressed layer-2 network to a privately-addressed layer-3 network. This upgrade improves network performance and enhances security measures. Also, in Summer 2022, every wireless access point across campus was replaced. The completion of this project puts the Wi-Fi network on a modern platform that can be built upon in the future, signaling our commitment to ensuring our technological infrastructure is prepared for the evolving landscape of education. In Summer 2023, a new smartboard was installed in Will Academic Center for use in classroom instruction as well as meeting the needs for Teacher Education accreditation.

To utilize larger spaces for learning, the College has **replaced or added technology** to spaces on campus that can accommodate large groups. A notable upgrade was completed in Memorial Hall, where an impressive LED wall, complete with state-of-the-art focused zone speakers, was installed. A podium with touch screen controls was also incorporated into the space. These advancements allowed courses to be effectively taught in Memorial Hall, while adhering to appropriate spacing requirements during the pandemic. A new projector and audio-visual controls were added in Krehbiel Auditorium to elevate the quality of presentations and lectures in this venue. Recognizing the significance of the campus chapel as a gathering space, a new projector and screen have been added. This upgrade facilitates effective communication and engagement for presentations, services, meetings, and other events held in the chapel.

Bethel College has begun the **upgrade of its student information system (SIS)** from Jenzabar CX to Jenzabar One. This comprehensive upgrade project is expected to be completed by Fall 2024 and should ensure a more user-friendly interface for information retrieval. Jenzabar One will empower our employees to more effectively access and manage information thereby enhancing productivity. The College has also installed new servers in its datacenter which will better support the computing infrastructure and enable the upgrade of numerous virtual machines.

Bethel College places great importance on **safeguarding student privacy and ensuring information security**. The College has developed an Information Security Program built on a thorough risk assessment. As part of this program, multi-factor authentication was implemented for faculty and staff in Spring 2023 and was introduced to students in Fall 2023 in response to the risk assessment findings. Additionally, a password change policy has been put in place to ensure that all employees and students regularly update their passwords. To mitigate cyber risks effectively, the College has also implemented a vendor management policy ensuring secure relationships with external partners. The College has also begun conducting active penetration testing of the network to detect weaknesses and vulnerabilities.

These improvements to our technological infrastructure were all designed to ensure that Bethel College can sustain educational programs and strengthen their quality in the future regardless of how these programs are delivered.

5.B.2 The goals outlined in the mission and related statements effectively align with the institution's organization, resources, and opportunities. The mission statement at the College serves as a guiding framework for management decision-making and budgetary allocations of resources. The College recognizes the significance of preparing students for meaningful lives and embraces three avenues to achieve this goal.

Faith formation holds a prominent position at Bethel College, evident in the mandatory lower-level religion course and the capstone course, Basic Issues in Faith and Life. Weekly chapel services offer opportunities for praise and worship, while the presence of a dedicated pastor on staff supports students' spiritual growth.

The importance of a **liberal arts education** is realized through the degree requirements at Bethel College. The curriculum is designed to cultivate intellectual capacities such as critical thinking and humanistic inquiry, drawing from the College's rich history in nurturing these skills.

The final component of our mission statement is **practical experience in career pathways**. Bethel College is progressing toward becoming a federally recognized Work College. Beginning with the freshmen class in the fall of 2024, all incoming students will participate in the [Employment Experiences Program](#), providing them with practical experience in their chosen career pathways. To ensure job placement and career readiness, the program is supported by two dedicated full-time employees.

5.B.3 Bethel College has demonstrated considerable progress in managing its resources through effective short-term and long-term financial planning. Additionally, the College has implemented substantial enhancements to its budget process, resulting in the following benefits:

- Increased involvement of faculty and staff in the financial planning process, fostering a greater sense of ownership and collaboration.
- Improved communication channels to facilitate transparent and effective dissemination of

financial information. This communication extends to the Board, Cabinet members, the President, faculty, and staff, ensuring that all stakeholders are well-informed about budgetary matters and enabling a shared understanding of resource allocation.

- Achieving equitable distribution of resources across the college in alignment with the College's mission and strategic priorities.

The budget development process at Bethel College begins in the fall, with Cabinet members being invited to submit budget change proposals to either the President or VP of Business and Finance. Many of these proposals focus on measures to increase enrollment or enhance student services. For the FY2024 budget, several proposals were due to uncontrollable cost increases stemming from rising costs and compliance requirements. The departmental proposals were then compiled into a [categorized list](#) based on their nature. For the FY2025 preliminary budget, each department submitted a proposed budget with any additions being related to the mission of the College. The departmental budgets were then combined into an institutional set of proposed expenditures.

At the same time, the VP for Enrollment Management estimates anticipated enrollment based on the current student body, projected retention rate, and anticipated new students. The budget change proposals and the enrollment projections are integrated to form an operating budget based on a set of assumptions. Adjustments to the preliminary budget are then made as needed following input from and discussion with Cabinet members. The preliminary budget is then presented to the Board at their fall meeting, where it is subject to a vote for acceptance.

The adopted preliminary budget is reevaluated and deliberated upon by the Cabinet in early spring. Any known adjustments deemed necessary are incorporated into the preliminary budget. The revised budget is then presented to the Board during their spring meeting, where a vote is held to determine its acceptance for the upcoming fiscal year.

Throughout the year, Bethel College monitors actual expenditures in comparison to budgeted expenditures to date. Budgets are overseen by departmental budget directors and the associated Cabinet members. Unaudited monthly financial statements including a budget-to-actual and current-year-to-prior-year comparative income statement are prepared to assess and analyze revenues and expenditures to date. These monthly financial statements are presented in Cabinet meetings and also shared with the Board of Directors. To ensure oversight, each Cabinet member also receives a monthly monitoring report providing a breakdown of departmental expenses in comparison to their respective budgeted amounts.

The VP for Business and Finance conducts [budget presentations](#) biannually in joint meetings of faculty and staff. These presentations provide a detailed overview of the year-to-date financial results and projections, enabling faculty and staff to gain insights into the College's current financial position. The VP for Business and Finance makes herself available once each semester for employees to seek clarification or ask specific questions related to the budget, promoting a culture of open communication and transparency.

In the fall of 2023, the President and VP for Business and Finance held three open forums for staff and faculty at which budgetary information was presented, followed by a question-and-answer session. The forums were well attended and served to ensure transparency in [budgeting decisions](#).

By implementing this budget and monitoring process, Bethel College ensures that communication reaches all employees, and that the College has the information and resources available to sustain the educational programs and facilities on campus.

5.B.4 Bethel College utilizes the budget process as a means to allocate its economic resources, ensuring the fulfillment of its educational purposes. This process allows departments to submit requests for additional funding, enabling strategic priorities.

In recent years specific departmental budgets have been increased to address additional costs in key areas such as Athletics, Business Affairs, and Development. To support the development of the new Employment Experiences Program, a **new Career Counselor position** was added to aid students in resume preparation and related career guidance. Three new positions have been added to the preliminary budget for FY 2025, including a Vice President for People and Belonging, an admissions counselor, and a new Health and Human Performance professor.

The Office of Advancement plays a significant role in providing financial support to facilitate the achievement of the College's educational purposes. Bethel College receives gifts and grants that contribute toward educational expenses. While some gifts and most grants are utilized for current year expenses, many gifts are endowed for a specific educational program purpose. The earnings from these endowed funds assist in funding the expenses of the designated academic programs.

Additionally, Bethel College has received multiple **endowed scholarships and endowed faculty chair funds** over the years. The endowed faculty chair funds ensure that the College can attract and retain qualified and well-trained faculty. Endowed scholarships help to bridge the financial gap between what students can afford to pay and the actual cost of their education.

To supplement the operating budget, Bethel College maintains the **Annual Fund**, which serves as a source of unrestricted funds. The Annual Fund plays a crucial role in addressing the shortfall between the actual cost associated with providing an educational experience for our students and the amount of net tuition revenue the College receives.

Bethel College recently launched a new initiative called **Cornerstone Day**, which initially aimed to provide support to various programs on campus, both academic and athletic. However, the College is working to transform Cornerstone Day into a broader giving day with a primary focus on the annual fund moving forward. While donors will still have the opportunity to specify their donations toward a specific program or department, the overall emphasis will be on contributing to the annual fund.

The mission at Bethel College is realistic given the institution's organization, resources, and opportunities. The College relies on net tuition revenue, fundraising, and endowment growth for much of its financing and needs a clear focus on strategies and tactics to enhance each form of revenue. Additionally, the institution continues to look for new revenue streams to further enhance the fulfillment of its mission. Finally, the College looks for ways to further enhance and increase the transparency of the budget development process.

Sources

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- 02 DOE LOC Release Letter
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- 12 FY21 Audit Report
- 13 6-30-22 audit report _ financials
- 14 6-30-23 audit report financials _ notes - final
- 15 FY21 Governance Letter
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- 23 Fall 2022 Budget Information Meeting
- 24 Fall 2023 Budget Memo to Campus
- 25 December 2023 Financial Statements
- 7.1 Cumulative Sport Avg Aid
- 7.2 Faculty Meeting Minutes
- 7.3 2022-2023 Admissions Visits
- 7.4 Kansas Independent Colleges Kansas Community Colleges
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- 7.6 Enrollment Management Report to the Board Fall 2023
- 93- 4B2 SSI 2023 Report slides

5.C - Core Component 5.C

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning and improvement.

1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities, including, as applicable, its comprehensive research enterprise, associated institutes and affiliated centers.
2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning and budgeting.
3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.
4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity, including fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue and enrollment.
5. Institutional planning anticipates evolving external factors, such as technology advancements, demographic shifts, globalization, the economy and state support.
6. The institution implements its plans to systematically improve its operations and student outcomes.

Argument

Bethel College engages in a systematic and integrated approach to planning and improvement. The College has recently adopted new mission, vision, and values statements in addition to new strategic priorities. A key focus for the College is the allocation of resources in a manner that aligns with its mission and priorities. The planning process strives to encompass the institution as a whole and consider the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups. The College acknowledges the potential fluctuations in revenue and enrollment while recognizing the importance of evolving external factors, including technological advancements, demographic shifts, globalization, the economy, and state support. By actively putting its strategic initiatives into action and focusing on the mission, vision, and values, Bethel College strives for continuous improvement and implements its plans to improve operations and student outcomes.

5.C.1 Bethel College, an undergraduate institution focused on teaching, leverages its resources to educate students through academic, employment, faith, and co-curricular experiences. The College apportions its resources in alignment with its mission, vision, values, and priorities, ensuring that its resources are allocated strategically. The mission, vision, and values serve as the bedrock for planning across all levels of the institution. Consequently, the Board, administrators, faculty, staff, and students participate in planning processes guided by these components.

By effectively using its resources and aligning them with its mission, Bethel College aims to foster a transformative educational experience that not only imparts knowledge, but also nurtures human flourishing, vocational development, and spiritual exploration. Through this integrated approach, the College seeks to empower students and prepare them for future success and meaningful contributions to society.

5.C.2 Bethel College establishes a connection between its assessment of student learning and the evaluation of its operations, planning, and budgeting ensuring the College prioritizes educational excellence and student success.

In recent years, Bethel College has maintained a budgetary approach aimed at prudent financial management, resulting in limited increases to department budgets. However, budget managers link assessments of student learning to planning and budgeting by optimizing the allocation of funds within their respective departments to better meet the evolving needs of students. For example, the Social Work Department assesses student competencies in anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion (ADEI). As a result of these assessments, this department used a portion of its budget for students to attend a cultural humility conference and brought a speaker to campus to discuss ADEI issues. Additionally, the Social Work Department received donations from alumni to fund sending students to an anti-racism training.

To improve the process and procedures associated with the integration of student learning assessments and planning and budgeting, the [Faculty Assessment Committee](#) met with the President, VP for Academic Affairs, and VP for Business and Finance in January of 2023. The purpose of this meeting was to review existing processes and explore opportunities for improvement and integration. At this meeting, one of the challenges identified was the timing misalignment between assessment result availability and the budget creation process. Recognizing the importance of using assessment results to inform budgetary decisions, the committee decided on a solution. The due date for program reviews and assessment reports was moved to Sept. 1, thereby allowing ample time for Cabinet to analyze and incorporate assessment results into the budget process. This adjustment ensures that relevant information is available to management during the budgeting phase, enabling more informed and strategic resource allocation.

Our technology infrastructure became vitally important as a result of the pandemic. The need to link student learning with operations, planning, and budgeting was imperative in Spring 2020 as the College swiftly transitioned to remote learning. In response to unprecedented circumstances, operational needs underwent a rapid transformation as students moved off campus and employees worked from home. The College transitioned all courses to an online format, which demanded flexibility not only in terms of personnel but also in the allocation of financial resources. We had to adapt quickly and efficiently, ensuring that our financial resources were utilized effectively to support the transition to online learning and still meet the evolving needs of our students and faculty.

In Fall 2020, as students returned to campus at Bethel College, we continued to demonstrate agility in allocating resources to meet student learning needs. During this period, we were fortunate to have access to Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds provided by the federal government. We used these funds to adapt our facilities and operations for student learning while prioritizing the safety and well-being of our students. One aspect of these adaptations involved modifying our physical spaces to ensure proper distancing and safety protocols. The College transformed larger spaces into classrooms, necessitating the addition of improved technology such as projectors, screens, and sound systems. These modifications helped to create learning environments that balanced physical distancing with effective instructional delivery. Recognizing the importance of reliable technology infrastructure, the College also worked to enhance wireless internet and network capabilities.

Recognizing the importance of health and safety, the College provided an on-campus nurse, available masks, and cleaning supplies. In response to the need for isolation and quarantine protocols, additional residence hall rooms were needed to keep positive-testing students separated from others which resulted in a reduction in room and board revenue. Overall, the COVID pandemic necessitated planning and budgeting for numerous operational adaptations at Bethel College to accommodate evolving student needs.

Given the urgency of the COVID pandemic, there was limited time available to comprehensively

assess student learning, plan for budgeting, and make operational adjustments. Despite the time constraints, Bethel College remained committed to ensuring that student learning needs were addressed. The College planned quickly to adjust spending priorities, reallocate resources, and implement operational changes in response to anticipated student needs.

To reinforce our ongoing commitment to offer high-quality online courses and programs, we made permanent adjustments in the allocation of resources, including the allocation of additional funds for an online learning platform support role in the Information Media Services Department. Furthermore, to provide comprehensive technical assistance, additional resources were allocated for help desk personnel.

Each year the students at Bethel College complete a **student satisfaction survey** which often results in changes and new initiatives. This feedback serves as a catalyst for change and the implementation of new initiatives to enhance the student experience. When students reported a need for campus safety, funds were designated for the purchase of multiple lighted emergency towers on campus allowing students to notify the local police department in the case of an emergency. In response to student dissatisfaction with the condition of the residence halls, an initiative was launched to [renovate a residence hall](#). By listening to student feedback through the student satisfaction survey, Bethel College demonstrates its commitment to continuous improvement.

5.C.3 Bethel College engages in an inclusive process of planning that seeks input from a wide range of internal and external constituent groups. This inclusive process is true of all major decision-making processes such as the creation of strategic priorities and development of the operating budget.

During the 2022-23 academic year, Bethel College identified [seven strategic priorities](#). To ensure inclusivity and collaboration, the Strategic Priorities Committee, led by the President, included representatives from various departments across campus. Additionally, smaller working groups, composed of faculty and staff, were established for each priority. These smaller groups engaged in developing detailed plans and strategies to accomplish their designated priorities. The strategic priorities were adopted by the Board at the Fall 2022 meeting. A strategic priority launch party was held January 2023 for all faculty and staff, where each strategic priority was presented, highlighting its significance and outlining the associated objectives. This ensured every faculty and staff member had a clear understanding of the strategic priorities.

In Spring 2023, Bethel College had an opportunity to reimagine the **management arrangement of the campus coffee shop**. The College organized open forums to ensure comprehensive input and representation from the college community. These forums provided a platform for students, faculty, staff, and community members to participate and contribute their perspectives. An online forum was also created, allowing individuals to provide input conveniently for individuals unable to attend in person. The input received from the forums served as a foundation for the decision-making process, allowing the College to consider the needs and desires of the College community.

The **Office of Institutional Advancement (OIA)** plays a vital role in building and maintaining strong connections with both internal and external stakeholders and devises plans to involve them in the College community. Additionally, this office develops strategies to secure financial support from these stakeholders to ensure the College can fulfill its mission. Throughout the year, the OIA organizes numerous events for alumni, while also traveling to cultivate relationships and gather feedback from external stakeholders. Furthermore, this office facilitates the Alumni Council, a group of alumni who offer support and advice to the institution.

The **Athletic Department** leverages its connections with local business leaders, community members, and student athletes to inform decision-making and strategic planning. This department actively engages with stakeholders to gather insight and perspectives that contribute to informed choices.

- The **Athletic Booster Club** at the College plays a crucial role by providing both financial support and valuable advice to the athletic department. The involvement of its members bolsters the department's resources and assists in shaping its operations.
- The department seeks input from the **Student Athlete Leadership Team (SALT)**, recognizing the importance of including the voices and perspectives of student-athletes in decision-making processes. This collaborative approach ensures that the department considers the unique insights and needs of those directly involved in athletic programs.

The **Bethel College Parents Association** supports students and recognizes parents as vital members of the community at the College. Composed of parents from students of each class, this association works collaboratively with the Office of Student Life to help and support the needs of Bethel College students.

The **Bethel College Women's Association (BCWA)** collaborates with the College on various initiatives, including special projects, educational events, and donations. Led by a council of local women, this organization has recently coordinated the redecorating of the Administration Building and a residence hall and the purchase of furnishings for the library. BCWA also extends its support to the College by providing gift cards, meals, and snacks to students, faculty, and staff. Additionally, BCWA annually sponsors on-campus presentations, bringing speakers to campus for the benefit of students and faculty.

5.C.4 Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, planning efforts at Bethel College have consistently reflected an understanding of our current capacity and the potential impacts of fluctuations in the institution's revenue sources. Three major sources of revenue for Bethel College are enrollment revenue, contributions to the annual fund, and endowment income. In addition, the College has recently partnered with [Core Education](#) with the [goal of identifying and implementing](#) new revenue streams.

The VP for Enrollment Management closely monitors the number of accepted, admitted, and enrolled new students from spring through the start of the fall semester. Although the budget for the upcoming year is approved by the Board in the prior spring, adjustments are made in the fall if enrollment falls significantly below projections, as was the case in FY 2022 and FY 2024. Room and board revenue projections are also based on enrollment expectations, necessitating budgetary adjustments if enrollment falls short. Anticipating changes in demographics, the College has budgeted with more conservative enrollment numbers in recent years. Furthermore, the College has partnered with [UQ Solutions](#) to conduct two different studies. The first study is an in-depth program review, carried out with the aim of creating the best program mix for the College. The second study has the goal of providing advice to the College on its appropriate price and positioning.

Predicting contributions to the annual fund can be challenging. While the College budgeted \$1,500,000 in annual fund contributions for FY 2022, FY 2023, and FY 2024, it did not receive the full amount in FY 2022 and FY 2023. However, there is optimism that the goal will be reached in FY24 due to recent upswings in the stock market and stabilizing inflationary trends.

While the markets can be volatile, our policy for applying money from endowments to operations,

programs, and scholarships assumes an average percentage of growth (currently set at 5%). This provides stability to this source of revenue within our operating budget. Our endowment value has grown substantially since 2019 leading to increased revenue from this source in the operating fund, as well as program and scholarship restricted funds.

5.C.5 By acknowledging and anticipating evolving external factors, such as technology advancements, demographic shifts, globalization, the economy, and state support, Bethel College is adapting and positioning itself for success. The College is monitoring and planning for future challenges and opportunities related to these external factors.

Technology. In an age of rapid innovation, Bethel College has responded with continual improvements in campus technology. The campus is currently operating on the CX version of the Jenzabar Student Information System, but the College is in the process of upgrading to the J1 version of Jenzabar, with plans for completion by Fall 2024. This transition aims to streamline administrative processes and enhance overall system functionality.

The **Marketing and Communication Department** uses various social media platforms for digital advertising and communication, enabling engagement with the campus community. Additionally, the College has undergone an upgrade to its website with a focus on creating a student-centered online presence that facilitates seamless navigation and access to information. Furthermore, digital screens have been installed in most campus buildings and residence halls for announcements and security alerts.

In Summer 2022, the College reconstructed its [network infrastructure](#), prioritizing improved functionality and connectivity across campus. Other noteworthy technological upgrades include the installation of an LED wall in Memorial Hall, allowing quality image projection for large audiences, as well as the replacement of the projector, screen, and sound system in Krehbiel Auditorium to enhance presentation experiences in this space.

Recognizing the importance of **maintaining up-to-date equipment**, the College is dedicated to replacing outdated computers, projectors, and other equipment on campus. The Director of IMS maintains a [computer replacement policy](#) for all computers across campus to ensure that personnel have access to updated technology. A [classroom needs audit](#) was conducted in 2023 to gather input from faculty regarding facilities and technology needs in the classrooms to improve student learning. The College has responded to innovations in technology and is continually improving the campus.

Demographic Shifts. The institution is aware that demographic shifts are occurring, and we have proactively responded by allocating resources to strengthen our outreach. An additional admissions counselor position has been added to the FY2025 budget. This addition aims to increase our presence in high schools, community colleges and other recruitment platforms. Moreover, it intends to broaden our communication channels with various constituencies particularly those who influence college-going decisions: high school and community college counselors, parents, extended family members, alumni, and athletic coaches.

For several years, the Bethel College admissions team has been expanding recruitment efforts across multiple states within our geographical area, focusing efforts on transfer students. Additionally, Bethel College has recently engaged the services of an international student recruitment firm to amplify international student enrollment efforts.

Globalization. Bethel College is committed to cross-cultural learning and exploring global

connections that go beyond its traditional recruitment base. Bethel College offers various study abroad programs that provide students with transformative experiences. For example, one notable program is the longstanding exchange program with the Bergische Universität in Wuppertal, Germany. This exchange program holds the distinction of being one of the oldest between any two colleges or universities in the United States and Germany.

In 2022, President Gering visited the **Bergische Universität in Wuppertal** to meet with university administrators. In 2023, Bethel's Director of Study Abroad programs visited the campus in Wuppertal to continue to [foster this relationship](#). Their visits not only strengthened the bond between the two institutions but also set the foundation for planning the 75th anniversary of this exchange program. As part of [the program](#), Bethel College regularly hosts students from Wuppertal, and likewise, Bethel students have the opportunity to study at Wuppertal. Currently, two students from Wuppertal are studying at Bethel for the 2023-24 academic year, while one Bethel student is enrolled at Wuppertal for Fall 2023.

As reported in our last assurance argument, Bethel College established an agreement with the **Universidad de Ciencias y Artes de Chiapas (UNICACH)**, in Mexico, for the purpose of collaborating in a number of ways. The global pandemic put a hold on all international exchanges and study abroad programs, but the May 2023 Biological and Cultural Richness of Mexico class traveled to Mexico and renewed contacts with the university. The College remains dedicated to further developing this relationship as demonstrated by the renewed agreement dated May 2023.

Bethel College also cooperates with other study abroad programs such as **AIFS Study Abroad and Amizade**. Since the pandemic, Bethel students have studied in Spain and Mexico. Other students are currently in the process of applying for programs in Mexico, Spain, and Guatemala.

In addition to these study-abroad opportunities, Bethel College welcomes a diverse group of **international students** each year. In recent years, students from Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Czechia, England, Germany, Iceland, Italy, Mexico, Panama, Serbia, Spain, and Uruguay have enriched the campus community with their unique cultural perspectives. The international exchanges and opportunities at Bethel College offer students a truly immersive and enriching experience, fostering global awareness and intercultural understanding.

Economy and State Support. The College relies on the Kansas Independent College Association (KICA) as a valuable resource for information regarding government funding and regulations. To stay informed on state and economic matters, the President, VP for Business and Finance, and the VP for Academic Affairs each attend monthly meetings with their respective counterparts within the KICA. The VPs for Enrollment Management and Student Life participate as active members of the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, which provides training, development, and guidance for student affairs professionals.

Admissions works with the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) to access updated information and stay abreast of developments in the field. The Registrar participates as an active member of the Kansas Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (KACRAO), which provides relevant information specific to registrars' responsibilities and concerns. Furthermore, the VP for Business and Finance is a member of the National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO), an organization that provides weekly updates on economic and national issues.

5.C.6 Bethel College implements its plans to improve operations and student outcomes. The

College has developed a [strategic plan](#) with seven priorities along with a set of [key performance indicators \(KPIs\)](#). These priorities serve as guiding principles for decision-making and advancement, while the KPIs enable the measurement of progress. Progress in meeting the priorities and the KPIs are [shared](#) with both the Board and all employees of Bethel College. President Gering spoke extensively about the strategic plan and the KPIs at the 2022 Prologue Day. This inclusive sharing of information empowers all stakeholders to contribute to the fulfillment of the strategic plan and fosters a collective commitment to achieving the College's goals.

Institutional financial performance is similarly documented and shared. The Cabinet and the Board review both the monthly statements of financial operations and end-of-year audited financial reports. Budgets are monitored monthly by budget managers allowing the College to identify performance challenges and resolve them where possible at an early point.

On the academic front, assessment results are used to evaluate student outcomes, but these results also include student input through the use of a survey. This information is used to improve services to students and to shift the curriculum to best fit the needs of the students in the programs. For example, within the Teacher Education Department, student assessments provide valuable information to inform workshops, study sessions, and remediation. To improve student outcomes, the Visual Arts and Design Department has begun using online and open-source materials allowing all students easy and affordable access to course materials. This department has also begun using alumni donations to provide all supplies for students in their general education courses, which they have found to improve student outcomes.

Sources

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- 02 Haury Hall Renovation Architect Plans
- 03 Knowledge Is Not Enough - SP Infographic
- 03.1 Bethel Wi-Fi Rollout email from Adam Haag
- 04 Computer Replacement Policy
- 05 Classroom Needs Audit
- 06 Bergische Universität Wuppertal Partnership
- 07 Bethel Wuppertal Exchange Students List
- 08 Key Performance Indicators
- 09 Core Education Proposal for Bethel College
- 10 Presidents email re Core Education
- 11 UQ Solutions
- 2.A.2 10 Fall 2023 Strategic Plan Update email

5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

The institution's resources, structures, processes and planning are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

Summary

Bethel College possesses the necessary resources, structures, processes, and planning to effectively fulfill its mission, continuously enhance the quality of its educational offerings, and adeptly manage both its current and future challenges and opportunities. Over the past four years, the College's endowment fund has experienced significant growth, attributed to the generosity of alumni and other supporters. Furthermore, favorable market returns have contributed to the increased market value of the endowment. Supplemental endowment transfers have been eliminated, ensuring a more sustainable financial approach.

To provide a clear direction for its operations, Bethel College has developed new mission, vision, and values statements and a strategic plan built upon the foundation of the mission, vision, and values. The strategic plan encompasses a set of seven strategic priorities. The College boasts a stable and highly competent faculty and staff, ensuring the institution's strength and continuity.

While celebrating its accomplishments, Bethel College remains committed to addressing ongoing challenges and planning for the future. As the College embarks on its journey as a work college, the focus lies in creating a transformative educational experience for students. With guidance from the governing Board and a renewed institutional mission, Bethel College will progress forward, ensuring that it upholds its longstanding tradition of excellence.

Sources

There are no sources.