Special Visit Report to the

Western Association of Schools and Colleges

Senior College and University Commission

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INTRODUCTION

Background of Saybrook University

Saybrook University is a private, not-for-profit institution offering graduate degrees and post-graduate professional development certificates in the fields of psychology, clinical psychology, counseling, organizational leadership, business, management, transformative social change, mind-body medicine, and integrative and functional nutrition. Originally founded in 1970 as the Humanistic Psychology Institute within Sonoma State University (SSU), Saybrook University is a product of the idealistic aspirations of Abraham Maslow, Rollo May, Carl Rogers, and other late 1960s psychologists. These innovative clinicians and thinkers were instrumental in developing a humanistic vision focused on the potential for individuals and creative community members to live full and meaningful lives. In 1974, Saybrook separated from SSU and was established as an independent educational institution offering primarily courses in psychology and human science. By 1984, the Humanistic Psychology Institute had been renamed The Saybrook Graduate Institute and Research Center and had achieved regional accreditation from WSCUC.

Over the years, Saybrook's programs remained largely intact, with slight variations made to the residential conference and curriculum delivery. Then, in 2000, Organizational Systems was first offered as a degree program. In 2009, the institution was renamed Saybrook University, and President Buchman charted a new vision for the future. In that new vision he outlined his concept of a humanistic university, which housed several colleges with innovative academic programs. Starting in 2009, those new programs grew to include mind-body medicine, clinical psychology, leadership, counseling, transformative social change, and business and leadership programs.

From the beginning, Saybrook has implemented a hybrid form of education, which includes a combination of face-to-face residential gatherings, written papers, dialogues, and audiovisual conference calls. Later, as the field of online education grew, the university sought to remain competitive by expanding its virtual online course and meeting offerings. Currently, Saybrook offers an at-a-distance, learning-centered environment, free of geographic limitations for both domestic and international non-traditional students and life-long learners interested in advanced graduate studies.

After 40 years in San Francisco, in 2014, Saybrook moved from its main headquarters to Oakland, California, while maintaining an additional campus location in the State of Washington (WA). The WA campus, which housed the former Leadership Institute of Seattle (LIOS) programs, moved from Kirkland to Bellevue in February 2016. Additionally, in 2014, the university affiliated with The Community Solution (TCS) Education System, marking a pivotal moment in terms of the institution's long-term commitment to sustainability and focus on its academic mission. Critical to the affiliation, and what attracted the university to such an arrangement, was the fact that Saybrook could retain its independence, while leveraging the capacity of a system model to support academic programming, enhance student services, and bolster financial and enrollment performance.

Leveraging its partnership with Pacific Oaks College and Children's School (also an affiliate of TCS Education System), in June of 2019, Saybrook moved its campus location to Pasadena, CA, giving it a ground-based, stand-alone facility with visible branding, classroom access, and offices scalable to institutional growth needs. The new location has allowed the university to improve operational efficiencies, with 6,070 square feet of dedicated space, including 21 offices, one classroom, and one conference room. The building also offers an additional 8,000 square feet of common space, including a student lounge with kitchen, a

community copier/supply room, and non-common space that includes six classrooms available for reservation without additional fees.

At the time of the move, almost all Saybrook students were enrolled in hybrid or online programs. Consequently, online courses continued without disruption, and students were not directly impacted by the transition. Saybrook staff continued to offer student services (e.g., advising, writing support, library) by email, telephone, video conference, and CANVAS, and TCS staff continued to offer additional services (e.g., financial aid) without disruption.

Organization of Saybrook University

Prior to 2014, the university was structured on a school-based model. While allowing specific disciplines to flourish, silos became impediments to collaboration and growth. To address this problem, in 2015, President Long collaborated with members of the executive team to reorganize Saybrook's structure by creating two colleges. The College of Social Sciences (CSS) houses psychology, clinical psychology, counseling, transformative social change, and leadership and management programs; and the College of Integrative Medicine and Health Sciences (CIMHS) houses mind-body medicine, integrative and functional nutrition, psychophysiology, and integrative social work ([Appendix A.1 Saybrook Organizational Charts](#)).

The reorganization to two colleges from four schools and the centralizing of certain administrative functions under academic affairs leadership has created a greater focus on collaboration, cross-disciplinary programming, and better alignment of processes and procedures where appropriate. Additional work continues to improve academic programming and delivery of services.

<center>**Descriptions of Major Changes**</center>

Program Changes

Since the spring of 2018, Saybrook University has initiated several new academic programs in both colleges. Brief descriptions of program additions follow here.

Department of Counseling. In the fall of 2019, the PhD program in Counselor Education Supervision (CES) was launched. The program has an enrollment of nine students, and program faculty are seeking accreditation through the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). They anticipate receiving a decision in 2022 regarding the program's status.

Saybrook's PhD program in Counselor Education and Supervision prepares students to hold full-time faculty positions within counseling programs, a necessary support towards ensuring a steady supply of counseling professionals to meet the burgeoning mental health needs across the country. As counselor educators, they will hold advanced knowledge and skills in teaching, clinical supervision, research, advocacy, and leadership.

Department of Leadership and Management. The MBA and DBA programs were launched in the spring and summer semesters of 2021. Both programs focus on sustainability and humanistic approaches to management. Currently, faculty support 11 students across both programs, and efforts to recruit additional applicants are ongoing. Students pursuing the MBA or DBA programs advance their understanding of socially conscious, sustainable business solutions by focusing on advanced studies in the following key areas: sustainable systems design and transformation, trends in global business, business development and entrepreneurialism, management strategies, innovations in leadership development, and organizational learning and development.

Department of Applied Psychophysiology (APH). In 2018, the Department of APH

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introduced a 37-credit, research-oriented MS in Psychophysiology program. In 2021, that MS degree in Psychophysiology was restructured into a 34-credit "science and research specialization" and a 34-credit "optimal functioning specialization." Currently, there are seven students enrolled. Saybrook's online MS in Psychophysiology is intended for people with undergraduate degrees, who are seeking basic skills in psychophysiology and associated areas.

Department of Integrative and Functional Nutrition (IFN). The Department of IFN's PhD program commenced in the fall of 2019. The 62-credit program began with 19 enrolled students and now supports 60 students. The PhD in Integrative and Functional Nutrition program is a fully online, 62-credit doctoral degree program designed for those looking to enhance their expertise and contribute to the scientific advancements in the field of integrative and functional nutrition. This online program prepares graduates to use an evidence-based approach to provide patient-centered, integrative care by applying their knowledge of functional biochemistry in assessing body dysfunctions, while incorporating environmental, social, physiological, and psychological sciences into their practice.

In the fall of 2019, the Department of IFN added minors in integrative wellness coaching and mind-body medicine to the MS in IFN and to the PhD in IFN degree in the fall of 2020. The Department of IFN also added a MS to PhD Pathway in 2019, allowing student without a masters to apply directly to the PhD program.

Department of Integrative Social Work (ISW). In the fall of 2020, the Department of ISW launched a PhD in ISW. This is a 60-credit PhD degree with specializations in gerontological studies and community studies. By the fall of 2021, faculty anticipate approximately 15 students will be enrolled in the program.

Department of Mind-Body Medicine (MBM). In 2019, the Department of MBM added two

elective minors for its MS in MBM. One of the electives is in integrative and functional nutrition, and the other is in integrative wellness coaching.

Staffing Changes

Vice President of Academic Affairs (VPAA). In June of 2021, the current VPAA announced his appointment to the presidency of an institution located in the State of Washington. The president immediately began efforts to establish a process for identifying the institution's next VPAA, by securing the support of Summit Search Solutions located in North Carolina. Following this action, the president then appointed an interim vice president, as well as an accreditation liaison officer. By late June, a steering group comprised of the Saybrook executive team and leadership cabinet members and three department co-chairs was formed. The steering group is responsible for the final phase of interviewing, once candidates have been selected by the university-wide search committee.

The co-chairs established a nominations process that was open to faculty, students, and staff in helping select the new VPAA. The search committee met on July 19, 2021, working with the Summit Search Solutions consultant, in preparation for the position advertisement that was distributed on August 2, 2021. The current plan is to conclude the search by late November, with the successful VPAA candidate in place by January or February of 2022.

In-Person and Remote Positions. Prior to and upon official completion of the move to Pasadena, CA, the university evaluated the potential to maintain several positions in person at the new location, versus remotely based, similar to the established structure in Oakland, CA. Academic Affairs considered positions in both of its divisions, including Academic Affairs Operations (e.g., registrar, library) and Academic Departments (e.g., chairs, faculty). Following a 10-month review, the university determined that a restructuring of several positions in the Academic Affairs Operations division was in the best interest of the university, given existing

and emerging needs.

In order to expand recruitment across the United States, Saybrook's focus on state authorizations became a main focus of opportunity. As a result, increased enrollment growth prompted the need for increased support in student services. In response to this increased need, the following three remote positions were restructured: Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, Administrative Assistant, and Director of Academic Affairs. In addition, the following four new Pasadena campus-based positions were created: Director of University Compliance and Regulatory Affairs, Academic Events Coordinator/Academic Affairs Assistant, Assistant Director of Student Success and Excellence, and Associate Registrar. These new positions are designed to address the existing needs and anticipated growth of the university.

In 2020, like many other institutions, COVID-19 forced Saybrook to shut down the Pasadena campus and move all Pasadena-based employee's home to telecommute. Saybrook responded by issuing stipends to all employees and accommodating flexible schedules for employees who were affected by the virus or who were serving as caregivers.

Self-Study Process and Organization of the Report

Saybrook WSCUC Steering Committee and Sub-Committees

On October 23, 2020, the Saybrook WSCUC Steering Committee had its kickoff meeting to discuss the purpose for the special visit, roles of committee members, preparation of the institutional report, and overall timeline with benchmarks (Appendix A.2 WSCUC Special Visit Preparation for Fall 2021). Steering committee members, who represent various leadership levels and departments, include:

- Nathan Long, President

- Gina Belton, Adjunct Faculty, Humanistic and Clinical Psychology, Co-Chair Faculty Senate

- Carmen Bowen, Director of University Relations

- Devin Byrd, Chief Academic Officer and Vice President of Academic Affairs

- Charlotte Hamilton, Dean, College of Social Sciences

- Crystal Ishihara, Registrar

- Karyn Lee, Associate Vice President Admissions Enrollment

- Donald Moss, Dean, Graduate College of Integrative Medicine and Health Sciences

- Shaniece McGill, Dean of Students

- Weyland Morse, Director of University Compliance and Regulatory Affairs

- Christine Poindexter-Harris, Interim Accreditation Liaison Officer and Assessment Coordinator, TCS Senior Director of Assessment

- Joline Pruitt, Director, Business Operations

- Kirwan Rockefeller, Associate Director, University Assessment, Assistant Director, Institutional Review Board (IRB), Adjunct Faculty- Mind-Body Medicine

- LaGrange Smith, Executive Assistant to President and Vice President of Academic Affairs

- Julia Sondej, Director of Academic Affairs Administration and Projects

- Eric Willmarth, Psychophysiology Department Chair

- Leanne Wruck, Interim Vice President of Academic Affairs, TCS Chief Academic Officer

Additional steering meetings were held regularly to discuss the status of the report

(Appendix A.3 WSCUC Steering Committee Minutes). The committee used Microsoft Teams to

communicate and file sharing software to compile the report.

The steering committee was organized into several report subcommittees, with the primary

goal being to address each of the issues identified in the July 20, 2018 WSCUC letter. The issues

identified relate to the areas of finance, student achievement, program review, the university's

organization, and diversity. Each area had a designated lead; those individuals were responsible for coordinating their respective parts of this report. Each sub-committee met as necessary to develop accurate and appropriate written responses to each section of the report (Appendix A.4 WSCUC Subcommittee Minutes).

The WSCUC Core Team compiled the final report, and the final draft of the report was made available to the committee for review. The report was posted on the Microsoft Teams site for review and final edits. In August and September of 2021, the final report was provided to the WSCUC Steering Committee, Board of Trustees, and the Saybrook community for final comment. Suggestions were taken into consideration, and final edits to the report were completed.

Saybrook Community Engagement

The residential conference (RC) provides a convenient platform to engage with the entire Saybrook community and provide WSCUC accreditation updates. The report was open for comment at the fall 2021 residential conference (RC). Members of the core team led the session, provided context to the special visit and the institutional report and engaged the participants in questions and answers (Appendix A.5 Saybrook Residential Conference WSCUC Updates). A discussion session was held for the Saybrook faculty to collect feedback on the report and for the larger Saybrook community including students and staff. At the fall 2021 RC, the session concluded with an opportunity for participants to test their Saybrook knowledge in areas of the special visit for a chance to win prizes.

Organization of the Report

In the spring of 2018, a WSCUC site visit team conducted a comprehensive evaluation of Saybrook University. Following the WSCUC Commission meeting in June 2018, the findings resulted in eight years of continued accreditation of the university. The Commission recognized

"significant progress towards financial stability," "professionalization of operational functions," "efforts to improve student success," and "leadership of the institution." The Commission also requested a special visit in fall 2021 to respond to matters related to finances, student achievement, program review, organizational issues, and diversity. The following sections describe the work that has been accomplished to address each of the recommendations.

FINANCE

In the area of finance, WSCUC made the following recommendations:

- Continue to strengthen financial viability through further enrollment growth, diversification of revenue sources, and building on initial advancement efforts (CFR 3.4).

- Continue to examine program-pricing strategies in light of the changing ecology of higher education (CFR 4.7).

Background

Since its affiliation with TCS in March 2014, and under new leadership, Saybrook's financial health and viability have substantially improved. At the time of the 2017 WSCUC report, Saybrook's positive operating surplus of $0.6 million and cash and equivalents of $5.2 million, along with the 2020 strategic plan that included transparent budgeting, long-term financial planning, and focused priorities, positioned Saybrook for continued financial stability and reserve growth. Achievable enrollment growth goals and milestones were developed, in concert with moderate tuition increases.

Saybrook was and still is highly dependent on tuition and student fees, with financial stability closely connected to enrollment growth. Increased fundraising, donations, and grants remain areas of opportunity and priority. Three new positions have been created to execute a fundraising outreach strategy with a starting institutional goal of $10K in revenue is outlined in

the 2020 strategic plan to increase outreach to alumni and the local community, but more time was needed to secure substantial resources through advancement activities. Saybrook accomplished the goal of building an outreach strategy with a new department of advancement, and the university is positioned to increase endowments by one million dollars by 2025.

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Institutional Response to Finance Recommendations

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Audited Financial Statements for FY 2018, 2019, and 2020

Audited financial statements from fiscal years 2018-20 show increasingly positive financial position, with total net assets increasing from $7.23 million to $8.4 million over three years (Appendix B.1 Saybrook Financial Audits FY18-FY20). (The FY2021 audited financial statement will be available in October 2021.) These financial results flow from focused attention on expense management, increased enrollments, and retention management for continuing students. Ongoing year-over-year budget surpluses (five years) also have contributed to the institution's overall increase in net assets, as well as to investments in marketing and infrastructure.

Fundraising, Donation, and Grant Goals

In completing the Saybrook 2025 strategic plan, President Long, in consultation with University Relations and the Institutional Advancement Board Committee Chair, crafted a five-year addendum to the plan related to fundraising and advancement initiatives (Appendix B.2 Saybrook Institutional Advancement Strategic Plan FY21). This plan provides a value proposition framework, followed by an outline of goals and objectives designed to assist the institution in realizing its stated strategic objectives outlined in Key Strategic Initiative I of Saybrook 2025 (Appendix B.3 Saybrook University Goals FY22). In order to further advance philanthropic initiatives, the university has budgeted for the hiring of an institutional advancement professional, beginning in the fall of 2021.

Appeals for giving are submitted throughout the university. Gifts come from varied sources through the giving website www.saybrook.edu/giving. Those gifts support the Greatest Needs Fund, Alumni Funded Scholarship, Saybrook University General Fund, and Faculty Research and Development Fund.

In addition to its work advancing overall community engagement, University Relations plans giving appeals, sets fiscal goals, and provides transparent updates on giving progress. Based on current appeal efforts, communication, and networking, the university is on target to meet or exceed projected 2020-2021 budgets, aided in large part by CARES Act funding and an initial sizeable gift provided by an anonymous donor (Appendix B.4 Giving Appeal Budget to Actual YTD for 2020-21).

Enrollment Management Data

The university's enrollment management efforts demonstrate continued growth year-over-year since 2015. Data from the current year reveal the most dramatic growth over the previous years, with a total enrollment at 778 students, as of the spring 2021 census (Appendix B.5 Saybrook Fall Semester Enrollment Trend F16-F20). Growth is attributed to several factors, including marketing investments, focus on admissions leadership and team stability, leveraging of training and fundamentals around admissions best practices, increasing support from faculty relative to enrollment growth, the addition of a third entry point (beginning summer 2021 with planned expansion in summer of 2022), and continued commitment to retention as a core priority. Fall 2021 enrollment projects currently point to 900+ total students across the university pointing to the institution's focus in this area.

Program Pricing Strategies

University administration identified three major reforms necessary for tuition and fees pricing: programmatic tuition alignment, revision of fees to better capture delivery of defined

university services, and innovations to certificate/micro-credentialing fees to entice greater enrollments and opportunities to convert into programmatic enrollments. These reforms are described in the following sections.

Programmatic Tuition Alignment. Following conversion in 2017-18 from a flat-rate model to a per-credit-hour rate, initial efforts began to remove vast differences in tuition rates between certain programs, thus creating greater parity. The initial process resulted in an overall tuition reduction by 4%. Some programs, such as psychology and transformative social change, saw decreases in cost per credit hours, while others in mind-body medicine and integrative and functional nutrition saw reasonable increases in programmatic tuition rates.

The university froze tuition for the 2019-2020 academic year, and then it increased tuition for the 2020-2021 academic year and continued to bring previously lower programmatic tuition rates into greater alignment with the majority of other programs (Appendix B.6 Tuition Alignment, Tuition and Fees). This process will continue until the 2023-2024 academic year, when a common tuition rate will be achieved across programs.

Revision of Fees Structure. The university also determined that its previous fee structure required greater simplification to account for the various student-facing services and university resources not covered by tuition. Beginning with the fall 2020 semester, students were charged one standard fee per semester, thus eliminating all other fees. This fee ($1,470 per semester, with a slight reduction for the summer term) includes, but is not limited to, technology resources, student services, and residential conference support services (Appendix B.6 Tuition Alignment, Tuition and Fees).

Innovations to Certificate/Micro-Credentialing Fees. Beginning in 2018, the Academic Affairs division began working with faculty leaders to pare down the number of certificates offered. In addition, this group developed a new fee structure that provides interested learners

with a more affordable rate, while creating potential pathways to enroll in connected academic offerings.

In line with emerging trends in higher education, Saybrook has created a micro-credentials pathway for current and prospective students. These non-credit bearing learning opportunities deliver tangible skills in a concise, affordable format, with fees ranging from $44 to $140. The Saybrook micro-credential program embraces a unified operational structure, which features consistency in pricing, delivery, and assessment, while allowing for academic innovation as faculty determine timely topics.

In the past year, micro-credential topics included Strategies for Global Leaders, Responsible Conduct of Research, Classic Grounded Theory, and Motivational Interviewing (offered fully in Spanish) ([Appendix B.7 Saybrook Micro-credentials Summary FY21](#)). The nearly 150 participants consisted of enrolled students, alumni, and prospective students, who interacted in an online format using Canvas. Each micro-credential concluded with a comprehensive participant survey, the results of which revealed that this micro-credential was the first for a majority of students and that for 74% of the participants their purpose in taking the program was professional development. The open-ended responses revealed that participants enjoyed the opportunities to interact with each other virtually and suggested several topics for future offerings.

Efforts in Grant Making

Prior to the 2019-2020 academic year, grant acquisitions were limited in scope, in part because the institution focused its efforts on longer-term sustainability where financial fundamentals were concerned. Consequently, between 2017 and 2019, few programs submitted grant applications, and grant funding had little impact on overall revenues. As previously stated, on January 21, 2020, Saybrook hired a Director of University Relations, with plans laid to create

a grants management function and eventually a grants office or department. Grants management became fully functional in May 2020, and a part-time grant writer was hired, along with a federal work study student, who assists with tasks to support departmental needs. Additionally, the institution now has a grants committee, which meets quarterly to discuss potential grants, new initiatives, and proposed departmental changes.

The grants budget for 2020-2021 was $5000, with a stretch goal of $10,000. The grants department is on target to exceed this goal, due to the receipt of the Cares Act Grant in the amount of $500,000 (Appendix B.8 Reporting for Outside Tuition Revenue). The grants management office sends quarterly requests to faculty and students to apply for programmatic, research, and equipment grants.

Expansion of grants management continues. Future years will include a full-time grant writer, who can begin exploration and eventual solicitation of foundation and government grants that yield increased revenues, support for research initiatives, student support, and community engagement. A full-time grants coordinator position is budgeted to begin in the summer or fall of 2021.

Five-Year Financial Plan

At the direction of President Long, the Saybrook Executive Leadership Team (VPAA, Associate VP of Enrollment Management, and Director of Business Operations), in collaboration with the TCS Education System finance office, was tasked with creating an updated, five-year long-range financial plan (LRFP) to align with the Saybrook strategic plan for 2025 (Appendix B.9 Long Range Modeling 2020-2025). Below are the three goals central to this LRFP:

1. Create a clear plan that outlines--at a broad level--revenues (enrollments, grants, other fundraising) and expenses, including strategic investments;

2. Link each year to specific fiscal year budgeting processes; and

3. Connect LRFP to the overall Saybrook 2025 strategic plan financial outcomes.

The final LRFP has been designed to include more conservative enrollment projection and expense modeling to account for likely market changes, resulting from anticipated demographic shifts in the higher education marketplace, impacts of COVID-19 on college decision-making, and other considerations. In addition, the LRFP enables the institution to better support faculty and staff in planning for future growth and programmatic developments. Specifically, the LRFP enables Saybrook's academic and student affairs teams to project hiring needs and development funding needed for new programs, capital needs, technology expenditures, etc.

Advancement: Maintaining a Focus on Fundamentals

Saybrook's financial success since 2014 is a result of several factors that will continue. These factors include continued expansion of enrollment, expense management, growth in advancement activities, and other revenue enhancements, such as increasing investments.

Continued Expansion of Enrollment. Despite the national trend of declining student enrollment, Saybrook has continued to witness growing interest in its programs, as evidenced by increasing leads (2,131 in 2016 compared to 3,984 in 2020) and increasing deposits across multiple programs (80 in 2016 compared to 173 in 2020) ([Appendix B.10 Sample Inquiries and Deposits YOY 2016-2020](#)). In particular, there have been sizeable increases in the counseling, clinical psychology, and nutrition programs (specifically the PhD IFN and MS IFN).

Looking ahead, enrollment increases require admissions team development, which necessitates reduced turnover, enhanced training, review of admissions procedures across all departments to ensure both quality and efficiency in the review process, ongoing investment in marketing and brand development, and academic program marketing strategies that include

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strong grassroots marketing initiatives led by the president and director of university relations.

Expense Management. The Saybrook executive team and leadership cabinet, in consultation with university department leaders, have collaborated to create an increasingly decentralized platform for budget development and accountability that has enabled stakeholders to manage budgets in more effective ways. This move towards decentralization has increased budgetary authority and accountability across departments, enabling each area to better identify what is needed to ensure the effective delivery of programs and services. However, further work is required in this area to ensure faster real-time reporting of expenses, which, in turn, allows a more proactive approach to cost containment, essentially course correcting as needed along the way. Furthermore, an ongoing focus on ensuring that revenue by program is sufficient to cover all necessary programmatic expenses has enabled the university to pivot and make adjustments to increase or decrease expenses as needed throughout the fiscal year.

Advancement Activities and Other Revenue Enhancements. The university leadership, specifically the president and University Relations Department, will execute on the Institutional Advancement strategic plan addendum, which supports ongoing revenue growth across grants, individual philanthropy, and corporate philanthropy. Additionally, certificates and micro-credentials will serve as a viable resource for future revenues that can likely contribute to growth in other academic programs.

Increasing Investments. The president has articulated, both to the Board and community, that increasing investments in future years is vital to continuing the current trends seen across the university, where financial health and sustainability are concerned. Descriptions of specific investments follow here.

- Marketing: Significant investments in brand expansion, lead generation, and social media will be necessary to ensure that the university is responsive to the increasingly

competitive marketplace where online higher education is concerned. The president recently approved a $1.4 million increase in marketing expenditures, with the aim of further seeding new enrollments. To date, Saybrook has witnessed a sizeable increase in both leads and conversions to deposited students. The plan is to continue these investments in subsequent years.

- Faculty and Staff FTEs: In addition to enrollment growth, commensurate expansion of academic faculty and student support services in the form of new full-time and part-time positions will be essential to support the quality of teaching, learning, and the overall student experience. "Trigger points" for hiring include student-faculty ratios by program, strategic investments supporting retention via student affairs, new student affairs staff, and university relations supporting fundraising and grant acquisitions. Twenty-two new positions and $1.2 million are included in the fiscal year 2022 and 2023 budgets to support this effort.

- Salaries and Benefits: The president also has worked with the institutional CFO and executive leadership to ensure increases to base salaries and funded retirement accounts. In 2019-2020, all staff received a one-time monetary award, called a team award, thanking them for their service during the five-year turnaround of the university. In 2020-2021, the university then provided a three percent across the board merit increase to all qualifying employees, with plans to maintain this increase annually, provided budgetary targets are met. Since FY 2015, the university has contributed 7% to every qualifying employee's 403B. This practice will continue.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

In the area of student achievement, WSCUC made the following recommendations:

- Continue to make progress in the collection and use of graduation and retention data, and create a plan containing timelines, goals, and ongoing assessment to define and ensure student success (CFR 2.10).

- Adopt a consistent model for assessment of student learning and program review, institutionalize the collection and dissemination of data, and use the results for program improvement and allocation of resources (CFR 2.7).

- Diversify data collection methods to include more direct assessment measures across the university (CFRs 2.3, 2.4, 2.6).

In the WSCUC July 20, 2018 letter to President Nathan Long, the Commission requested the following information regarding Student Achievement:

1. Retention and graduation rates since spring 2018.

2. Status of a student achievement plan containing timelines, goals, and ongoing assessment to define and ensure student success.

3. Description of assessment of student learning across the colleges (methods, models, use of results).

4. Progress in procuring an assessment management system.

Retention and Graduation Rates AY 2018 to AY 2020

Retention and graduation rates are currently prepared on a triannual basis, with report updates available in April, August, and December. These reports are initially provided as Excel files that use pivot tables to allow users to filter between programs and student demographic characteristics. Annually, the Office of Institutional Research (OIR) produces a summary of Saybrook's student achievement metrics, which include a static, overall, view of retention and graduation rates at the university (Appendix C.1 Saybrook Student Achievement Data 2021).

Retention rates are calculated using students' presence or absence, in official census data, as the marker to determine if they are, or are not, to be counted as retained. Additionally, if students are in a graduate status during the specified retention timeframe, they also will be considered retained. There are two timeframes at which retention is assessed: semester-to-semester and year-over-year. For year-over-year retention, new students in a summer or fall semester must appear in the following year's fall census (e.g., new in summer or fall 2018 is checked against fall 2019) or be in a graduate status during that timeframe. New students in the spring semester must appear in the following year's spring semester (e.g., new in spring 2018 is checked against spring 2019).

Graduation rate data are collected and reported out on a triannual basis. Student statuses are extracted from the student information system, and those data are matched against official census records. Graduation rates are then calculated by cohort start, either by term, semester, or academic year.

Since the spring 2018 term at Saybrook, the semester-to-semester retention rate (S2S) has been 80.05%. During that same timeframe, the year-over-year retention rate (YoY) was 69.20%. Trends in the data reveal that those students starting in fall terms have a higher retention rate (S2S = 83.90%; YoY = 73.81%) compared to students starting in spring terms (S2S = 73.24%; YoY = 64.52%). There are no retention rate differences between doctorate (S2S = 80.31%; YoY = 69.73%) and masters (S2S = 80.58%; YoY = 70.11%) level students ([Appendix C.2 Saybrook Census-based Retention Rates](#)).

Going back to AY 2018-2019 new student cohorts, Saybrook's graduation rate was 15.87%. However, that figure is artificially low, because 61.76% of those new student cohorts are still persisting through their programs as of spring 2021. The oldest Saybrook new student cohort currently in the graduation rate report is from AY 2015-2016. This cohort has a

graduation rate of 58.23%, with only 14.56% of that cohort still persisting through their program. (Appendix C.3 Saybrook Census-based Graduation Rates).

<div align="center">**Ensuring Student Success**</div>

Since the 2018 WSCUC reaffirmation, Saybrook University has continued its focus on student success. A culture of assessment is now more deeply embedded in the organization, with ongoing continuous improvement discussions amongst faculty and administration. These discussions center on alignment of Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs), Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs), and Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs), and the use of data from OIR and rubrics within course structures. Student success is at the center of these discussions, which have included revision of syllabi to remain relevant and up to date to meet professional competencies, curriculum mapping, and identification of signature assignments.

The institution has captured retention information from OIR reports. The university also has a Student Excellence Task Force (in place of Student Retention Committee) with a broader scope of student services and how those services provide support for students and take student initiatives to the next level. Included in the university's student success initiatives is an adaptation of a career services platform, creation of community pages, and revamping of a student gateway portal.

Registrar's Office

The Registrar's Office is mid-cycle through implementation of critical initiatives designed to improve the accuracy, ease, and timeliness of student registration and retention. The overall goal is to support the matriculation of students to take courses needed to complete degree requirements and raise awareness of the impact of student policies and procedures.

The following Registrar's Office initiatives have been implemented, or are in the process of being implemented, in order to address the self-study findings.

Proactive Communication. Through previous experience, faculty and staff have observed that students often are unaware of the implications of schedule changes, particularly having to do with dropping courses. This lack of awareness has resulted in students' confusion or frustration and subsequent requests for tuition refunds or policy exceptions. To reduce these occurrences and to help students fully understand the impact of requested schedule changes, the Registrar's Office now responds to any course drop or full withdrawal request with communication detailing the impact of policies (e.g., withdrawal grades, pro-rated refunds, satisfactory academic progress implications). Providing this information before processing requests has helped students understand the implications of their decisions, decreased student frustration, and reduced requests for policy exceptions due to institutional error. Students are generally appreciative of having the information, and it significantly decreases any additional follow-up once the drop has been processed.

Policy Orientation. In line with providing students with advanced information, beginning with the fall 2020 incoming cohorts, the Registrar's Office section of the new student orientation details additional relevant policies, such as satisfactory academic progress (in detail, inclusive of maximum time frame); posting attendance; and the implications of taking a leave of absence, withdrawing, or subsequently re-entering. Whereas current students often seem to experience difficulty locating appropriate forms or policies, newer students appear to experience fewer difficulties in this area.

Year-Long Schedule. In conjunction with Academic Affairs and Human Resources, the Registrar's Office has implemented a year-long course schedule. This annual approach has the benefit of providing students with advance notice regarding course availability and an opportunity to "bookmark" their courses, so that all related offices can begin to project teaching load or the need for additional sections. Creating a template schedule also improves efficiency

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within the Registrar's Office, so that schedules are not rebuilt from scratch each semester. The copy schedule functionality is used and adjusted as needed. Creating consistency overtime will also increase the university's ability to predict year-over-year trends (e.g., course enrollments). The year-long schedule was first implemented in the summer of 2021, with the schedule preview and bookmark functionality scheduled to roll out to students in the fall of 2021.

Program Planning. The university is in the process of reviewing all catalog requirements to create accurate program plans for each student. Improvements resulting in the ability to fully rely on the degree audit functionality that currently exists in the student information system will improve student advising for the academic departments, degree conferral for the Registrar's Office, and increased accuracy with course scheduling. University staff also hope to utilize the degree audit functionality as the "source of truth" for students, faculty, and staff. This will eliminate confusion between stakeholders and improve overall efficiency. Once the changes described here have been fully implemented, an advisor degree conferral report will track all outstanding student requirements and further assist in projecting course schedule requirements. Estimated date of completion is the summer of 2022.

Division of Student Affairs

The Division of Student Affairs supports the holistic development of students by offering co-curricular programming, professional development, and student life activities. The office oversees the Student Excellence Task Force to review current student services and identify ways to take student initiatives to the next level and support student retention. The task force is comprised of a variety of campus stakeholders, including students from several programs, faculty, and staff to offer a diverse perspective. The Student Excellence Task Force is continuing the work that was started by the former Retention Committee.

Career Services Software. Student Affairs and University Relations secured the Handshake

Career Services Platform to provide students with access to career services supports, job boards, and virtual career fairs. Students gained access to the platform in the summer of 2021.

Community Pages and Student Gateway. At the beginning of the spring 2021 semester, the university launched the Saybrook Community Sites, which provides access to resources and services that are publicly facing. The community site includes information on how to establish academic accommodations; forms from the Office of the Registrar; and quick link access to the library, academic calendar, and catalog. The refreshed student gateway serves as a portal for students to complete self-service transactions, such as ordering transcripts, registering for courses, and previewing degree audits.

Professional Development. During the fall 2020 term, Student Affairs partnered with University Relations to host a series of professional development workshops for students. The workshops featured a variety of topics, including: How to Create a CV, Utilizing Strengths Finder, and Joining Professional Organizations. Additionally, in the fall of 2020, Student Affairs launched the Student Professional Development Reimbursement Fund to provide reimbursement for professional organization membership dues, conference attendance fees, and/or professional development trainings.

Getting Started Course. Student Affairs led the initiative to create a Canvas course to introduce new students to university support services at Saybrook before the start of the term. New students across both colleges are enrolled in the self-paced interactive course at the start of the registration period for the semester in which they are enrolling. The course contains content from the Office of the Registrar, Writing Center, Student Affairs, Financial Aid, and Library and also includes a welcome letter from each department chair. Additionally, students are encouraged to engage with other incoming students, faculty, and staff via the course discussion board to build community. Each incoming class is enrolled in a Getting Started Course that is tailored to their

start dates, and they retain access to the course throughout their first semesters of enrollment. Completion of this course is mandatory for students in the CIMHS and strongly encouraged for students in the CSS.

Student Support Services Orientation. Student Affairs developed a synchronous orientation to review student support services in detail before the start of each term. The synchronous orientation supplements the information in the Getting Started Canvas course that all new students are enrolled in. Attendance at the synchronous orientation is strongly encouraged to connect students with resources and set them up for success.

Student Organizations. Student Affairs created a two-tiered student organization structure to encourage student leadership and development. Student organizations are classified as either a student interest group or recognized student organization. After a student interest organization has been in existence for a designated period, the group can apply to become a recognized student organization within the university.

Retention Tool. Student Affairs is working to create an innovative, in-house solution to support academic advising, provide early intervention for students experiencing challenges, and streamline internal communication to support student success. To advance these efforts, Student Affairs created the Student Intervention Team, which consists of student-facing departments and academic leadership to review the student intervention form and provide feedback on the form and how it will be utilized within their respective areas. The student intervention form was developed to provide a central place for faculty and staff to document various student concerns. The form submissions are triaged by the Student Affairs team and disseminated to the appropriate offices for follow-up and resolution.

Retention Strategy. Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, and Admissions (The Retention Taskforce) are collaborating on a comprehensive, university-wide retention plan that includes

analyzing Canvas analytics to identify at-risk students to coordinate care and student support resources. The Canvas analytics measure student engagement with the course content, log in frequency, assignment submissions, and grades to generate a score for each student to identify struggling students early. The taskforce will work with the academic departments to provide training on how to interpret students' scores and generate reports.

New Student Onboarding Plan. Student Affairs is developing a university-wide new student onboarding plan. The plan will include a timeline for communications for student facing departments, a coordinated handoff from Admissions to Student Affairs and the academic departments, enrolling students in a virtual orientation course, and scheduling the synchronous Student Support Services Orientation. Additionally, the department will work with the Admissions and academic departments to develop milestones to track incoming students leading up to the start of the term.

Additional Curricular and Co-Curricular Supports

Advising Model. Previously, student course advising was supported primarily within the Registrar's Office, and then within Student Affairs through one staff member. In the fall of 2020, the advising process transitioned to the academic departments to enhance the connection between students and their academic departments. Department chairs have a clear understanding of the needs of their students, are able to schedule courses more effectively, and are able to strengthen students' understanding of their pathway toward timely program completion. Additionally, with the year-long schedule and program planning initiatives currently in place, the ease and quality of advising should improve over time.

New Institutional Review Board Mentor System. In June 2018, a new Director of the Department of Research and IRB was hired and responsible for improving the IRB review process and expanding the role of the IRB office beyond the management of the ethical review

committee to include educational and support for Saybrook researchers. An earlier assessment of the Saybrook IRB review processes suggested efficiencies could improve IRB operations. The Saybrook IRB reviews approximately 140 new applications annually. Over 95% of these applications are student research, of which approximately 80% are student dissertations. The remaining 20% of these applications are for pre-dissertation research projects.

In addition, federal rules regarding human subjects were updated in January 2018. As a result, the freely available NIH human subject training program went offline. At that time, Saybrook University invested in an institutional license for the CITI program training, which provides a more comprehensive online human subjects research training program for researchers. In addition, the CITI program training modules are available to new doctoral researchers to support research ethics training.

From June 2018 through early 2019, several web-based submission and review systems were considered and presented to Saybrook leadership and the faculty for consideration. In early 2020, the Saybrook IRB decided to adopt Mentor IRB, a software-as-a-service (SaaS) solution to facilitate the online application and review processes. After a four-month customization and set-up period, Saybrook piloted Mentor IRB in the summer of 2020 and transitioned all reviews to the new system at the start of the fall 2020 term.

Concurrent with a new IRB process and a changing faculty and student population, data demonstrated that some students were struggling to get through the dissertation process in a timely manner. With an increase in students requiring dissertation rewrites, some difficulty passing the IRB without additional support, and delayed time to completion, it was evident that changes were needed in the area of research. To resolve these issues and to address WSCUC's recommendation to reduce silos and create an integrated university, Mentor IRB was implemented, which includes a "smart" application that incorporates the data the researcher

enters into the form to drive future questions, which results in a much more efficient user experience.

With Mentor IRB, reviews are assigned and completed online, which enables the IRB to provide comprehensive feedback in much less time. The Mentor IRB system has over 100 different built-in notifications to support ongoing communication between researchers and the IRB. In addition, the Mentor IRB system also reports the real-time review status to facilitate a transparent review process. The Saybrook IRB has been able to build in reviewer checklists, and Mentor IRB facilitates a process that would leverage the expertise of IRB members to support the IRB in minimal risk reviews, which make up over 95% of the reviews completed by the Saybrook IRB. These reviews have traditionally been conducted solely by the IRB Director and Assistant Director.

Mentor IRB provides a one-stop location for all IRB application and support materials. The new system now houses the university's growing set of support guides, materials, and videos. The IRB Office also has implemented eight hours of drop-in office hours each month with the IRB Director and Assistant Director. In addition, beginning in the summer of 2021, the IRB Office initiated another four hours of drop-in peer IRB support, which is led by an advanced doctoral student who has been working as the IRB coordinator for over a year.

In addition to the integration of the IRB CITI training materials into the doctoral research courses, the IRB piloted a practice IRB learning activity in two advanced research methods courses in spring 2021 and has plans to roll out this activity in the remaining advanced methods courses in the fall of 2021. Giving students an opportunity to learn how to use Mentor IRB before their dissertation research should further support a more efficient review. Finally, these improvements to IRB processes and systems lay the groundwork for additional support for faculty research and funded research at Saybrook.

Online Learning Specialist. The Online Learning Specialist position at Saybrook was created in May 2018 and is responsible for overseeing the ongoing development, implementation, and operations of the university's online academic courses ([Appendix C.4 Saybrook Online Learning Specialist](#)). The position supports and enhances the quality of online learning at the university by onboarding new faculty, providing ongoing training of faculty in face-to-face formats and online in Canvas and other educational technology, and offering face-to-face and virtual training and support to new students in navigating the online learning environment.

Center for Writing and Academic Success. Through the Center for Writing and Academic Success (CWAS), Saybrook students from all disciplines have direct access to writing tutors, proofreaders, editors, and APA and ESL support. From tutors, students learn both conventional and innovative techniques of academic writing and communication. Tutors also use diverse strategies to convey ideas, in addition to supporting critical thinking and providing research writing resources. The writing center recently changed its name to better reflect its purpose in how it serves Saybrook students to include writing and academic mentoring. This also coincides with launching a new digital archive of writing resources and development of new writing process materials made available to all students.

The Assessment of Student Learning

Learning Outcome Alignment (ILO – PLO)

Beginning in August 2018, and continuing to the present, faculty, chairs, deans, and staff began to establish an institutionalized assessment process, focusing on the alignment of Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) with Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) and Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs). The ILOs from the 2018 visit have remained consistent, allowing for open dialogue to discuss among faculty how these aspirations can meet professional competencies. Thus, with ILO consistency from 2018-2021, faculty continue to

focus on direct measures regarding assessment of educational outcomes. ILOs are featured in the Saybrook catalogue following the institutional Mission, Core Principles and Values. As a result of reaffirming Saybrook's ILOs, faculty members have been actively engaged in reviewing the selection and sequencing of content that builds a body of knowledge that reflects 38 professional industry-stated proficiencies. Every program completed the ILO to PLOs evaluation and mapping (Appendix C.5 Saybrook Sample ILO- PLO Alignment Reports).

Methods, Models and Use of Results

As discussed above the institution adopted a consistent model and method for approaching assessment with the use of a Program Success Plan Template (Appendix C.6 Saybrook Program Success Plan Template). This template incorporated standardizations to identify and address tasks related to the assessment process and documenting the planning and use of direct measures of assessment.

Continuing into fall 2019, program chairs and directors began entering data directly into AMS with a focus on differentiating outcomes between the Masters and Doctoral level programs, identification of signature assignments and direct assessment measures, educational outcomes couched in behavioral terms, and the movement from grading to the use of rubrics within all Canvas courses. Additionally, a concerted effort was made to affirm a consistent model was employed by all programs. As programs began and continued an annual assessment process with, as of this writing, varying levels of completion, templates were provided with the goal of establishing consistency and a one-model approach to documenting and communicating findings and actions related to the assessment of student learning.

Ownership of information and process has occurred within departments. Assessment is developing and growing – a change from prior years. Highlighted is an example of student

learning assessment and revisions implemented as a result of the process described above. Here the MS in MBM program documents and updates the ILO-PLO alignment, assessment cycle plans, findings and actions Saybrook's assessment management system ([Appendix C.7 Saybrook MS MBM Assessment Cycle 2018-20 Reports](#)). In 2018-2019 in the MS MBM program, 12 students' capstone essays were evaluated to determine whether they met the learning outcomes of the master's degree program. The majority of students completed the curriculum before the significant revisions were implemented between 2018 through 2020. The outcomes suggested several limitations and growth opportunities, including: inconsistencies with the faculty members' interpretations of the PLOs during the assessment; three to seven students struggled to meet the expectations set for PLOs 3, 4, 5, and 6; and the assignment instructions did not clearly align with all of the PLOs.

Several actions were taken based on the review. The faculty member assigned to teach the capstone course identified issues with the instructors and included modifications in Summer and Fall 2019 to include an emphasis on writing to the rubric and ethics questions. The syllabus was also updated to include additional time with the instructor and submission of drafts of the essay throughout the semester.

The 2019-2020 assessment cycle for the MS in MBM program revisited the prior years' PLO assessments. In 2019-2020, seven students' capstone essays were evaluated in the same way as in 2018-2019 assessment cycle stated above; however, more than 80% of the students received a proficient or highly developed rating for each PLO ([Appendix C.8 Saybrook MS Mind-Body Medicine Program Review](#), see pg. 1, 15). The increase in the ratings from the previous year may reflect the syllabus changes and more direct feedback from the instructor on draft submissions. Actions resulting from the assessment cycle data included:

- further refinement of three PLOs to enhance their measurability.

- curricular changes in the MBM5588 Capstone Essay syllabus, to include adding additional live time with the instructor, emphasizing professional ethics more extensively

- soliciting several drafts of their capstone essays through the semester.

The larger incorporation of the direct assessment data into the programmatic review, including PLO assessment rubric and complete data analyses, can be found in [Appendix C.8 Saybrook MS Mind-Body Medicine Program Review](#).

Assessment Management System

Following the March 2018 WSCUC site visit, a Program Review and Student Achievement Task Force was created in June of 2018. Consisting of faculty, administrators, and department chairs, this task force met for three months throughout the summer of 2018 to prioritize a university-wide standardization for ongoing recommendations to institutionalize an assessment culture into the organization. In August 2018, the task force submitted their conclusions, in which they recommended adopting a university-wide model and contracting with Watermark's Taskstream for an Accountability Management System (AMS) ([Appendix D.1 Saybrook Program Review Task Force Recommendations 2018](#)).

The task force met in person during the Residential Conferences (RC), which took place in August 2018, January 2019, August 2019, and January 2020. Included in these onsite RCs were faculty seminars of the AMS portal, presented by key personnel and representatives from Taskstream by Watermark. The purpose and the goal of these meetings were to familiarize faculty and administrators with the AMS, scope of adding content, and timelines for completion. In March of 2019, the university formally adopted AMS to support data collection and consistent reporting. Between March and August of 2019, the AMS administrative and organizational

structure for the online portal was created. The AMS supports a consistent location and templates for all program reviews. With AMS, the university has a system that allows multiple shareholders to access data evidence and move from process to improvement.

PROGRAM REVIEW

Background

In its July 20, 2018 letter, WSCUC identified the following program review variables as focuses for its fall of 2021 site visit:

- Adopt a consistent model for assessment of student learning and program review, institutionalize the collection and dissemination of data, and use the results for program improvement and allocation of resources (CFR 2.7).

- Diversify data collection methods to include more direct assessment measures across the university (CFRs 2.3, 2.4, 2.6).

Program Review Guidelines

In August of 2018, the Program Review Task Force issued several recommendations regarding the committee's goal of prioritizing a university-wide standardization for ongoing program review and assessment. Recommendations included adopting a web-based assessment technology, collaborating with TCS supports to document learning outcome alignments, and organizing faculty training to ensure a consistent use of rubrics and other assessment processes (Appendix D.1 Saybrook Program Review Task Force Recommendations 2018).

Practical Templates and Guidelines

The Program Review Task Force recommended that the program review process should offer a user-friendly practical template and guidelines, while incorporating flexibility for different academic programs (Appendix D.1 Saybrook Program Review Task Force Recommendations 2018, p. 1). Several templates were disseminated to faculty and departments

during the program review process. Later, those templates were revised, based on faculty feedback designed to increase the templates' clarity and usability. Goals included engaging faculty and department chairs in the program review process, providing a consistent and formalized approach across both CIMHS and CSS, and accelerating progress towards completed program reviews.

Program Success Plan Template. After the adoption of AMS, a program success plan template was created, based on the AMS assessment cycle workspace for data entry in AMS and Saybrook's desire to focus on institutional learning outcome alignment (Appendix C.6 Saybrook Program Success Plan Template). The template, which focused on ILO-PLO alignment, identifying an assessment calendar, and specifying direct measures of assessing student learning, provided a practical approach to determining the strengths and weaknesses in the assessment process for each department.

Program Review Outline Template. The WSCUC Program Review Subcommittee recommended use of the program review template to the Academic Affairs Leadership Council (AALC), as the template offers clear guidance and provides structure and consistent formatting to the programmatic review (Appendix D.2 Saybrook Program Review Outline). The program review template was reviewed in an AALC meeting (Appendix D.3 Saybrook WSCUC Visit and Program Review) and was followed by training on how to enter and create the program review in AMS. All 2021 academic program reviews used the same template to help establish consistency across colleges and departments. Additionally, with the use of AMS, there is open access to departments' program reviews, a factor which facilitates transparency and the sharing of ideas.

Program Review Grid Template. The program review grid template served as a vehicle for organizing program baseline data, including indirect assessment measures such as retention and graduation rates, course metrics, faculty-student ratios, and program resources to be used by all

programs in the 2021 program review ([Appendix D.4 Saybrook Program Review Grid- Baseline Data](#)). The VPAA shared those baseline data with all department chairs for use in program review, after introducing the potential program review metrics in an AALC meeting. The Office of Institutional Research provided a template to assist in writing factual statements using the data. Faculty could then interpret the data statements within the context of their programs in the program review report.

Faculty and Departmental Support

Assessment and program review continue to be faculty-led processes, with academic affairs providing requested support. Saybrook has taken several steps to ensure faculty and departments are supported during the program review process through AALC, requested department trainings, and one-on-one faculty assessment led trainings. Guidelines for program review were discussed and reviewed during:

- Faculty-led departmental meetings with trainings by the Associate Director of University Assessment and the TCS Senior Director of Assessment. These trainings included a review of the aforementioned templates and associated timelines ([Appendix D.5 Example Saybrook Faculty Assessment Workshops](#)).

- One-on-one meetings between faculty assessment leads and TCS assessment support. These meetings included a discussion of timelines, the best approach to using the templates, and training topics as requested by faculty ([Appendix D.6 TCS Assessment Support Updates](#)).

- Residential conference sessions with faculty and department chairs. These sessions provided timelines and status updates regarding where the programs and university stood in relation to the FY 21 program review goal ([Appendix D.7 Example Saybrook Assessment Timelines](#)).

- The AALC and other university-wide meetings with the VPAA, WSCUC Program Review subcommittee, and/or the WSCUC Student Achievement committee ([Appendix A.4 WSCUC Subcommittee Minutes](#)). These meetings were focused on establishing and communicating a consistent approach to assessment and program review across the entire organization.

<div align="center">Sample Program Reviews: The College of Social Sciences (CSS)</div>

Department of Humanistic and Clinical Psychology

PhD in Clinical Psychology P**rogram.** The clinical psychology degree program is located in the College of Social Sciences (CSS). The Clinical Psychology degree program is committed to a developmental approach in understanding individuals within their broader social and cultural context, and with a full appreciation of the inseparable nature of spirit, body, and mind.

Clinical psychology students are required to satisfy the comprehensive exam after completing all core degree required courses. Broadly, the exam affords the student the opportunity to demonstrate skills and knowledge related to clinical conceptualization, theory, research, and ethics, as well as competency in practice and cultural sensitivity. The department institutionalized the exam in 2017 and have employed outcome data to inform curricula and program initiatives. For example, now there are strategic courses where multiple choice tests are integrated to support student comfort with the testing process, identified courses where students are required to provide power point presentations to expose them to this skill set, as well as increasing course clinical activities that afford students opportunities to deepen their assessment, conceptualization, and treatment skills.

Based on the CP program evaluation in 2018-19 and 2019-20, the written comprehensive exam (Comps) is designed to assess students' achievement on a broad range of the program learning outcomes (PLOs) and as such, was an easily identifiable valuable 'signature

assignment' to review for the purposes of program evaluation. The assessment data suggested some areas for growth, but the program is generally approaching outcome goals. A program strength includes the students' ability to attend to the whole person and provide a therapeutic relationship grounded in empathy, congruence, and authenticity. The areas of growth noted included developing students' ability to apply central theories and research in the areas of cultural and spiritual aspects of the person, human development, and psychopathology. While students did not ignore the cultural and spiritual aspects of their hypothetical client, the program noted a lack of literature to support their ideas. Subjectively, the program also noted a need for the program to communicate more clearly to students that cultural competence is not something that is achieved and completed, but that it is a way of being that continues to grow and evolve and develop in awareness and sensitivity. Current and future actions include, but are not limited to:

- Incorporating more assignments in a variety of classes that ask students to incorporate, spiritual, cultural, life-span development, and diagnoses in their case conceptualizations and support their ideas with the scholarly literature.

- Reinforce in all of CP courses and RC offerings the idea that cultural competency is never completely achieved and completed, but an evolving awareness and attitude of cultural humility. This can be done by including relevant prompts in discussion posts, paper assignments, and presentations.

- Introducing more assignments that ask for clinical diagnoses, both in Psychopathology and Diagnoses and in Clinical Intervention courses, including developing clinical vignettes.

Other changes and associated resources needed to fully implement the program improvements are discussed in Appendix D.8 Saybrook PhD in Clinical Psychology Program Review.

Department of Psychology

MA in Psychology Program. The MA Psychology program provides students with different approaches to address societal challenges and meet a broad range of future professional opportunities. This interdisciplinary psychology degree program offers mature students a foundation of scholarship based in the tradition of existential and humanistic psychology. The curriculum contains a blend of theoretical and practical learning opportunities and helps students expand their outlook beyond the confines of a discrete discipline. Given the diverse array of course offerings, students are able to create a degree path that tailors their studies to best meet their academic, professional, and personal goals and interests.

Changes made to the MA in Psychology program since the last review were informed by (a) ongoing work and reflection of the members of the HCP Program Review Committee/HCP Program Review and Assessment Committee (PRAC); (b) pedagogical vision and collaborative work of psychology faculty; (c) ongoing consultation with, collaboration, and support by the CSS Dean and the TCS ES instructional designer; (d) students' and administrators' feedback; (e) enrollment reports; (f) University and Psychology Program's growth plans; and (g) budget reports.

The MA Psychology program was reviewed in the 2018-2019 school year. As a result of this review, psychology faculty identified core psychology program growth opportunities, including: to establish and revise the Program Goals and Learning Outcomes; to systematically review Psychology coursework for revision, renewal, and update (in content and delivery within the LMS); and develop the Creativity Studies specialization for the MA.

Conducting the program review allowed the continued enhancement of review process highlights and chief outcomes. Psychology faculty are committed to following a process for

systematic review, which leverages university-wide and college-specific collaboration. Current and future actions include, but are not limited to:

- Reviewing the Program Goals and Learning Outcomes for clarity resulting in a more streamlined program learning outcomes (Appendix D.9 Saybrook Program MA in Psychology Catalog 2018-19 PLOs; Appendix D.10 Saybrook MA in Psychology Program Review)

- The core psychology faculty ran a systematic four-course pilot course revision project that focused on course content and delivery (Canvas template) revisions, under the guidance of the CSS Dean and the assistance of the TCS instructional designer,. The four courses in revision were offered fall 2018. The remaining psychology courses were revised in stages, according to the pilot project outcomes.

- The creation of a Creativity Studies specialization was formalized. This unique approach to creativity goes beyond the arts to encompass "everyday creativity," the originality of everyday life, which encourages personal and professional satisfaction, as well as health benefits. This specialization is designed for students who want to learn how to accomplish in-depth research in an aspect of creativity and make a meaningful contribution to the field. The program is designed to be applicable to a broad range of professional pursuits but emphasizes the discovery of creative solutions to complex problems.

- As a result of the self-study process, the MA Psychology program adopted a three-year formal review cycle and an ongoing review and renewal process.

Other program growth opportunities and changes to the program are discussed in Appendix D.10 Saybrook MA in Psychology Program Review.

Sample Program Reviews: The College of Integrative Medicine and Health Sciences

Department of Mind-Body Medicine

The Department of Mind-Body Medicine (MBM) offers an MS in MBM, a PhD in MBM, and a Certificate in MBM. The department and its two degrees were launched in September 2009 and is currently the largest department in CIMHS with over 240 students enrolled in its degree programs. The mission of the Department of MBM is to train professionals to apply evidence-based mind-body approaches and integrative techniques to the fields of health and wellness in the work they do as educators, practitioners, and researchers.

The Department of MBM has systematically developed its self-study process since 2013. That review process has been utilized over time in the refinement of program learning outcomes, and the development of objectives for curricular reform for the Department. For example, the 2018-2020 self-study in MBM led to revision of the Program Learning Objectives into their current form, with the objective of simplifying them and making them more measurable for future program reviews. In addition, past self-study has led the Department of MBM to prioritize adding more perspectives in its courses on multicultural differences, health equity and health access, and diverse health needs of various communities, overall emphasizing access to healthcare and healthy lifestyle for all members of the community. Several students and faculty members will participate in this year's annual meeting of the Integrative Medicine for the Underserved organization (www.im4us.org), in pursuit of this objective.

The current MBM curriculum reflects ongoing revisions for the entire department since 2017. The last update impacted courses offered in Spring 2021, specifically the new learning outcomes and assignment updates following the 2019-2020 assessment period. See earlier example of the assessment of student learning for the MS in MBM program in the Student

Achievement section of the report. A summary of curriculum changes made to the MBM department include, but are not limited to:

- Finalizing clear and focused learning outcomes to improve the clarity and measurability of them.

- Offering a set of core courses (15 credits), research (21 credits), mind-body science (6 credits), practice (9 credits), electives (9 credits), and specialization or no specialization (15 credits). Each course is 3 credits. The generalist specialization allows students an additional 15 credits of electives to add one or two certificates of choice. Some courses come from other academic departments to support students' interests in related disciplines (applied psychophysiology, research, and consciousness/spirituality and integrative health specialization in psychology).

- Modifying course assignments:
  - Adding assignment rubrics
  - Developing writing assignments that emphasize critical thinking and scholarly writing
  - Emphasizing course expectations and policies via announcements, videoconferences, and academic writing expectations
  - Increasing the number of structured videoconferences to increase faculty-student engagement

- Incorporating a focus on diversity awareness and multicultural perspectives

- Changing the 7/8-week accelerated curriculum to 15-week courses in the fall and spring semesters. The accelerated schedule was not conducive to supporting the amount of reading and academic writing expected of the students. Students often requested an

incomplete grade or suffered lowered scores on the final academic paper because of the time constraints associated with the 7 or 8-week course. The semester-long format allows students time to receive writing support, revise, drafts, and improve their research/writing skills.

Other program growth opportunities and changes are described in detail in [Appendix C.8 MS Mind-Body Medicine Program Review](#) and [Appendix D.11 Saybrook PhD in Mind-Body Medicine Program Review](#).

Department of Research and the IRB

Saybrook has embraced the feedback provided by WSCUC to create and implement a university-wide research curriculum. Through a course of meetings between the Department of Research and the programmatic departments, including revisions of the guiding documents, the research curriculum was launched in FY 20 and is inclusive of all academic departments. The key stakeholders remain engaged in assessment discussions on how to implement improvements based on emerging needs and new programs ([Appendix D.12 Saybrook Department of Research Program Review](#)).

The Department of Research and the Institutional Review Board (IRB) organizationally sit outside of both CIMHS and CSS; both report directly up through the VPAA. The Saybrook Department of Research was established in 2015 with the goals of improving student learning about research and success at the dissertation stage by eliminating duplication of courses and resources through the adoption of interdisciplinary research courses. In June 2018, the Department of Research and the IRB were established, and the current director was hired. Over the last three years, the new Department of Research and IRB have accomplished the following significant improvements:

- Designed and implemented an interdisciplinary, university-wide research program curriculum.

- Streamlined the IRB process with the adoption of Mentor IRB, an online IRB submission, and a review system.

Saybrook's new research curriculum aims to improve student learning with rigorous research requirements that support student success through degree completion, while simultaneously reducing redundancy in research course offerings and saving instructional costs. The new research courses incorporate an improved pedagogical approach that emphasizes research skill-building and knowledge development, using active and applied learning in an interdisciplinary setting.

In coordination and collaboration with CSS and CIMHS program chairs and the Research Curriculum Advisory Council (RCAC), the Department of Research has designed and implemented an improved two-course master's research sequence and a seven-course doctoral research sequence, which includes the dissertation. After examining the role of research in each Saybrook academic program, the new master's research curriculum program learning outcomes (PLOs) equip students to be skilled consumers of research, whereas the doctoral degree research curriculum PLOs prepare students to successfully design and conduct original research, such as the dissertation.

The new interdisciplinary research courses were first offered in the spring of 2019, and new student program plans incorporated the new sequence starting in the fall of 2019 (CIMHS programs) and spring of 2020 (CSS programs). As part of the new curriculum development, the Department of Research implemented several formative and summative assessment strategies, designed to gather data from students and faculty. These important assessment data have been

used to inform and refine the new courses during the development process, which is part of a continuous improvement cycle. Resulting actions include, but are not limited to:

- Reducing the number of courses offered by the Department of Research increased efficiencies while still achieving the intended learner outcomes.

- Utilization of a "template" course model, where prototypes of each course have been developed in collaboration with expert research faculty and in coordination with the curriculum grid that maps course learning outcomes (CLOs) to research program learning outcomes (PLOs).

- New research faculty are mentored as part of a team of faculty teaching the same course. This course development and teaching model ensures that syllabi and course design are driven by program learning outcomes and faculty can effectively support students across discipline areas.

Other growth opportunities and changes are described in detail in [Appendix D.12 Saybrook Department of Research Program Review](#).

Advancement: Continuous Improvement

Since the 2018 WSCUC review, Saybrook has adopted a clear commitment to student achievement and assessment. This culture of assessment has become institutionalized, with the ongoing involvement of chairs and faculty as subject matter experts. Faculty have principal responsibility for curriculum design, degree requirements, and alignment of ILOs with PLOs and CLOs. To aid in this alignment, and upon the recommendation of a task force in August 2018, the institution acquired an online portal for a consistent process and structure.

In March of 2019, the Accountability Management System (AMS), Taskstream by Watermark, was launched. After establishment of the organizational structure, portal training for chairs began and continued through the fall of 2019. Additional efforts continued into 2020 and

2021. AMS supports data collection and reporting. As a result, more direct measures are in place. Program chairs, directors, faculty, and staff have provided perspective on the approach to the process.

Each program chair and director has held ongoing meetings with faculty to develop a template for the PLOs, related to direct assessment of student learning. Rubrics have been created, and each program is involved in the process. Development of the review process has become a part of the culture. Programs are at various stages of implementation, and the goal is to have all programs in a revolving cycle of assessment, review of data, and implementation of programmatic revisions. Since the 2018 WSCUC site visit, documentation of the process has occurred in a more detailed manner, which yields evidence related to meeting the intended goals.

ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES

In the area of organizational issues, WSCUC made the following recommendations:

- Address faculty morale through the adoption of a faculty workload and evaluation plan, and clarify decision-making roles in a shared governance model (CFRs 2.8, 2.9, 3.7).

- Continue to make progress in reducing organizational silos by standardizing academic policies, best practices, and procedures (CFRs 3.7).

Faculty Morale

In the previous WSCUC review, concerns were raised regarding faculty morale at Saybrook University. For example, the WSCUC special visit final report included a recommendation for the university leadership and faculty to engage in "…conversations about the proper level of faculty research activities to support quality instruction and professional development subject to institutional budget constraints" (p.14).

In response to this recommendation, various conversations and initiatives were begun,

and those continue. In 2020 and 2021, the Annual Faculty and Staff Engagement Survey was administered. The survey consists of questions related to aspects of the organization culture, including employee satisfaction, engagement, and meaningful workplace. The data collected from administration of the survey brought attention to variables and data points that shed light on faculty morale, as well as on shared governance process.

In addition to the introduction of the Annual Faculty and Staff Engagement Survey, the Task Force on Shared Governance (TFSG) was formed. This group met with the faculty senate, department chairs, and departmental faculty. At the end of their work, the TFSG brought forward several recommendations for implementation. These recommendations and their implementation, including further work being visioned, are discussed in subsequent sections of this report.

Advancing Faculty Awareness and Engagement

The Annual Faculty and Staff Engagement Survey from 2020 and 2021 ([Appendix E.1 Annual Saybrook Faculty Staff Engagement Survey Results 2020-2021](#)) played a pivotal role in learning about and understanding faculty morale. The purpose of the survey is to measure current faculty and staff engagement with Saybrook to determine what steps (if any) may be taken to improve and/or maintain engagement. With two years' data, Saybrook can now identify indicators of engagement, as the university supports faculty morale and shared governance initiatives.

While varying levels of satisfaction exist in 2021, 71.7% of respondents reported that they are satisfied or very satisfied with their work, compared to 65.1% in 2020, with the highest level of satisfaction being among staff members and the lowest among salaried faculty. Ten to 13 percent of those responding to the survey in both years stated that they strongly disagree with the statement "I am satisfied with Saybrook's support of my personal wellness and with

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work/life balance." While some faculty feel a gap in support, 96% feel that "they are contributing positively to the university," and over 96% feel satisfied that "their colleagues are contributing positively." In addition, at least 85% of salaried faculty feel that they have "close relationships at work," based on 2020 and 2021 survey results. Approximately 94% of salaried faculty in 2021, compared to 88.9% of salaried faculty in 2020, agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "I am passionate and devoted to individual and collaborative endeavors to offer innovative education at Saybrook." Finally, adjunct and full-time faculty responses to "My suggestions are given serious consideration." improved to 68.8% in 2021 from 58.2% in 2020.

Since the spring of 2018, several advancements designed to promote faculty and chair awareness and engagement have been implemented. These include: the Faculty Research Task Force, annual faculty evaluations, multi-year faculty contracts, the faculty rank project, enhanced budgeting oversight, and improvements to the student advising process.

Faculty Research Task Force

The university's strategic plan included a goal focused on the development and promotion of faculty research within the university. Task force efforts included the development of initiatives designed to increase the level of interest, participation, and collaborative efforts across departments, as well as with students and external partners. Phase one of the faculty research task force project began in January of 2021 and was completed in April of 2021, with the development of research goals across the following areas:

- Resources needed to assist faculty and students in research endeavors.

- Networking opportunities to facilitate new individual and collaborative research.

- Development strategies focused on fostering skills in faculty and students.

Phase two of the project will begin in FY 22, with the creation of subcommittees focused on executing the identified initiatives from each of the three aforementioned areas (Appendix E.2

Saybrook Faculty Research Task Force Initiatives and Timeframes). Funding for these initiatives

has been earmarked for FY 22.

Annual Faculty Evaluations

In the spring of 2019, an initial annual evaluation process was launched for faculty to

evaluate performance for FY 20 in teaching, scholarship, and service. This evaluation process

was required for completion by salaried faculty and designated as optional for adjunct faculty

members. A formal committee was charged with revising the annual evaluation form and

process in the fall of 2019. The committee was comprised of members engaged in the faculty

workload and faculty evaluation projects, including the VPAA, department chairs, faculty, and

program coordinators. Adjustments were made that included adding/revising qualitative and

quantitative areas of measurement; including an administrative area of measurement; revising

supervisory input; enhancing the feedback process; and adjusting the timeline for completion of

the process by the faculty member, supervisor, dean, and VPAA.

The revised faculty evaluation process is intended to provide faculty an understanding of

their performance in the critical areas of their position and an opportunity to establish goals for

the next fiscal year. In addition, the evaluation process will serve as a foundation for capturing

the experiences deemed essential for building the applicant file for those seeking to engage in the

voluntary faculty rank process.

Multi-Year Faculty Contracts

Recognition of the significant and sustained contributions of salaried faculty members is

important to the institution. Following the completion of revisions to the annual faculty review

process for FY 20, the process of awarding multi-year contracts was initiated. Based on faculty

members' performance and feedback provided by the supervisor and dean, salaried faculty

members are evaluated and awarded a variable year contract for a one, two, or three year period

for teaching, scholarship, service, and/or administrative responsibilities.

A one-year contract is reserved for faculty members who are either in their first year of employment with Saybrook University or are under disciplinary review or a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP); seven faculty are in this category. Two-year contracts typically are awarded to faculty who meet university standards; twelve faculty members received this contract. Three- year contracts are offered to faculty who have been determined to exceed university standards; eighteen individuals received this contract.

Faculty Rank Project

In FY 21, a committee was formed to consider the possibility of creating a faculty rank process. An initial survey was conducted at the outset to understand the thoughts and opinions of the faculty in this area. Following the receipt and consideration of feedback from faculty, it was determined that interest existed in support of the initiative. The importance of adhering to a humanistic approach to ranking, including one that was voluntary, were fundamental and critical to guiding the process of developing the structure.

Basic tenets of the system include the assistant, associate and Full professor levels, which are applicable to both salaried and adjunct faculty members across the major areas of teaching, scholarship, service (departmental, university, community, professional), and administrative responsibilities. Application procedures for faculty, application review and determination, along with a timeline for the process, have been established, including an appeals procedure. Faculty members who are successful in achieving rank are provided monetary compensation in honor of their achievement. Upon approval by the Board of Trustees, implementation of the ranking policy will launch at some point in the next calendar year (2022).

Standardizing Academic Policies, Best Practices, and Procedures

Enhanced Budgeting Oversight

In the spring and summer of 2019, department chairs began to receive additional information regarding departmental budgets for monthly expenses via emailed reports and individual meetings to review the information in detail. Meetings with chairs were focused on providing information on the status of expenditures, as well as on expansion of budget acumen to include an understanding of student enrollments and revenue projections by department. The process has advanced and now includes course scheduling, expenses, and student enrollment for the full academic year. The university VPAA, CFO, and registrar have worked closely with the college deans and chairs to provide information on the connections among these areas to improve the overall planning process.

Student Advisement Process

Student course advisement and registration occurred between the university registrar and student services division as standard practice. Due to feedback received regarding faculty members' desire to have closer connections with students, budgeting, and course scheduling processes, new and continuing student advising and registration transitioned to the academic departments in the fall of 2020. The intent was to provide an opportunity for the academic departments and faculty to enhance their awareness of student program matriculation, course preferences, and information regarding the curriculum. To date, the process has been evaluated as successful and continues to provide notable advantages, including enhanced course scheduling, improved connection between faculty and students regarding career goals, and curricular and programmatic policy improvements.

Decision-Making Roles in a Shared Governance Model

Another key area of work has been the ongoing integration of recommendations

made by the Task Force on Shared Governance (TFSG). For Saybrook University, shared governance means a commitment to making decisions that are best for the institution. This means that administration, faculty, and staff who are positioned to make informed decisions actively participate in the decision-making process. Students and alumni are stakeholders with valuable perspectives. As such, they will be granted ex-officio status in decision-making.

The TFSG was formed in the summer of 2018 as a response to recommendations from the WSCUC accreditation team to clarify decision-making roles in Saybrook's shared governance model. TFSG members include representatives from administration, academic affairs, the faculty, and the faculty senate. This task force went through a rigorous process of mapping the current governance structure at Saybrook. That process consisted of reviewing lessons learned, building a governance map, creating a mid-process survey for all stakeholders, and creating a final report and recommendations (Appendix E.3 Saybrook Task Force on Shared Governance Final Report).

The TFSG recommended the formation of a working governance body, composed of representatives of all stakeholders, to carry out shared governance. An essential recommendation from the TFSG was the construction of a governance map and matrix, based on the university's mapping of current governance processes, both in the Faculty Handbook and with administration, as well as surveys from all stakeholders. This matrix summarizes recommendations regarding clear roles for each group of stakeholders in the decision-making process (Appendix E.4 Saybrook Proposed Shared Governance Matrix).

TFSG recommendations led to the expansion of participants on the Academic Affairs Leadership Council (AALC) to include broader representation throughout the university, as this group was identified as a critical point of communication and decision-making among university

stakeholders. Prior to implementing this specific recommendation from the TFSG, the AALC membership included program chairs, directors of departments, faculty senate co-chairs, and the CIMHS dean. Now, AALC participants include those same members, as well as all members of the Saybrook faculty senate; staff from student affairs, admissions, and human resources; and the president of the university. The expansion of the AALC membership addresses concerns related to the shared desire for bi-directional communication. Shared governance roles and responsibilities continue to be developed through the agency of the faculty senate, with consultation and feedback from all stakeholders. Every AALC participant may submit agenda items for review, discussion, consultation, and/or feedback.

Advancement: Next Steps

A primary intention of the recommendations from the TFSG is that these stakeholders will work together to create a robust and transparent working model of shared governance to be codified into the Faculty Handbook, this revision will culminate in the approval of an agreed-upon model by the Board of Trustees. At the start of the academic year, Faculty Senate Co-Chairs will meet to review work priorities for the Faculty Senate as a whole. This work often includes revision of the Faculty Handbook and will include agreed upon recommendations from the TFSG.

DIVERSITY

In the area of diversity issues, WSCUC made the following recommendations:

- Continue efforts to diversify the faculty (CFR 1.4).

- Continue efforts to recruit and admit a diverse student body (CFR 1.4).

- Develop a Diversity Master Plan (CFR 1.4).

Social justice has consistently served as the primary focus of the university's mission and core values. Prior to the last WSCUC site visit, the university had begun to study a variety of

issues, including inclusive hiring practices, increased student diversity, development of university-wide practices related to multicultural curricula, and alignment of systems with the university's focus on social justice. The concept of the diversity task force emerged from this initial study, with implementation evolving to include a robust framework that took shape in the 2020-2021 academic year, with the intended goal of expanding through 2025 and beyond.

Description of Steps Taken to Institute Inclusive Hiring Practices

Recognizing the need for increasing diversity across the university, Saybrook implemented several initiatives and continues exploration of practices that include recruitment of staff and faculty through targeted advertising in various trade publications (e.g., *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Higher Ed Jobs*), identifying diversity as key consideration. These initiatives include:

- Active recruitment during executive and staff searches, highlighting diversity as one of the key criteria in developing the candidate pool.

- Reviewing options for human resources recruitment, including masked resumes during the initial screening process.

- Ongoing work in developing a culture that embraces diversity, as well as equity and inclusion, thereby demonstrating to candidates and the community Saybrook's commitment to its values.

Demographic Characteristics of the Student Body in
2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21

Age

The mean age of Saybrook's student population continues to decrease, from a high of 44.4 years to 42.5 years, as of 2020 ([Appendix F.1 Saybrook Fall Student Demographics F16-F20](#)). This decrease is in line with the commensurate increases seen in slightly younger

individuals enrolling in greater numbers, likely driven by the university's addition of programs in nutrition and counseling, which tend to attract slightly younger students.

Gender

Historically, the university's student population has consisted of more females than males, with females comprising 73.8% of the student population in 2016, and 80.8% of the student population in 2020 ([Appendix F.1 Saybrook Fall Student Demographics F16-F20](#)). This trend continues and is in alignment with national trends, which show greater numbers of women enrolling and graduating from undergraduate institutions. In addition, second- and third-career movers are more likely to be women.

Race/Ethnicity

The university also has witnessed increasing racial and ethnic diversity, including a 4% increase in LatinX students, a 7.7% increase in African American students, and a 1.1% increase in Asian Pacific Islander students over the past several years ([Appendix F.1 Saybrook Fall Student Demographics F16-F20](#)). These increases are likely due to a variety of factors, which include expanded marketing and outreach efforts across multiple social media platforms that demonstrate greater representation of underrepresented and marginalized communities; programmatic development in disciplines of interest, such as clinical psychology, counseling, and transformative social change; and positive word of mouth from current students to the communities of which they are a part.

The Diversity Task Force Update: JEDI Council

Recently, the Diversity Task Force has gone through several iterations. Following the deaths of George Floyd, Ahmed Arbery, and Breonna Taylor, the president of the university called on the community to take decisive action that would result in positive transformational change. In doing so, the task force concept evolved over the course of several months into a

multifaceted, multi-stakeholder group now titled the JEDI Council, with JEDI standing for Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. Central to the creation of this council is its emphasis on long-term, sustainable work, and its focus on racial and social justice, both internal to the university and within the communities Saybrook University serves. The Council is comprised of the president of the university, faculty, students, and staff representing multiple departments. These individuals were nominated and subsequently appointed by the president.

The JEDI Council Vision and Purpose

Additionally, the JEDI Council formulated vision and purpose statements to support actualization of its mission. These statements are described in the following sections.

JEDI Council Vision. It is 2025, and Saybrook University embodies social justice-oriented curricula, policies, and procedures that reflect the institution's community and the populations their programs serve. The Saybrook organizational culture affirms that all life is immeasurable and deserves an equitable environment for realizing every being's potential to thrive in a just, inclusive, and sustainable world. The JEDI Council strives for a culture at Saybrook University that celebrates and engages multiple voices from historically marginalized communities to attract a diverse population of students, faculty, and staff that aligns with the national demographics of the United States.

JEDI Council Purpose. The purpose of the Saybrook University JEDI Council is to collaborate with an external consultant to advance social justice initiatives across the university; develop and incorporate ongoing assessment processes to determine strengths and challenges in supporting students, faculty, and staff; and identify and dismantle White supremacist structures that perpetuate barriers for historically marginalized individuals.

As evidenced by JEDI Council minutes, as of this writing the constituents of the Council includes the annual Diversity Luncheon, the Anti-Racist Collaboration, a student-led group and

establishing relationship with an external consultant-facilitator. The JEDI Council is currently engaged in the process of identifying a long-term relationship with this consultant-facilitator to support the above-outlined initiatives. The Anti-Racism Collaboration Committee (ARC) serves as a key educational arm of the JEDI Council (Appendix F.2 Saybrook J.E.D.I. Council Graphic). The JEDI Council acknowledges that its work rests on the historical efforts of the Diversity Luncheon.

ARC Events

The ARC currently focuses on a monthly speaker series, with the goal of continuing the conversation related to anti-racism and social justice. The committee meets regularly to discuss future speaker events and provide time for committee members to share experiences and educational information.

The ARC held their first speaking event as part of Saybrook University's fall 2020 Residential Conference and continues to hold monthly speaking events for all Saybrook students, faculty, and staff. The ARC events conducted to date are described below.

- *A Conversation on Racial Injustice within the Saybrook Community (September 2020):* A panel that featured Nathan Long, EdD (President), Devin Byrd, PhD (VPAA), Gina Belton, PhD (Faculty Senate Co-Chair/Adjunct Faculty), Tom Hayashi, PhD (Leadership & Management Department Chair), Crystal Ishihara, PhD (Registrar and ARC Lead), and Alta Lenee Braxton, MS (Mind-Body Medicine PhD student and facilitator). This event opened the conversation for the Saybrook Community to discuss areas of opportunity and to gather information on next steps as a school.

- *White Allyship: A Case Report from a Community-Based Seminar on Race (September 2020):* Presented by Luann Fortune, PhD, this event focused on a model for attendees to

begin having difficult conversations regarding race in their predominantly white communities.

- ***Self-Care and Empowerment for Social Justice Activists (September 2020):*** Presented by Lurinda Sumpter (Counseling M.A. Student), this event focused on supporting the attendees by allowing them to discuss and support each other through the difficult conversations that continue to be necessary.

- ***Dismantling White Supremacy in Higher Education (October 2020):*** Presented by Orlando Taylor, PhD, this event focused on providing foundational information regarding systemic racism, while also continuing an internal review of next steps for how Saybrook can improve as a university.

- ***Decolonization is Not a Metaphor: Myths and Misunderstandings of Decolonial Praxis (November 2020):*** Featuring Mary Watkins, PhD, Sunil Bhatia, PhD, and Cutcha Risling Baldy, PhD, all thought leaders in decolonial praxis, as well as two of the speakers being Indigenous scholars. This panel discussion offered historical, contextual information and explored concepts of decolonization, their application in curriculum development and research epistemologies, coupled with breakout sessions so participants could deconstruct the content and make it applicable to themselves.

- ***Intergenerational Trauma: A Noose Across Nations (December 2020):*** Presented by Donald Grant, PhD, this discussion provided participants with an understanding of the implications of trauma across the generations, understanding how the impacts of the trauma of slavery still negatively impact marginalized populations in the current day.

- ***What is Humanistic About Anti-Racism (January 2021):*** As part of another residential conference, this panel featured Drs. Long, Byrd, Belton, Hayashi, and Spaeth, facilitated by Mind-Body Medicine PhD student Cassondra Jackson. This was a continuation of the

conversation from the previous panel event that allowed for deeper review of Saybrook's next steps.

- ***100 Voices with Saybrook University (February 2021):*** Led by Tracie Jae of Quiet Rebel, this session focused on a unique way to share stories that allows for everyone to listen. This event was heavily based on listening to how others have experienced their lives without the ability to respond, which allowed for a very rich sharing opportunity.

As part of the ARC initiatives, the committee requested participant feedback from each event. Results reveal an average rating of 3.67 out of 4, indicating that participants found the events highly valuable (29 participants have responded in total to feedback requests). Additionally, all participants who provided feedback indicated that they would be likely to participate in a future event. Participant responses to the question "Which element(s) of our event did you value?" follow here.

- The opportunity to reflect and share community with students, faculty, and administration, as a collaborative enterprise. Excellent speaker.
- The presenters were top notch, expert yet expressing knowledge in an inclusive way and making it relevant to all peoples. The breakout groups after each presentation were important to integrating the material.
- I most valued hearing how the Browns have created opportunities to support the Black community in ways that seem unrelated to police brutality.

Advancement: Next Steps

Through the key groups and initiatives identified, the university is positioning itself to address justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion in a more holistic, strategic fashion than ever before. These efforts are essential to the implementation of the university's mission. In addition, they emerge from and reflect the university's core values, which students, faculty, and staff

believe are critical to actualizing the change they wish to see in themselves and the world at large. With these points in mind, the institution is taking the following next steps.

- Furthering efforts toward inclusive hiring practices that support a diverse, inclusive, and equitable work environment.

- Continuing the work of the JEDI Council (including connected committees and initiatives) indefinitely, ensuring the work is both funded and supported by senior leadership, faculty, staff, and students.

- Budgeting and supporting a consultant-facilitator who will assist university stakeholders in exploring, identifying, and actualizing efforts toward a more just, more inclusive, more equitable university.

- Expanding initiatives in the community that reflect the work the institution is doing and that are attuned to its core values.

CONCLUSION

Saybrook University has made significant strides in maintaining its strategic focus to address the identified areas of improvement outlined in the last reaffirmation visit. Efforts made across departments demonstrate the institution is improving. As the university prepares for the next reaffirmation visit, the offsite review (scheduled for fall 2025), and the accreditation visit in spring 2026, the Saybrook 2025 strategic plan guides the lion's share of the work.

With a revised mission serving as the foundation and the heart of the university's work, the strategic plan helps actualize the vision of long-term growth and vitality. Three key metrics buttress this plan and vision: 1,000 students, $20 million in revenues, and $1,000,000 in philanthropy by 2025. While numbers do not in and of themselves represent the total health of an organization, these numbers do in fact tell the big picture story: an institution that is maximizing its reach, increasing its financial sustainability thus ensuring its long-term dedication to

accomplishing its mission, and leveraging its role in the community. Aligned with the Saybrook

mission and vision is the capability to promote humanistic research and practice that improves

the health and well-being of individuals, organizations, and communities. In so doing, Saybrook

University continues to affirm its place in the academy, as a progressive institution of higher

learning, embracing its humanistic heritage as a catalyst for academic innovation and

opportunity.