

**Report to the  
Faculty, Administration, Trustees, Students of**

**BARNARD COLLEGE  
New York City, New York  
by**

**An Evaluation Team representing the  
Middle States Commission on Higher Education**

**Prepared after study of the Institution's self-study report  
And a visit to the campus on February 20-23, 2011**

**The Members of the Team**

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**AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT**

**President:**

**Debora L. Spar**

**Chief Academic Officer:**

**Elizabeth S. Boylan  
Provost and Dean of the Faculty**

**Chair of the Board of Trustees:**

**Jolyne Caruso-Fitzgerald**

## **I. Context and Nature of the Visit**

Barnard College is a private, Baccalaureate-Liberal Arts college founded in 1889, when the trustees of Columbia University agreed to a proposal to establish a separate college for women. Named after the tenth president of Columbia who led this initiative, Frederick A. P. Barnard, Barnard remains a women's college today and enrolls approximately 2,370 students. Situated in New York City, New York, it has no branch campuses, additional locations or other instructional sites. It is affiliated with Columbia University under the terms of a formal Intercorporate Agreement that governs relations between the two institutions.

The self-study process and report followed the model of the comprehensive report and was organized by chapters covering between one and four standards each. The process was led by co-chairs, one a member of the faculty and one an Associate Provost, together with a steering committee comprised of two students, two members of the Board of Trustees, and the chairs of five ten-person working groups. The co-chairs shared a draft self-study with the entire Barnard community and hosted discussions of this document with faculty, staff, students, trustees, and all the major college committees. Based on these discussions, the co-chairs edited the document and composed a final chapter of conclusions.

## **II. Affirmation of Continued Compliance with Eligibility Requirements**

Based on a review of the self-study, interviews, the certification statement supplied by Barnard College and other institutional documents, the visiting team certifies that the institution continues to meet the eligibility requirements in *Characteristics of Excellence*.

## **III. Compliance with Federal Requirements**

Based on certification by the institution, the team affirms that the institution's Title IV cohort default rate is within federal limits.

## **IV. Evaluation Overview**

We are grateful to the faculty, students, administrators, staff members, alumnae and trustees of Barnard College for providing the visiting team with a hospitable welcome, abundant information, and stimulating conversations. Our team conducted a comprehensive evaluation based on prior study of extensive written materials as well as on-campus interviews, meetings, and further review of documents from Sunday, February 20 through Wednesday, February 23. (A list of the team's schedule for meetings is appended.) We were met by individuals and groups with attentiveness, openness, helpfulness, and enthusiasm. The self-study is well written, thoughtful and comprehensive. It highlights the College's accomplishments and presents the College's challenges in a clear and distinct manner.

The College embraces its identity as a complex institution defined by paradoxes: As noted in self-study, Barnard is "a liberal arts college *and* part of a major research university; a student body that is all-women *and* (in many respects) co-ed; a campus that is a quiet oasis *and* in the middle of New York City." The richness of this identity as well as the complications of negotiating some of its tensions was apparent in every aspect of our visit.

Barnard College has a proud history and a bright future. The faculty is devoted to excellence at the highest level in both teaching and scholarly activity. The students are engaged and committed, loyal to the institution and appreciative of their relationships with faculty and staff members. The Board of Trustees is passionate about the mission of Barnard and committed to supporting the College. Sound and spirited leadership is found throughout the institution. Following a presidential transition in 2008, there have been many appropriate changes in people and administrative structures at Barnard in recent months. Several key administrators are either new to the College or in new positions, and one major search (for the VP for Development) is currently underway. During this transitional period in the College's history, there is a clear opportunity to capitalize on its accomplishments and use these as a catalyst for the future.

## **V. Compliance with Accreditation Standards**

In this section of our report, we follow the organization of the self-study and present findings, significant accomplishments, suggestions and recommendations by chapter. Overall, we indicate how Barnard demonstrates compliance with all of the 14 Middle States Standards of Excellence.

### **Chapter 2: Mission and Goals**

This section covers the following standard:

#### Standard 1: Mission and Goals

The institution meets this standard.

Based on a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

Barnard College has a clear statement of its mission that is appropriate and that is clearly and consistently communicated. This Mission Statement, crafted during the 2000 self-study, continues to reflect the vision and values of the institution. The Mission Statement is elaborated through a self-definition encompassing four quadrants – (1) a liberal arts college (2) for women (3) in New York City (4) in partnership with a world-class research university -- that inform both policy and practice across the institution. (A longer version of the mission, goals and objectives of the College, also developed in the previous Middle States Self-Study, was included in the 2010 Self-Study Report as well.)

#### *Significant accomplishments:*

Since the last self-study, both administrative units and academic departments have developed well-articulated mission statements built on the College's Mission Statement.

The recently created Athena Center for Leadership Studies has the potential to be a significant asset to Barnard women that underscores the College's stated commitment to educating students "prepared to lead and serve their society" (Barnard College Mission Statement, 2000).

Barnard's stated commitment to diversity as a central part of the College's mission (as reflected in both the 2000 Mission Statement and the longer Diversity Statement) and allocation of resources to its efforts to pursue diversity in its broadest terms deserve special recognition.

*Suggestions:*

As indicated in the self-study, Barnard should re-examine its current Mission Statement and amend it as appropriate, as a prelude to the next strategic plan.

As indicated at several points during the self-study and embedded in other suggestions, the College should charge a group of trustees, faculty, staff and students to create a detailed, systematic plan for defining the objectives of, promoting, and sustaining diversity at Barnard.

### **Chapter 3: Institutional Resources; Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal; Institutional Assessment**

This chapter covers the following standards:

Standard 2: Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal

Standard 3: Institutional Resources

Standard 7: Institutional Assessment

The institution meets these standards.

Based on a review of the self-study, documents, and interviews, the team has developed the following conclusions regarding Standards 2 and 3:

There is sufficient evidence to indicate adequate budget planning and allocation. Although the budget is ultimately the responsibility of the President and approved by the Trustees, many constituencies of the College appear to be well represented in the process. The Intercorporate Agreement is a formula-driven legal agreement between Barnard and Columbia. The details of this Agreement have been discussed during the visit and the College's administration is satisfied with the arrangement especially since the Athletics portion has been simplified.

The planning function is well aligned. Members of the faculty (Faculty Budget & Planning Committee), senior staff, and board committees are staffed along strategic and functional lines and appear consistent in their commitment to the goals of the current (circa 2002) strategic plan. The College has conducted needs assessments and facilities master planning efforts, which resulted in new construction and expansion. The College recognizes that its planning efforts must continue despite its current debt obligations and that capital improvements will not result from additional borrowing, at least in the near term. Planning in the area of faculty recruitment and development resides with the Provost, while planning at the staff level resides in the Office of Human Resources (HR). Although there is no formal succession planning for staff, this is not uncommon in the higher education industry. The primary responsibilities of HR pertain to recruiting (including issues of diversity), labor negotiations, performance evaluations, benefits, and training.

Resource allocation as stated in the self-study is guided by three themes: diversity, community wellness, and environmental sustainability as they pertain to the character and identity of the campus community. In recent years the College has made significant investments in its physical plant (Diana Center and Cathedral Gardens as examples) as well as many renovations to existing buildings. As a result, its debt service obligation has increased from \$54 million as of the June 2010 financial statement to \$104 million, thus hampering future capital development from current operational reserves. The College's debt burden measured as the percentage of debt service to expenses (less depreciation) is 5.79% of total expenditures in 2010 compared to 3.68% in 2006. The generally accepted industry upper limit is 7.00%; however, the College's 2010 debt service coverage ratio of 7.12 is at the high end of the scale and provides sufficient reserves to finance its debt service obligations.

The College continues to maintain a need-blind financial aid policy, meeting need regardless of expected family contribution for all regularly admitted U.S. students (p. 33). The tuition discount (unfunded aid) rate has ranged from 28.79% in 2006 to 29.95% in 2010. Although there is no industry standard for the unfunded discount rate, the resulting net tuition as a component of operating income determines whether the college is generating sufficient income to meet its current needs. The operating income (self-generated income) ratio has ranged from 72.02% in 2006 to 80.43% in 2010. This ratio indicates that the College, over the five-year span and presumably longer, has been generating sufficient resources that have contributed to the overall financing of its operations and institutional self-sufficiency.

Net tuition increases during this period (from 8.69% in FY 2006 to 6.05% in FY 2010) and net tuition as a percentage of operating revenues (from 46.45% in FY 2006 to 52.12% in FY 2010) suggest that Barnard's reputation and selectivity can support operations despite its need-blind financial aid policy and that increased annual giving will only add to their operating success, endowment income (and market stability) notwithstanding. To promote annual giving, the program to engage alumnae by telling "Barnard's Story" is compelling and should be pursued with conviction.

From an annual budgeting perspective, Barnard generally lives within its means. The percentage of the operating budget allocated to programs and overhead as a percentage of revenue has been generally positive. In Barnard's case, as with many if not all within higher education, operating losses were incurred during 2008 and 2009 since investment losses were significant. Barnard regained its surplus operations in 2010 and forward planning documents suggest breakeven operations despite higher debt service carrying costs.

The financial statements and associated auditor comments (Management Letters) between the fiscal year ended 2006 to 2010 indicate an institution of vitality, strength, stability, and resiliency. Financial statement audits and the College's IRS Form 990 are publicly available. The financial ratios are positive and illustrate a college that is both financially flexible and well balanced. Arguably the College intends to invest more in its physical and technology resources, "grow" the endowment, increase the annual fund, devote more to its core priorities, remain selective in its admissions, and maintain if not lower its tuition discount rate.

The College has a well-written Emergency Management Plan that encompasses the significant elements of a NIMS (National Incident Management System) certified plan that will eventually be required of all higher education institutions. It also has an excellent business

continuity plan that will enable the college to regenerate if not continuously maintain its administrative systems.

The College also has substantial records retention and destruction policies; however, they do not appear to be aligned with the Archival policy. Although there are policies and procedures for each area, better integration between the two would be beneficial.

The efforts of Barnard Library and Academic Information Services are consistent with the educational mission of the College. This is particularly true given the availability of Columbia University Libraries to Barnard College. President Spar has identified library facility renewal or replacement as the highest priority capital project. We agree that this is clearly a pressing need and an opportunity to re-conceptualize information services.

*Significant accomplishments:*

The College should be commended for prudent stewardship of its resources and the alignment of planning objectives and resource allocation.

*Suggestions:*

The College should create a comprehensive gift acceptance policy.

Where feasible, office assignments should be consolidated along functional lines.

As part of the development plan critical to raising funds for future operations and programs, the College should continue to articulate a credible “Barnard Story” to distinguish its unique strengths apart from its beneficial affiliation with Columbia University.

The College should continue to pursue additional housing options especially for incoming faculty.

The College should integrate records retention and records destruction with archival policies and procedures.

The College should consider conducting an economic impact study to illustrate the College’s contribution to the local economy.

The newly formed Task Force on Library and Learning Space Planning should boldly envision information services in Barnard’s unique situation, moving beyond the usual activities of a Teaching and Learning Center.

*Recommendation:*

The College should create a detailed plan, including priorities and cost estimates, to implement information technology issues identified by the Vice President for Information Technology. A system-wide gap analysis and work plan regarding technology needs and work processes will provide direction to the College’s inevitable and significant investment in its administrative software. The College could consider using an external consultant to facilitate the process. It is important for the College to address the widely perceived inadequacies of the

present technological infrastructure and prioritize the implementation of a database capable of supporting the planned capital campaign.

Regarding Standard 7, Institutional Assessment, the team's findings are as follows:

Barnard's clear and well-communicated mission, as well as its focus on the Four Quadrants that identify its distinctive core values, guide institutional assessment and decision-making. The current strategic plan, most recently evaluated in April 2008, outlined recommendations that arose from the 2000 Self-Study. For example, facility needs assessments informed master planning efforts that were directly related to strategic planning goals. Moreover, assessment data is regularly shared and discussed in bi-weekly meetings of the President's Council, and a report of Strategic Indicators (e.g., admissions data, student body demographics, college finances) is used by the President's Council and the Board of Trustees to guide decision-making.

At the institutional level, data from external surveys (e.g., biannual COFHE Senior Survey, COACHE faculty survey, Merged Information Services Organizations survey), as well as local instruments (e.g., academic advisor survey, alumnae survey) and comprehensive studies (e.g., four-year study of the general education requirements) provide evidence of institutional effectiveness. Results have guided curriculum revision and policies to support greater work-family balance for faculty.

To assess information literacy in first year students, the Library participated in a multi-institutional survey, The First Year Information Literacy in the Liberal Arts Assessment. As part of the Ford Foundation Difficult Dialogues project, the institution conducted a cultural audit of diversity issues on campus. Focus groups with faculty, students, and staff highlighted the need for a meaningful institutional commitment to diversity and provided specific suggestions for the new president. The most visible outcome from this work was the creation of the Dean for Faculty Diversity and Development position and the new Committee on Faculty Diversity and Development.

In response to the College's Policy on Assessment, all academic departments have developed mission statements. The majority of programs have student learning outcomes (publicized in the College Catalog) and have mapped these objectives on their department curriculum. Departments submit annual Assessment Reports that summarize their most recent activities and provide analysis of these findings. Most programs have assessed at least one learning outcome, typically evaluating student work in capstone experiences. Departments have responded to assessment results by revising curriculum (e.g., adding a research seminar component in Biology), adding requirements (e.g., increasing the number of required language courses in AMEC), and encouraging specific pedagogies to improve student learning. A summary of these reports is reviewed by the Committee on Instruction. In addition, academic departments participate in an external review every 10-12 years.

Administrative departments have well-defined mission statements. Many have outlined annual goals and have written plans for evaluating their effectiveness in light of these objectives and the institutional mission. Some, but not all, offices have developed and implemented strategies to respond to assessment findings. The Roadmap for Institutional Assessment provides an overview of activities across divisions. Examples include regular assessments of first year orientation, on-line evaluations of pre-major advising, residence life surveys of the room selection

process and of the RAs, as well as student Town Hall meetings that focus on specific topics. Barnard Health Services and the Counseling Center track visits and administer surveys to evaluate student satisfaction with services. In addition, the new Vice President for Information Technology conducted interviews with constituents across campus to evaluate faculty, staff and student technology needs.

*Significant accomplishments:*

At all levels of the College, organized assessment is conducted in order to evaluate programs and services. Results inform planning and resource allocation across the institution.

*Suggestions:*

A significant amount of assessment is being conducted to evaluate institutional effectiveness; however, there may be too much reliance on surveys of student satisfaction when more qualitative methods, such as focus groups and interviews, could provide a richer narrative of actual student experience.

As noted in the self-study, faculty and staff perceptions of services should also be evaluated and integrated with student views to provide a more comprehensive picture of institutional effectiveness.

*Recommendations:*

Barnard has established the foundation for a culture of institutional assessment and has structures in place to guide the process. However, resources need to be directed to support systematic and sustained assessment practices, better coordination and dissemination of findings, and most importantly, the development of direct measures to evaluate student learning across the institution, not simply in academic departments and select programs.

Moreover, the new strategic plan should be accompanied by an implementation plan that outlines information on key strategic metrics and the manner in which they will be assessed.

As recommended in the self-study, expertise in assessment methods and statistical analysis would be a valuable addition to the Institutional Research Office. The position should be given responsibility for synthesizing and maintaining current assessment efforts by making maximum use of existing data, as well as for supporting programs and departments as they develop and refine assessment plans.

#### **Chapter 4: Leadership & Governance; Administration; and Integrity**

This section covers the following standards:

Standard 4: Leadership and Governance

Standard 5: Administration

Standard 6: Integrity

The College meets these standards.

Based on a review of the self-study, documents, and interviews, the team has developed the following conclusions regarding Standards 4 and 5:

The Board of Trustees is appropriately constituted under the Charter and By-Laws of Barnard College. Board members are highly engaged and committed, and have been careful stewards of the College's fiduciary responsibilities. At the same time, the Board has worked effectively with the administration to make significant advances in such key areas as facilities and faculty workload. A Committee on Governance is responsible for nominations and orientation of new Trustees, and is in an early stage of self-assessment of the Board's effectiveness. A restructured Committee on Audit and Compliance plays a central role in enterprise risk management, in collaboration with the offices of the Chief Operating Officer and General Counsel. Board participation in shared governance is exemplified by "Committees of the College" ("tri-partite committees"), which include representation of faculty, administration and students.

Debora Spar was appointed by the Board as president and chief executive officer in 2008, and has been delegated authority appropriate to her role. The Board reviews the president's performance regularly, and she reviews the performance of her senior staff, who are accomplished individuals with the skills and experience that their positions require.

The administrative structure is in a broad state of transition. There are a number of key individuals new to Barnard, others in changed roles, and important positions, notably the Vice President for Development, are currently vacant. Although these current reporting relationships of the administrative staff are documented clearly in recently-compiled institutional organization charts, the extent of this change has left faculty and staff with important questions about institutional data: What data is available? Who owns it? How does one get it?

Barnard faculty are hard-working and passionate about their institution. In parallel with the Board, they have worked to streamline faculty governance structures. Most substantive work occurs within faculty committees and in monthly meetings of the chairs, while meetings of the whole faculty have served principally as a forum for the administration to communicate information. In an effort to make faculty meetings more interactive, "new business" has been moved from the bottom to the top of the agenda. While this has provided an opportunity for change to occur, suggestions by the faculty for new business items have thus far remained few. The Faculty Advisory Council, which serves as a "committee of committees," is a potential avenue for more interactive conversations between the administration and the faculty, but this group has not met regularly.

The Student Government Association (SGA) serves both as a governance structure and as a budgetary authority in disbursing student activities funds. The SGA student leaders are highly engaged and have high praise for their "amazing" access to the administration. Student governance functions are implemented through an Executive Board, Class Councils, and a committee structure. "Town Halls" provide open fora for discussion of thematic topics such as re-accreditation and diversity, and "Fireside Chats" with the president are more informal gatherings by invitation.

All constituents collectively attribute to Barnard's shared governance structure and to the

small and close-knit structure of the institution the ability to be “nimble”—to act quickly and decisively when opportunities (or threats) present themselves.

*Significant accomplishments:*

The Board leadership in 2009 streamlined the committee structure and changed the protocol for committee meetings to a “consent agenda” that provides time for substantive discussion of thematic issues.

The office of the Chief Operating Officer has earned widespread praise for its transparency in communicating important institutional information to the Barnard community.

*Suggestions:*

The Board, in order to facilitate the diversification of its membership, and to provide greater depth for the forthcoming capital fund drive, should consider expanding the number of active Trustees to the limit of 40 specified in the By-Laws.

The Board should proceed with its efforts to develop a thorough, ongoing process of Board self-assessment.

The Board should proceed aggressively with its goal of further diversifying its membership in terms of race/ethnicity, gender, independence (of connections with Barnard), occupations/skills, and other dimensions consistent with whatever definition of diversity is adopted by the institution.

The faculty should continue efforts to initiate substantive “new business” items for discussion by the faculty at large.

The president could consider more regular meetings of the Faculty Advisory Council as a forum for additional dialogue on issues of interest or concern to the faculty.

The administration could educate the community better about the scope and responsibilities of administrative officers in the new organization chart, and, in particular, consider developing a clear and widely disseminated institutional data plan or “data map” that guides staff in securing data necessary for the effective conduct of their responsibilities. One beneficial component of such a plan would be a policy on access to Personally Identifiable Information (PII), based upon recently-released best-practice guidelines available on the Department of Education website.

Regarding Standard 6, Integrity, the visiting team has determined that Barnard College meets the standard in the following ways:

Barnard ensures that important policies are clearly documented and widely communicated and accessible. Current and prospective students have access to timely and accurate information about courses of study and curricular requirements. The *Student Handbook* is an excellent and extensive compilation of policies relevant to students, and the *Code of Academic Freedom and Tenure* provides detailed information specific to the faculty. Additional policies address conflict of interest, intellectual property rights, Institutional Review Board, and animal care and use, among

many other examples. These policies currently reside in distributed locations, but the Vice President for Communications is in the process of creating a central repository from which links can be established wherever reference is required on the institutional website.

HEOA compliance is coordinated jointly by the Office of the General Counsel and the Office of Institutional Research. With the recent implementation of a new web content management system, the development of an HEOA web portal (and links to all mandated information disclosures) is anticipated within a matter of weeks following the team visit. Distance education provisions of HEOA are not applicable to Barnard, and the issue of transfer of credit is documented in the Self Study.

*Significant accomplishments:*

*The Student Handbook and Code of Academic Freedom and Tenure* are excellent examples of comprehensive and detailed policies tailored to the needs of major institutional constituencies.

*Suggestions:*

The College should complete its efforts to create a central repository for all institutional policies.

The College should develop a new policy on access to and use of Personally Identifiable Information (PII).

Barnard should continue to develop a comprehensive system for tracking rates of retention in faculty cohorts, including the timing and reasons for departure from Barnard at various points prior to the final tenure review.

## **Chapter Five: Faculty**

This Section covers the following standard:

Standard 10: Faculty

Barnard College meets this standard.

Based on a review of the self-study, documents, and interviews, the team has developed the following conclusions regarding Standard 10:

Barnard has an outstanding faculty of dedicated, passionate and hardworking teacher-scholars. Consistent with Barnard's dual identity as a small liberal arts college and an affiliate of a major research university, Barnard faculty combine the commitment to teaching typically associated with the former with the research demands of the latter. Barnard's affiliation with Columbia University both deeply enriches and adds to the complexity of the Barnard faculty experience.

Barnard faculty stand for tenure in a two-stage process. While the first stage is at Barnard, the second is at Columbia University and is adjudicated by an *ad hoc* university

committee in which Barnard faculty constitute two of the five members. Thus the successful candidate receives tenure both at Barnard and at Columbia University. The process at the University will be changed in the coming year as a university standing committee, which will include faculty from Barnard, replaces the *ad hoc* committee structure. The standards and procedures of the tenure process are published in the *Chair's Manual* and in the *Code of Academic Freedom and Tenure* (see also the Columbia University document, "Principles and Customs Concerning the Procedure of *Ad Hoc* Committees and University-Wide Tenure Review for Barnard College").

Barnard provides support for untenured faculty in a number of ways including grants and course releases to support research. Following a successful third year review, faculty members receive a leave of one semester at full salary or a year at half-salary to pursue their research projects. They can also apply for supplementary research grants. The caliber of the faculty and the effectiveness of the support for junior faculty are reflected in the high rate of tenure at both the Barnard and Columbia stages of the process for those who are recommended by their departments, and also by the publications of the faculty and the external awards which they receive.

Barnard has increased its support for faculty research and, more broadly, for faculty development at every stage of a faculty career. The creation in 2008 of the position of Dean for Diversity and Development is a significant indicator of this support as is the recently created Faculty Diversity and Development Committee.

Both the position of dean and the establishment of the committee grew out of a profound engagement of faculty with issues of diversity at Barnard and a desire to see an increase in faculty diversity. The purview of the position and the committee is a thoughtful recognition of linkages between enhancement of faculty development and increased faculty diversity. The dean and the committee work with departments throughout the job search process to facilitate both the hiring of faculty members who add to the diversity of the faculty, and also to aid in the exploration by the faculty of what constitutes a diverse faculty, and thus how better to progress toward that goal.

In the past decade, Barnard has made significant progress in the diversification of its faculty and, in the context of an under-tenured faculty, in the overall percentage of tenured full-time faculty. The percentage of minority full-time faculty increased from 13% to 18%, and, among the tenured faculty, from 6% to 17% (*2011 Data Book*, pp. 30, 32). The percentage of tenured female faculty increased from 38% to 49% (*2011 Data Book*, p. 32). In 1999-2000, 38% of continuing full-time faculty was tenured. A decade later the percentage had increased to 48%, with a slight decrease in the past year (self-study, p. 69). Attention to faculty diversity and development and associated issues surrounding faculty retention is an ongoing and essential process.

Barnard faculty members share a commitment to teaching. The faculty generates, maintains, and revises the curriculum through departments and the Committee on Instruction. The faculty votes to approve the curriculum. There are multiple modes of assessment of teaching effectiveness in place for all of the faculty, on ladder, off-ladder, and part-time, some of which have been recently introduced as part of an institution-wide greater focus on more regularized assessment processes (see Chapter 7). Faculty members serve as major advisors and as advisors for independent study projects. Many provide opportunities for students to participate in their

research projects. Faculty members also serve as advisors for first and second year students. The faculty workload is very demanding, and the College should continue the ongoing effort to ensure its equitable distribution and, for some areas of service, its reassignment.

Barnard offers a rich and diverse curriculum (see Chapter 7). Barnard and Columbia undergraduate courses complement and augment one another. Many Barnard faculty teach Columbia courses, both undergraduate and graduate, serve as advisors to doctoral students, and pursue their research work at the University. However, the participation of Barnard faculty in teaching and research activities at Columbia varies widely, rooted in the great variation among the relationships between Barnard departments and their counterparts at Columbia (see the Barnard document "Relations Among Departments; Snapshots"). Whereas some departments have a unified curriculum and great collaboration in many or most areas of departmental decision-making, others are unified in curriculum but largely separated in decision-making; another set are separate in curriculum as well. The impact of these differences should be followed, and mitigated insofar as they affect faculty development and the tenure process. So too should the impact of the relationship with the affiliated Columbia department be examined for faculty who, while housed in a department, pursue interdisciplinary teaching and research which may fall outside of traditional areas of departmental instruction and research.

Barnard's full-time faculty include both on-ladder and off-ladder faculty. The percentage of off-ladder faculty among the full-time faculty has roughly approximated 30% in recent years. Off-ladder faculty are full participants in teaching, advising, and committee work. The College is in the process of revising the review process for off-ladder faculty. In recent years, there has been greater support for off-ladder faculty in many facets of faculty development. This has included the creation of the Off-Ladder Faculty Advisory Committee. Attention to faculty development for off-ladder faculty should remain an ongoing and essential process. The impact on off-ladder faculty of the newly implemented 2-2 course load for on-ladder faculty should also be followed. With the exception of Professors of Professional Practice, whose course load is four, off-ladder faculty continue to have a six course teaching load. For all of the past decade, the percentage of part-time faculty has been approximately forty percent of the total headcount of faculty. The College must continue to examine and address the challenges posed by a faculty constituted of on-ladder, off-ladder, and part-time appointments.

Barnard has clearly articulated procedures for addressing such issues as appointment, promotion, tenure, grievances, and disciplinary actions (see, for example, the *Code of Academic Freedom and Tenure*). Its commitment to academic freedom is published in its *Code of Academic Freedom and Tenure*. Service on committees is a key framework in which faculty participate in the shaping and implementing of policies and practices which affect faculty and the fulfillment of their teaching and research requirements. The seven major committees that report to the Provost are indicative of this (self-study, p. 59).

Throughout our visit, we were deeply impressed not only by the superb quality of the teaching, research, and service activities of the Barnard faculty, but also by their visible engagement with the College and concern for its well-being and by their affection for and appreciation of Barnard's students.

*Significant accomplishments:*

There has been a significant increase in the percentage of tenured faculty in the past decade.

The diversity of the faculty has increased in the past decade as reflected in the significant growth of the percentage of minority faculty among the full-time faculty and of women and minority faculty among the tenured faculty.

The College has created the position of the Dean for Diversity and Development and the Faculty Diversity and Development Committee as part of the College's profound and ongoing commitment to increase the diversity of the faculty and to explore the understandings of what constitutes diversity.

The College has increased support for the professional development of both on-ladder and off-ladder faculty at every stage of their careers.

*Suggestions:*

The College should continue and enhance its efforts to diversify the faculty and to explore the understandings of what constitutes diversity.

The College should continue and enhance its ongoing efforts to provide support for faculty development for all members of the faculty at every stage of their careers.

## **Chapter 6: Student Admissions, Retention, and Support Services**

This chapter covers the following standards:

Standard 8: Student Admissions, Retention and Support Services

Standard 9: Support Services for Students

The College meets these standards.

Based on a review of the self-study, other significant institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students and others, the team has developed the following conclusions.

The staff of Admissions and Financial Aid operates under a clear set of policies and programs designed to attract and recruit a talented and diverse group of women students who have the ability and interest in the kind of education Barnard provides. The Admissions and Financial Aid staff are to be commended for moving multiple metrics, including the number of applications, diversity of applicants, selectivity, and yield in a positive direction. The College seems to have been able to increase its profile despite considerable competition from prestigious overlap schools with considerably more financial resources. Barnard continues to hold to its need-blind policy for the majority of its admitted students, despite limited financial resources.

The student services function, under the leadership of the Dean of the College at Barnard College, provides high quality and thoughtfully conceived services to support students' academic,

intellectual, and personal development. The staff has appropriate professional credentialing and experience to provide leadership and direction to support student development. Commitment to the student's academic success is seen as primary. Students are encouraged to engage deeply in the academic and intellectual opportunities of the College and at the same time take advantage of the social and cultural offerings afforded them by New York City and Columbia University. The College is to be commended for its exceptionally robust internship opportunities, which, according to the students with whom we spoke, are an important part of the educational experience and the attractiveness of Barnard to prospective students.

The College continues to provide innovation and experimentation in its offerings outside the classroom. One notable example is the Athena Center for Leadership Studies, with offerings designed to serve students and alumnae. All indications point to an exciting and innovative program taking shape there.

The staff demonstrates considerable appreciation and admiration for their students, noting that they are passionate, intellectually curious and serious about their academic pursuits. Indeed one concern expressed is that students sometimes become overly stressed as a result of their academic commitments.

The Dean of the College staff exhibits a clear commitment to students from various racial, ethnic and socio-economic, gender identity and differently abled groups and makes a specific effort to be responsive to the specific needs presented by these groups. Students in turn feel that the administration is responsive to their needs and accessible to their individual and collective concerns.

Students express satisfaction that the administration trusts student government and gives them high degree of authority and autonomy. Students also express satisfaction with the extent to which the administration and faculty are accessible to them, noting that their voice is considered in institutional policy decisions.

The Dean of Studies and class deans play a key role in connecting lives of students beyond the classroom with their academic lives and the faculty. The deans also provide special needs advising and pre-professional advising that supplements and complements the advising of faculty. Systematic evaluation of both pre-major and major advising is conducted on a regular basis and changes to the advising program are made based on those evaluations.

Barnard is to be commended for its approach to students at risk. The Dean's Evaluation Committee meets weekly to assess students at risk and to recommend appropriate interventions to support students. Likewise, Barnard is to be commended for its consistent and strong support for a wide range of health and counseling support services, as well as proactive health education.

Assessment activities in areas under the Dean of the College have increased significantly in recent years. Student utilization and satisfaction patterns, analyzing both longitudinal trends and peer comparison data, are monitored across a wide range of services, including residence life and housing, health and counseling services, advising, orientation, among others.

*Significant accomplishments:*

The College has improved its admissions profile despite competition from prestigious overlap schools with considerably more financial resources.

Barnard is to be commended for its approach to students at risk. The Dean's Evaluation Committee meets weekly to assess students at risk and to recommend appropriate interventions to support students. Likewise, Barnard is to be commended for its consistent and strong support for a wide range of health and counseling support services, as well as proactive health education.

*Suggestions:*

Despite a robust program of survey instruments and survey data, the team found relatively little data or narrative linking surveys and other assessment data to specific changes and improvements in program. We suggest that the next round of assessment focus more on "closing the loop," and illustrating how the data was used to inform specific changes and insuring that the link between assessment and continuous improvement is documented.

There is a need documented in the Self Study and in our on campus conversations for ongoing renovations of student spaces, including residence halls and the Health Center. We encountered a concern, also documented in the self-study, about lack of adequate spaces for students and other members of the campus to enjoy informal social interactions. Many described this as a need for a "hang out space." We encourage the College to continue its discussion and planning for this kind of space, most likely within the context of the new Diana Center.

Over the course of many years, the College has had a series of conversations about diversity and what it means on the Barnard campus. The College has made clear progress and yet, as many College members noted, there is still considerable room for improvement. A report in 2008 called for "a clear statement of the College's position on diversity with a detailed, systemic plan for promoting and sustaining diversity at Barnard." However, the College has not yet produced such a plan. In the interim, the College may need to quantify, if only as interim steps, some concrete "working" goals so that measurement towards progress can be captured, shared, and celebrated.

As Barnard seeks to increase diversity, all constituencies should understand that the student and faculty experience in and out of the classroom is considerably enriched by both domestic and international diversity. However, in a financial sense, increasing domestic and international student representation both require considerable financial resources and therefore may be in tension or competition with one another. These tensions are inescapable in the practical sense. Without setting quotas, the admissions and financial aid office will need to have a clear sense of priority to align their work with the institutional strategic plan.

The college should start to think more broadly about how to capture the learning experienced by students serving in mentoring and peer leadership roles, as well as internship experiences. Students expressed some enthusiasm for the E-portfolio, a concept which may be helpful in documenting learning both inside and beyond the classroom.

Multi-year program planning is well underway in the Athena Center and for the new role of VP for College Relations. These plans will need to be integrated into the broader institutional strategic plan.

The College should continue to monitor challenges for women athletes at Barnard. The College should work to minimize inconsistencies in its approach to Barnard athletes.

## **Chapter 7: A Barnard Education**

This section covers the following standards:

- Standard 11: Educational Offerings
- Standard 12: General Education
- Standard 13: Related Educational Activities
- Standard 14: Assessment of Student Learning

The institution meets all of these standards.

Based on our review of the Barnard self-study and other institutional documents (detailed below), along with site interviews with faculty, students and the academic administration, the team has reached the following conclusions regarding Standard 11: Educational Offerings:

As evidenced by the narrative in the self-study and confirmed by review of the course catalogue, Barnard offers a rich and balanced curriculum that is well considered and consistent with the mission of the institution. In curricular terms, Barnard makes excellent use of the affiliation with Columbia University, with significant student traffic between the institutions. This allows Barnard students to take advantage of programs offered at Columbia (certain foreign languages and some upper level science classes, for example) that substantially enrich the student academic experience beyond that typically available to students at small undergraduate institutions. The experience of Barnard faculty in participating in Columbia programs varies widely (see Chapter 5). Interviews with those who do have that experience speak of the energy that such affiliation bring to their teaching on the Barnard campus.

According to the self-study (p. 114), Barnard offers a total of 61 majors or major tracks, a number that appears large compared to the overall size of the faculty and student body. These majors have appropriate depth and rigor. Further review of documents, especially the spreadsheet "Barnard College Majors by Field, Department and Major," reveals an even larger array of more specialized tracks in interdisciplinary fields such as Comparative Literature, Africana Studies and Urban Studies. The 10-year history available to us suggests that some of these tracks are completed by only a handful of students (and in some cases only one). While Barnard faculty should be commended for their flexibility and willingness to meet student interests, the administrative workload associated with this large number of majors could detract from the other important work of the faculty.

The Committee on Instruction (COI) is the faculty group responsible for reviews of course syllabi to assure that student learning outcomes are incorporated. The COI has been at work on this task for approximately one year and has been met with general (though sometimes reluctant) acceptance by the faculty. The Faculty Budget and Planning Committee is responsible for the

allocation of faculty lines. Given the financial constraints under which Barnard lives, it is critical that this work be carried out thoughtfully and with integrity. Our interviews with the committee and the relevant constituencies confirm that this is the case.

*Significant accomplishments:*

There is a focus on diversity in the curriculum as part of an overall institutional concern with diversity. Examples include some First Year Seminar offerings, as well as course work in Urban Studies and Theater.

Barnard offers innovative curricular programs, including those funded by HHMI and the Mellon Foundation.

Barnard students actively participate in the research programs of faculty. The number of student participants has grown approximately 50% since 2000.

There is sustained and careful attention to the content and form of senior capstone exercises.

The implementation of a four-course teaching load should provide additional opportunities for curricular innovation along with enhancing the intellectual life of the faculty.

*Suggestions:*

The implementation of a four-course teaching load is a notable accomplishment. The Barnard administration and faculty should monitor this process carefully to assess the impact on the breadth of curricular offerings and the viability of the wide number of majors and major tracks.

The Barnard administration and faculty should monitor the overall faculty workload with respect to participation in (1) assessment activities and (2) the large number of majors and major tracks. The breathing room for pedagogic and scholarly innovation provided by the four course load must not be diminished through administrative creep.

Regarding Standard 12, General Education, the following are our conclusions:

Barnard has a robust set of General Education courses. All students are required to complete course work in the "Nine Ways of Knowing." The assignment of courses to one of the "Nine Ways" is determined by the elected Committee on Instruction (COI); interviews with this group indicate that they approach the task with a great deal of thoughtfulness and seriousness of purpose. The "Nine Ways" have been recently reviewed by the COI, with some largely cosmetic changes made that make the requirements more transparent and less ambiguous.

Barnard also requires all students to complete a two-semester First Year Foundations Program. The First Year seminar was the subject of rave reviews from the students that we interviewed. The First Year English offering is also a ubiquitous aspect of the experience of first year students. Barnard has appropriately initiated a version of First Year English for those students with less than ideal high school preparation. All of these offerings have assessment plans and activities in place (see Standard 14, below). These courses have a coherent rationale and

are properly resourced; enrollments are capped at 16 to meet the ambitious goals that have been established.

The entire set of General Education requirements was assessed in an impressive study of four graduating classes (2002 – 2005), in 2006 ("Appraisal of the Old and New General Education Requirements by Seniors in the Classes of 2002, 2003, 2004 and 2005"). This report provides a detailed examination of structure and student experience in the curriculum. A notable result is the transformative role of the "Nine Ways" in shaping the intellectual growth of Barnard students.

*Significant accomplishments:*

Barnard has developed and implemented a detailed assessment plan for the General Education requirements that could serve as a role model for the rest of the curriculum.

*Suggestions:*

Given the resources devoted to the General Education program, Barnard should repeat the 2006 report on student experiences in the program sometime in the next decade.

Regarding Standard 13: Related Educational Activities, the following are our conclusions:

Because of the nature of the institution, Barnard has only a limited number of programs that can be classified as Related Educational Activities. These include the Athena Center for Leadership Studies, study abroad programs (none of which are operated by Barnard), a writing and speaking fellows program, research programs in the sciences and various programs to promote civic engagement. All of these initiatives fall in the general category of engaged learning: attempts to break down the walls of the traditional classroom and laboratory and extend student learning into the community, international settings and situations where students can claim ownership for their own independent intellectual accomplishments. As such, these initiatives are well formulated and consistent with the mission and goals of the institution.

*Significant accomplishments:*

Participation rates in foreign study are nearly the same for students receiving financial aid and full-paying students.

The Athena Center has the potential to draw together the curricular and extra-curricular lives of Barnard students in a particularly dynamic way.

*Suggestions:*

While a number of the programs reviewed have been the subjects of assessment activities, much more can be done. This will be particularly critical with respect to the new Athena Center, which should be the subject of rigorous assessment sometime in the coming decade.

The goals, expectations and outcomes of the study abroad program should be examined, particularly in light of the initiative to internationalize the campus.

Regarding Standard 14, Assessment of Student Learning, the following are our conclusions:

Sound assessment is built on a clear articulation of student learning goals and outcomes at each level in the College – the course, the program and the institution. At Barnard, academic departments have mission statements and student learning outcomes that align with the institutional mission. The Committee on Instruction requires that faculty outline student learning objectives on syllabi of new courses that it reviews. Students complete evaluations of all courses. Beginning in 2009-2010 departments implemented methods to directly assess student learning in their programs. Most collected and evaluated student work from capstone projects and subsequently, some programs implemented program revisions to support improvement in student outcomes.

The Committee on Instruction commissioned a comprehensive assessment of the Nine Ways of Knowing general education requirements. In response to the four-year study, COI organized faculty groups to review and revise requirements that students found vague and confusing, specifically the Reason and Value and the Social Analysis categories. More recently, the committee developed student learning outcomes for each of the Nine Ways of Knowing. The curriculum and objectives are publicized in the on-line catalog.

Learning goals for the First Year Foundation Programs have also been articulated. On-line evaluations of students' first year experience and skill development and results from the COFHE Perception of Undergraduate Life and Experiences survey are used to guide program revision. Faculty who teach in the First Year English program also meet regularly to discuss and evaluate student work, sharing strategies for supporting course goals. First Year Seminar instructors evaluated final papers in the course to assess student skills and to identify types of assignments across courses. Moreover, a Fall 2006 external review of the writing program provided evidence of the program's success in strengthening student writing, but also highlighted the need for technical and administrative support.

The assessment activities in several special curricular initiatives provide a model for the use of multiple methods, both direct and indirect, to determine a comprehensive picture of student learning. These models include the integration of student survey data and critical thinking scores (Genomics and Bioinformatics Programs), the use of a quasi-experimental pre-post study of student learning with faculty surveys ("Reacting to the Past" pedagogy), and an independent external evaluation (Brownfield Project) to evaluate the effectiveness of these innovative programs. Integrating multiple types and sources of data provide a more holistic understanding of program effectiveness.

Barnard systematically tracks student participation and, in some cases, satisfaction with co-curricular activities, such as internships, student research, and study abroad. However, the College has not conducted any direct assessment of student learning in these high impact practices.

*Significant accomplishments:*

In a relatively short time, the College has established a framework for student learning assessment that has led to the collection of actionable data to inform revisions at both the program and institutional level. Faculty and staff at Barnard have taken seriously the need to integrate assessment activities into their work and have done so in a way that aligns with best practices.

*Suggestions:*

As outlined more specifically in the recommendation for Chapter 3, the institution should consider the addition of a dedicated structure to support faculty and staff in the development of tools that directly and indirectly assess student learning and that conform to disciplinary practice. Adding expertise in student learning assessment to the current IR functions will also allow for more efficient and streamlined use of existing student data and better communication and sharing of methods and results.

**VI. Summary of Recommendations for Continuing Compliance:**

**Standard 3: Institutional Resources.** The human, financial, technical, facilities, and other resources necessary to achieve an institution's mission and goals are available and accessible. In the context of the institution's mission, the effective and efficient uses of the institution's resources are analyzed as part of ongoing outcomes assessment.

*Recommendation:*

The College should create a detailed plan, including priorities and cost estimates, to implement information technology issues identified by the Vice President for Information Technology. A system-wide gap analysis and work plan regarding technology needs and work processes will provide direction to the College's inevitable and significant investment in its administrative software. The College could consider using an external consultant to facilitate the process. It is important for the College to address the widely perceived inadequacies of the present technological infrastructure and prioritize the implementation of a system capable of supporting the planned capital campaign. A database is one piece of the information system needed to support the capital campaign.

**Standard 7: Institutional Assessment.** The institution has developed and implemented an assessment process that evaluates its overall effectiveness in achieving its mission and goals and its compliance with accreditation standards.

*Recommendations:*

Barnard has established the foundation for a culture of institutional assessment and has structures in place to guide the process. However, resources need to be directed to support systematic and sustained assessment practices, better coordination and dissemination of findings, and most importantly, the development of direct measures to evaluate student learning across the institution, not simply in academic departments and select programs.

Moreover, the new strategic plan should include an implementation plan that outlines information on key strategic metrics and the manner in which they will be assessed.

As recommended in the self-study, expertise in assessment methods and statistical analysis would be a valuable addition to the Institutional Research Office. The position should be given responsibility for synthesizing and maintaining current assessment efforts by making maximum use

of existing data, as well as for supporting programs and departments as they develop and refine assessment plans.