



Thematic Pathway for Reaffirmation of Accreditation Institutional Report

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WASC Senior College and University Commission
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PREFACE

Scripps College welcomes the Thematic Pathway for Reaffirmation of accreditation (TPR) as an opportunity to reflect on its mission, past, present, and future. This focused self-study has been especially timely given that the College is currently both implementing a new strategic plan and also transitioning to new administrative leadership. As we prepare for these anticipated changes, we affirm our core values. Innovation and inclusion have underpinned Scripps College's values and interdisciplinary approach from its beginnings. They tie directly into the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) Core Commitment of Student Learning and Success, where supporting and improving the success of all students is paramount.

Our self-study report includes the four required components, framed by Scripps College's tenets of living "*confidently, courageously, and hopefully.*" Component 1 introduces Scripps College, summarizing its unique institutional characteristics through a brief history and description. This section includes a synopsis of Scripps College's responses to past Commission recommendations and highlights the current state of the college. Component 2 delineates key take-aways from the process of completing the *Compliance with WSCUC Standards and Federal Requirements Worksheet and Forms* document. Component 8 expands on Scripps' chosen themes of *Inclusive Student Success* and *Innovative Learning Organization*. We discuss how the TPR themes were developed, their alignments with WSCUC standards, and their impact on Scripps College. In addition, we present two stories with multi-faceted evidence that emerged from our close examination of two themes: Scripps' institutional priority of affordability for students; and the evolution of the College's signature Interdisciplinary Core Humanities program. Component 9 closes our institutional report with conclusions drawn from the College's reflective self-study investigation and a discussion of the impact of the self-study with a view to what will best serve students in the future.

COMPONENT 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE INSTITUTIONAL REPORT

Institutional Context

Mission (CFR 1.1)

As one enters Scripps College through the picturesque Honnold Gate, one is greeted by the inscribed words:

“The paramount obligation of a college is to develop in its students the ability to think clearly and independently,

and the ability to live confidently, courageously, and hopefully.” -- Ellen Browning Scripps. [Scripps College’s](#)

[mission](#) builds on Ellen Browning Scripps’ vision of an institution with women’s education as its center,

challenging yet supportive, and bent on equipping students to be engaged and productive citizens. Specifically:

The mission of Scripps College is to educate women to develop their intellects and talents through active participation in a community of scholars, so that as graduates they may contribute to society through public and private lives of leadership, service, integrity, and creativity.

Profile of Scripps College

Historical Context

“I am thinking of a college campus whose simplicity and beauty will unobtrusively seep into the student’s consciousness and quietly develop a standard of taste and judgment.” -- Ellen Browning Scripps, Summer 1926

A private, residential, women’s liberal arts college located in the southern California city of Claremont, [Scripps College](#) is approximately 35 miles east of Los Angeles. Scripps College was endowed by Ellen Browning Scripps in 1926 to offer to women an education designed to “train her for the fullest and richest life that she herself may have, as well as the chance to give to society her greatest contribution.” Early Scripps College was an intriguing

mix of progressiveness and traditionalism. While academic offerings and even building design were intentionally shaped to “give to the dormitories the appearance and atmosphere of a beautiful home” and framed by early 20th century ideals of “feminine structures appropriate to women’s nature,” the College was unusual for its day for having 11 women members among its initial 23-member Board of Trustees, several of them professionally credentialed, including the then superintendent of schools for Los Angeles and the head of the California Division of Adult Education.

Student Enrollment (CFR 1.1, 1.4, 1.8)

Intentionally capped to promote faculty-student engagement, Scripps College’s undergraduate student enrollment for the past five years has hovered around 1000 students: as of the fall 2021 census, student enrollment consisted of 1091 degree-seeking undergraduates and 21 post-baccalaureates. In fall 2021, students hailed from 46 states and the District of Columbia and 19 countries. Approximately 41% of the undergraduate population were students of color (3.8% Black/African American, 14.2% Asian/Asian American, 13.3% Latina/Chicana, and 9.6% Two or More Races).

The College is committed to improving existing and implementing new policies to ensure that we welcome, serve, and benefit all students as espoused in WASC Senior College and University Commission’s (WSCUC’s) [Statement of Commitment to Equity and Inclusion](#). For example, Scripps has an explicitly transgender-inclusive admissions policy that was approved by the Board in [fall 2014](#). In March 2020, following extensive data analysis and discussion, and just prior to the impact of COVID that forced many colleges and universities to go test-optional, [the Board of Trustees](#) approved [a test-optional policy](#) for admissions making the submission of SAT or ACT scores optional for all applicants starting with the fall 2021 application cycle. In Component 8 we discuss in greater detail conclusions drawn from examining markers of the potential impact of our equity and inclusion policies and the [WSCUC Key Indicator Dashboards](#) for Scripps College, specifically focusing on enrollment and student finances.

Faculty & Staff (CFR 3.1, 3.3)

When the first set of faculty members were appointed at Scripps college for the 1927-28 academic year, two of seven were female. Today, of Scripps' 376 employees, 127 are faculty members, and 249 are non-instructional staff. Of the faculty members, 72 (57%) are female. Ninety-nine faculty members, or just over 75%, are full-time and, of those full-time faculty, 56 (57%) are female and 85 (86%) are tenured or tenure track. The student-to-faculty ratio is 10:1 with an average class size of 16.

The Claremont Colleges Consortium

[The Claremont Colleges Consortium](#) is made up of five contiguous undergraduate liberal arts colleges and two graduate institutions, preserving “the inestimable personal values of the small college while securing the facilities of a great university.” The consortium offers an intellectual network of shared institutional resources, with myriad benefits for students, faculty, and staff: joint academic programs; cross-registration in courses; a two-million-volume library; combined/shared athletics teams; student bookstores; health and counseling services; chaplains' offices; and recreational facilities, among others. As an example of Scripps embracing the benefits embedded in the consortial structure, in fall 2021 there were 1288 cross-enrollments of Scripps students in other Claremont Colleges' courses. The total number of cross-enrollments of the other Claremont Colleges in Scripps College courses was 1036. There were additionally 1259 enrollments of Scripps students in intercollegiate programs, including Keck Science, a consortial department currently serving Claremont McKenna, Pitzer, and Scripps Colleges.

Governance (CFR 3.6, 3.7, 3.9)

Scripps College operates under a system of [shared governance](#) with a [Board of Trustees](#) that serves as the governing body of the College and includes a level of shared responsibility by faculty, students, staff, and trustees. Such a model allows for crucial engagement between Scripps College stakeholders and gives

stakeholders a place at the decision-making table.

Academic Outcomes (CFR 1.2)

We are proud of our strong retention rate. Scripps College's retention rate has averaged 91.7% for the first to second year since our last reaccreditation in 2013. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, Scripps' entering 2019 student cohort transitioned to remote instruction during spring 2020, their first college year, and their retention rate of 80.2% reflects this upheaval. There is evidence of a positive rebound to pre-COVID numbers: the retention rate for the 2020 student cohort in fall 2021 was 96.6%, as indicated in the [2021-2022 Scripps Common Data Set](#). The [WSCUC's Key Indicator Dashboard](#) shows that six-year graduation rates for Scripps have averaged 88% over the 2014 to 2020 period. For the entering fall 2014 student cohort, 4- and 6- year graduation rates were 81% and 88%, respectively, and for the fall 2015 cohort, they were 76% and 82%, respectively.

Examining the [demographic breakdowns](#) on the WSCUC's Key Indicator Graduation Rate Dashboards, Pell Grant recipient students have traditionally graduated from Scripps at a higher rate than non-Pell recipients (93% versus 88% 6-year graduation rates respectively for the 2016-2020 period), although there was a dip in graduation rate for the fall 2015 Pell-recipient entering cohort to a lower-than-usual 74%. There has been no noticeable trend difference in the 6-year graduation rates of white students and students of color (with the notable exception of the COVID-impacted fall 2015 entering cohort, which showed a decreased graduation rate for students of color). In addition to looking at first-to-second-year retention rates, moving forward we will add year-to-year retention across students' six years to the key academic indicators that we monitor; doing so will allow us to interrogate more specific and disaggregated data and to explore any trends that exist among students who might leave Scripps.

Outcomes for our graduates remain a source of pride. Scripps College was in the top 3 for Top 100 U.S.

Baccalaureate-Origin Institutions of 2007–2016 Women STEM Doctorate Recipients (see pg. 3) by Institutional-

Yield Ratio. Scripps College continues to be [one of the top baccalaureate colleges](#) producing undergraduate students and recent alums accepted to the Fulbright US Student Program. In addition to the seven Scripps Fulbright US Students awarded for the 2021-2022 academic year, other Scripps students, alumnae, and faculty members were awarded prestigious academic awards and fellowships, including the [Fulbright-Nehru Academic and Professional Excellence Fellowship](#), [Napier Award](#), and [Watson Fellowship](#). Additionally, faculty members have received awards from the National Education Association (NEA), National Science Foundation (NSF), National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Guggenheim Foundation, and the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS), to name a few.

Scripps Students' Journey

Curricular Exploration (CFR 2.1, 2.2, 2.6)

A Scripps education equips students to live confident, courageous, and hopeful lives. Scripps graduates possess a strong foundation in the humanities as well as in-depth knowledge of their chosen academic discipline or disciplines. We emphasize the development of rigorous intellectual standards, a passion for inquiry, and a comprehensive, connected understanding of academic disciplines.

[Scripps' liberal arts approach](#) is encapsulated in the following statement: "Far from being solely arts-focused, a liberal arts education is designed to encourage critical thinking and continuous inquiry, developing the analytical, communication, and problem-solving skills that give graduates the cutting edge, no matter their chosen industry." Indeed, graduating Scripps seniors from the class of 2020 responding to the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) College Senior Survey saw their critical thinking skills as a major strength (72% versus 57% at peer institutions) and were less likely than their peers to say that connection to their declared college major is an essential or important consideration when career planning (40% versus 60% at peer institutions). These indirect measures reflect students' awareness of the impact of Scripps' interdisciplinary, liberal arts

education.

Matriculating Scripps College students begin their academic experience with [the Core Curriculum in Interdisciplinary Humanities](#) (known as the Core), Scripps' signature program, which sets the College's "[institutional tone](#)." As a characteristic element of students' academic path, the Core Curriculum showcases both Scripps' evolving definition of humanities and our commitment to engaging students and faculty in difficult conversations around diversity and inclusion. In Component 8 we focus on Core, illuminating the program and our approach to its reimagining. Students engage with Core before declaring a major and enter those more specialized areas of study with knowledge, skills, and perspectives influenced by interdisciplinary, humanistic modes of inquiry.

Students select from among more than 60 [majors](#) in the arts, letters, social sciences, natural sciences, mathematics, and interdisciplinary programs. A student may choose to pursue a major at a different member of The Claremont Colleges if the major is not offered at Scripps, there is room in that major for the student, and the student meets [specific guidelines for an off-campus major](#). Upwards of 15% of Scripps students chose a double or dual major for 2020-2021. About a fifth (18%) of degrees conferred between July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021 were within the arts and letters division; 23% represented intercollegiate/interdisciplinary programs; over a quarter (28%) were within the social sciences division; and 31% were natural sciences and mathematics.

A Scripps student's education culminates with the required [senior thesis/project](#) – [a capstone experience](#) that allows students to express both their discipline-specific expertise and interdisciplinary connections in an original project. Assessment of the senior thesis at Scripps provides direct measures validating [Scripps' institutional learning outcomes](#). While Scripps' general education requirements facilitate students' [breadth of study](#) across "different ways of knowing and thinking," the Scripps senior thesis encourages students' depth of study through individual, independent work, with two faculty readers serving as intellectual advisors and resources. As noted

on [The Scripps Experience: The Journey of a Scripps Senior](#) page about senior theses, “You might complain a little to your friends and family, but it is a [major accomplishment](#).”

Seniors who self-nominate or are nominated by peers or faculty can choose to share a summary presentation of their exploratory and analytical senior thesis at the celebratory campus community event [Capstone Day](#). In spring 2022, [58 seniors participated](#) in an in-person event available live to friends and family via Zoom. This interactive dual approach allowed for participation from a wide range of attendees, including seniors’ non-local family and friend supporters. A traditionally in-person event, Capstone Day continued online though the COVID-19 pandemic, offering pre-recorded student presentations followed by live, interactive Q&A sessions for faculty, students, and other attendees in [2021](#) and [2020](#).

Through [Study Abroad and Global Education](#) (SAGE; see Appendix R. #4 for Scripps College Acronyms & Abbreviations used in this report), Scripps students, usually juniors, can choose to “extend the critical inquiries begun on campus” to study in one of more than 125 approved semester or year-long global programs, with a petition process to consider additional options that best fit a student’s academic needs and personal goals. Despite continuing program cancellations and difficulties obtaining visas (due to COVID surges) in spring 2022, 44 Scripps students participated in study abroad programs. This dip from past numbers (where an average of 68 students per semester studied abroad in the six pre-COVID semesters from spring 2017 through fall 2019) reflects a temporary response to COVID-related uncertainties. Applications for Spring 2023 have bounced back to previous participation levels and interest from the current sophomore class is strong moving forward.

Several additional programs enrich curricular offerings for Scripps students. The [3-2 program](#) in engineering enables students to spend three years at Scripps and two years at an engineering school, combining a BA degree and a BS degree with the outcome of a [“a well-rounded and versatile engineer, student, and person.”](#) In addition to the undergraduate experience, Scripps offers a co-educational [Post-Baccalaureate Premedical Program](#) that

enrolls approximately 18 students annually. The Scripps Post-Bac Program affords motivated students “the opportunity to complete the prerequisite science courses to successfully pursue a career in medicine” in a twelve-month program.

Co-Curricular Foundation (CFR 1.1, 1.4, 2.13)

The seal of Scripps college, [La Semeuse](#), or “she who sows,” refers not only to the new academic lives that Scripps students begin with their tenure at Scripps College, but also to new residential experiences, exploration of support systems, and engagement in a community that they create through their presence and participation. As detailed in Scripps’ [Principles of Community](#) and [Principles of Diversity](#), careful cultivation and affirmation of a shared environment where community members feel a sense of belonging and diversity is an imperative.

One hundred percent of Scripps first-years and 95.4% of all Scripps undergraduates live in college-owned, college-operated, or college-affiliated housing. These patterns of residency intentionally foster an [engaged and interconnected](#) student community. Residence halls feature mixed-class year housing, encouraging first-years to benefit from more senior students’ experience and knowledge. [Wednesday Scripps Tea](#), often hosted by academic and non-academic organizations, offers a weekly opportunity for students, faculty, and staff to interact and connect with each other. The [Scripps Communities of Resources and Empowerment \(SCORE\)](#) office supports inclusivity through social justice programming and houses many identity-based Scripps clubs and organizations ([CLORGS](#)). There are over 30 [Scripps-specific CLORGS](#) as well as [5C club and organization opportunities](#). Holistic supportive programs, such as the [First Generation@Scripps program](#), ensure that students of all demographics represented at the college are visible and valued.

Scripps strives to create strong leaders. The [Laspa Center for Leadership](#) offers students “distinctive programming, enhanced networks, and experiential learning” among other involvement options. Students may serve as a [Scripps Associated Students \(SAS\)](#) student government representative, acting as a “liaison among the

student body and the administration, faculty, and the Board of Trustees of the College.” Students can connect with alumnae through mentorship programs, such as the [La Semeuse Mentorship program](#), or with active professionals through the [Career Planning & Resources \(CP&R\)](#) center’s [Career Exploration Trek program](#). Scripps College students are immersed within a community of women leaders, including our [president](#), [chair of the Board of Trustees](#), members of the [Scripps’ Senior Leadership Team](#), and our faculty and staff.

Response to Previous Commission Actions

An essential first step to our institutional self-study was to reflect on past accreditation experiences and on the most recent recommendations from the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC). WSCUC completed a Mid-Cycle Review of Scripps College in 2018. In addition to commending Scripps College on rigorous assessment of student learning in both academic and co-curricular/student services domains and on instituting a multi-pronged approach to enhancing diversity, equity, and inclusion, the interim review panel report recommended several areas for further investigation. The sections that follow summarize and share continued progress in areas mentioned in the [2014 action letter](#), woven into responses to [recommendations from the 2018 Interim Review panel](#), referring to further detail in Component 8 as appropriate.

Recommendation #1: Demonstrate how the results of assessment and program review inform resource allocation (CFR 2.3, 2.4, 2.7, 2.10, 2.11, 4.1, 4.3, 4.4)

Since our 2013 reaffirmation, the College has put tremendous effort toward streamlining and sustaining assessment efforts across the institution’s curricular and co-curricular departments and programs. Ongoing systematic assessment of the College’s institutional, general education, academic departmental, and co-curricular student learning outcomes has been conducted consistently since 2012-2013. They are documented through the completion of distinct rubrics and program surveys that are summarized each year for review (see Appendices C1. #10a, #10b, #10c, #10d, and #10e for sample assessment reports). During our reflection on assessment and program review processes, we took the opportunity to examine their sustainability, utility, and

perceived value.

Assessment and Program Review Processes

[Scripps College's institutional student learning outcomes \(ISLOs\)](#) were developed and approved by the faculty, senior staff, and the Board of Trustees in spring 2013. The ISLOs were based on Scripps' mission, the Association of American Colleges & Universities Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education (AAC&U VALUE), and [WSCUC Core Competencies](#). Scripps College's selected ISLOs include students' abilities to demonstrate:

- #1. analytical/critical thinking
- #2. effective writing
- #3. breadth of knowledge in multiple academic fields
- #4. depth of knowledge in at least one area of study
- #5. the ability to think in interdisciplinary contexts
- #6. intercultural knowledge
- #7. knowledge about leadership skills

The senior thesis is a requirement for all seniors and as a common, culminating activity, was recognized as a ready and critical tool for assessment of institutional outcomes. Faculty serving as senior thesis readers currently conduct the assessment of ISLOs #1 (aligns to the WSCUC core competency of critical thinking), #2 (aligns to the core competency of written communication), quantitative literacy, and information literacy, using ISLO assessment rubrics. Scripps' annual Capstone Day event, where students nominated by their department, peers, or self-nominated orally present their senior thesis to faculty, staff, students, families, board members, and alumnae, is used to measure the WSCUC oral communication core competency.

Senior theses are also used as a tool for departments to assess [departmental student learning outcomes](#), using departmentally crafted rubrics. Each year, academic department chairs close the assessment loop by creating

assessment reports that delve into the meaning of assessment findings and state whether the department seeks to make curricular changes based on the assessment findings. The office of assessment and institutional research logs and houses submitted assessment reports and changes are made to departmental rubrics as identified in each department's report for the following year. The [Keck Science Department](#) systematically assesses its majors as well in a similar process, based on the senior theses. Keck students additionally present a poster of their work, with an assessed poster presentation linked to the department-wide outcome of effectively communicating scientific concepts both verbally and in writing.

In addition to assessing our ISLOs and departmental outcomes, the process of assessing general education requirements, specifically the Core Curriculum, is a continuous activity carried out annually. Core faculty use Core's in-house assessment rubrics to assess a sample of student work at the end of each semester. The Core program coordinator forwards submitted assessments to the office of assessment and institutional research, and the Core director provides an annual assessment report with findings based on student learning outcomes. Co-curricular departments and programs have similar processes in place, where every department has operationalized program goals, activities, and corresponding learning outcomes, expected assessment activities, and annual assessment reports.

Curricular departments and programs typically undergo an external review every ten years, a best-practice approach in academic affairs to which Scripps adheres. [Program reviews](#) are embedded into the functioning of the institution, with the support of offices and roles including the vice president for academic affairs/dean of faculty (VP/DOF), associate dean of faculty (ADOF), Faculty Executive Committee (FEC), office of assessment & institutional research (A&IR), office of the Registrar, and faculty members. Using a process established in 2012-2013, each co-curricular department undergoes a program review that mirrors the academic program reviews, where the department conducts a self-study and submits a report to an external review team of expert practitioners in that area and uses these recommendations for self-reflection and change.

Sustainability: Implementation of Assessment and Program Review Processes

As we reflected on the status of assessment at Scripps College this past year, we found that the process itself is well integrated into the college and has proven sustainable over the years since our last reaccreditation. Learning outcome creation and assessment plan implementation has been thoughtful, intentional, based on best practices and relevant literature, and faculty- and staff-led. Even as we proceeded remotely from spring 2020 to fall 2021 and as a new director of assessment and institutional research was being onboarded, institutional and departmental student learning outcome assessment continued, albeit with a decreased response rate. Amid the need for reduced expenditures during the 2020-2021 academic year, several academic departments chose to defer their self-studies and external departmental reviews to the 2021-2022 academic year. Our assessment and program review processes are resilient, built on a strong foundation, and have been carried out consistently over the past decade by faculty and staff.

Utility: Integration of Assessment and Program Review into Budgetary Processes (3.4, 4.5, 4.6)

Assessment and program review cycles are intertwined with our resource allocation process. An explicit goal of an assessment or program review cycle holds that the time and effort that goes into its planning and implementation should be rewarded through use of the collected feedback, reports, and information in subsequent decision-making processes. At Scripps, resource allocation begins when the Presidential Budget Advisory Committee (PBAC) meets with Scripps' president to identify and establish budget priorities for the coming fiscal year. The PBAC is co-chaired by the vice presidents for business affairs/treasurer and academic affairs/dean of faculty and includes staff from the Business Affairs division as well as rotating faculty, staff, and student representatives. Two primary reasons for the intentional constituency representation of PBAC members are shared governance and budget education across the College.

Each year communication is sent to the Scripps community about the budget process, with invitations to submit

annual requests for human and financial capital resources. Requesters are asked to provide evidence of need and alignment of requests to the institution's short and long-term strategic goals, with an emphasis on innovative ideas. Vice presidents prioritize the submitted requests for the PBAC who subsequently makes funding recommendations to the president and senior team. Following the president's presentation of recommendations to the Board of Trustees and their approval of the budget for the subsequent academic year, the PBAC co-chairs provide a public budget presentation for the community that seeks to communicate both endorsed priorities and trade-offs.

At the institutional level, commitment to Scripps' current strategic plan, the [Centennial Plan](#), has meant a commitment to funding specific initiatives. Forum feedback, survey data, and usage numbers have led to the funding of essential human and financial capital investments. At a departmental level, for example, the most recent Art department external review in spring 2022 highlighted issues regarding teaching spaces and outdated equipment. Collaborative decisions around the physical and financial parameters were approved in our PBAC process and significant work has been completed going into the 2022-23 academic year.

Value: Perceptions of the Curricular Assessment Process

Our self-reflective questions moved beyond the sustainability of our assessment process to its value. We asked in what ways are institutional and curricular departmental assessment of student learning outcomes results being utilized and what is the general perception of their worth? The TPR process provided an opportune invitation to engage Scripps faculty in conversations on these questions to seek their perspectives.

Through the 2021-2022 academic year, Scripps College department chairs and their departmental faculty met with the associate dean of faculty and the director of assessment and institutional research. The chairs and department faculty were provided with a one-page contextual document that included information about the new TPR approach as well as guiding questions for the discussion. Seventy-four faculty attendees from across

Scripps academic departments participated in the reflection sessions. In addition to substantive discussions of our themes: *Inclusive Student Success* and *Innovative Learning Organization* (discussed in Component 8), faculty were asked about the senior thesis-based institutional student learning outcome (ISLO) and academic departmental student learning outcome (DSLO) processes and their thoughts on their utility and value.

Assessment Process Reflection Faculty Session Findings: Faculty were candid and engaged in discussions; their passion for and commitment to Scripps students' learning and growth was palpable. A few departments shared that they have used the academic departmental student learning (DSLO) assessments of senior theses to inform substantive changes to their curriculum and majors. Faculty are able to use the DSLO assessments to ask about what senior theses demonstrate and to use that information to teach thesis more effectively. However, the majority of departments stated that they did not use the current DSLO senior thesis-based assessment results when considering curricular changes. For the most part, faculty members' perspective was that the DSLO rubric-based assessment results currently do not provide sufficiently valuable information for their discussions.

Reasons given included a mismatch between learning outcomes and the rubrics used, lack of knowledge of DSLO assessment reports and findings, and, principally, the lack of context provided by the DSLO assessment results, as compared to the complexity of students' senior thesis processes and products, and in contrast to the more granular student learning assessments performed throughout the semester on an individual level.

Faculty's feedback in discussion sessions was echoed and elaborated on by members of the Faculty Assessment Committee (FAC), a longstanding committee that oversees assessment of ISLOs and DSLOs through senior theses and Capstone Day. The FAC is co-chaired by the associate dean of faculty and the director of assessment and institutional research and is composed of faculty representing natural sciences and mathematics, letters, arts, and social sciences. This past year, the FAC examined both the institutional learning outcomes and departmental learning outcomes assessment processes. To facilitate analysis, committee members were provided with institutional and departmental rubrics, as well as examples of past assessment reports for their departments.

Faculty committee members shared sample theses from their content areas. Members were asked to review the theses and apply the matching rubrics, making note of their experience doing so.

For most of the FAC membership, this exercise was their first-time viewing of theses from another discipline, and reactions included recognition of students' efforts and the high quality of the theses across content areas. FAC members identified challenges of the current ISLO and DSLO thesis rubrics. For example, given that every thesis student begins the process from a different point, the assessment itself lacked a baseline. Through the examination of theses across disciplines, the FAC committee affirmed that each student's senior thesis experience is an individual journey, and that nuanced and individualized contextual information is not effectively conveyed through our short quantitative rubric. The FAC reiterated points that arose in departmental discussion sessions: that much of faculty members' engagement with students in the thesis process is in the form of extensive individualized verbal and written feedback and conversations throughout the semester and/or academic year, and that a thesis reader's subsequent evaluation of theses often takes the form of conversations with colleagues.

Summary of Assessment Reflection Findings: Even while many faculty members might not currently integrate the results of thesis assessment into their departmental functioning, they expressed excitement about the future of thesis assessment at Scripps. First, the senior thesis itself was reaffirmed as a fitting tool for assessment altogether. The scant few who were against any change feared that any alterations would be accompanied by a large extra time burden, but for the most part both in departmental sessions and in the FAC analysis meetings, faculty members supplied suggestions for both incremental and large-scale change.

Assessment Opportunities: Initially we approached obtaining feedback on the ISLO and DSLO assessment processes as an opportunity to see what small revisions could optimize the processes moving forward. When we look at multi-year institutional student learning outcome findings, we see a steady incremental increase in rubric

ratings over the past nine years. We gain insight into specific areas within the ISLOs where students are trending positively (e.g., the criteria of attribution assessed under *Information Literacy*) and areas where there is further opportunity for growth (e.g., the criteria of complexity of a student's position, perspective, thesis/hypothesis, assessed under ISLO #1: Students will be able to demonstrate analytical thinking).

Invaluable feedback from the FAC and from faculty discussion sessions indicated an opportunity extending beyond small tweaks. We are proud of our assessment infrastructure, the time and effort that faculty and administrators have spent crafting and tracking sound institutional and departmental student learning outcomes, and the faculty's commitment to our students' learning and to institutional effectiveness. To continue the legacy of robust, embedded assessment at Scripps College, we wanted to ensure that faculty knew they were being listened to and their needs met. Rather than continue exactly as is, the office of assessment and institutional research used summer 2022 and continues this fall to pause and review the feedback and suggestions given by faculty, to take a deeper look at what has and has not proven valuable over the past decade's assessment findings, to distill recommendations in concert with the Faculty Assessment Committee, and to receive further input from faculty on proposed specific changes to the assessment process and/or instruments. Implementation of changes will begin in spring 2023, allowing time for thoughtful reflection while preserving the continuity of the assessment process.

As an example of proposed revisions, suggestions from the Faculty Assessment Committee included the addition of two open-ended questions to the ISLO thesis rubric that would allow faculty to add context to their ratings: one question asks about the extent to which students challenged themselves and a second question asks about the students' demonstration of intellectual and/or creative growth over the course of the thesis. Some faculty suggested having fully qualitative ISLO and DSLO assessments instead of rubrics, such as exit interviews or focus groups with graduating seniors. These suggestions are intriguing and require more focused discussions with faculty. Our reflection processes this past year have reinvigorated faculty connection with the assessment

process and we look toward the future of assessment at Scripps College.

Recommendations #2-4: Exploring, Enhancing, and Assessing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

In the 2013 Educational Effectiveness Review (EER) report, Scripps outlined diversity initiatives in progress that had originated from the Scripps College 2007 Strategic Plan. These initiatives included goals for admissions, financial aid, institutional capacity building, student success, campus climate, and academic programs. The institution has continued to focus and expand on these initiatives and has recognized that nimbleness and flexibility are required in our approaches to meeting our aspirational goals. A priority of the TPR self-study was to use the TPR themes as a focus to look beyond specific programmatic outcomes. We examined the indicators visualized in the [WSCUC Key Indicator Dashboard](#), asking ourselves about the institutional impact on students, especially around student finances. In the Component 8 section we elaborate on Scripps' diversity journey, with special attention to progress, impact, and future opportunities.

The Past Decade of Change

Initiatives of the past decade have expanded and boosted Scripps' globalization, leadership, and curricular development. For example, Scripps' Off-Campus Study office was renamed the [Office of Study Abroad and Global Education \(SAGE\)](#), reflecting the office's reprioritized approach and adjustments to student needs. Scripps founded the [Laspa Center for Leadership](#) and was the lead college in the collaboration to create the [7C EmPOWER Center](#), the violence prevention and advocacy center of The Claremont Colleges. In addition, [six endowed faculty chair positions](#) have enhanced our academic program. Growth initiatives were made possible largely through the generosity of donors to the college's largest ever campaign, [We Want More: The Campaign for Scripps College](#). The 2013-2018 More Scripps campaign was the most successful in Scripps' history, exceeding the desired goal of \$175 million to raise [\\$179 million](#).

In 2018, Scripps' fourth strategic plan, [the Scripps College Centennial Plan](#), was unveiled to the Scripps community and adopted for implementation. The plan resulted from over a year's worth of executive committee and planning team meetings (composed of faculty, students, and staff), connecting with the campus community, institutional reflection, and drafting. The process emerged from asking ourselves where Scripps College should be in 2026, when it turns 100. Priority questions that shaped the form of the Centennial Plan and continue to direct Scripps' future include:

- ❖ What initiatives would result in a sense of belonging amongst all students?
- ❖ What initiatives would unleash innovation at Scripps?
- ❖ What initiatives would allow us to meet new generations of students where they are?

From the strategic planning process, the four pillars/themes of the Centennial Plan are named as follows:

- ❖ [*Inclusive Student Success*](#)
- ❖ [*Innovative Learning Organization*](#)
- ❖ [*Distinctive Identity*](#)
- ❖ [*Mission Driven Outreach*](#)

The Centennial Plan itself has been the blueprint for several current Scripps initiatives, including expansion of computer science/data science capacity, creation of the [Equity and Justice Leadership Team](#), and the [Presidential Scholarship Initiative](#), which expanded financial support to students and is explored in Component 8. A new strategic planning team was reassembled in spring 2022, charged with invigorating the strategic plan process following two years of COVID disruption. The committee is charged with monitoring progress on the plan's objectives, examining key performance indicators, and discussing the initiatives that support each of the four major pillars of the plan.

In terms of institutional leadership, several pivotal changes have occurred during this past decade. Lori Bettison-Varga stepped down as president of Scripps College in 2015, and her successor, Lara Tiedens, served as president from 2016 until April 2021. Suzanne Keen became the 10th president of Scripps College on July 1, 2022, after a successful national search. Amy Marcus-Newhall served as interim president during each presidential search and transition and has returned to her role as vice president for academic affairs and dean of faculty, effective July 1, 2022. Gretchen Edwalds-Gilbert, professor of biology, served as the acting dean of faculty this past year. Binti Harvey stepped into the position of vice president for external relations and institutional advancement in 2018. This new role merged two previously separate departments, institutional advancement and marketing and communications, allowing for unified communication to Scripps College constituents and further advancement of Scripps' strategic goals. Adriana di Bartolo-Beckman assumed the role of interim vice president for student affairs and dean of students late Summer 2021 following the departure of Charlotte Johnson, the previous vice president of student affairs and dean of students. A permanent successor, DeMethra LaSha Bradley, joined our community as vice president for student affairs and dean of students at Scripps College on August 10, 2022. In Spring 2021, the Sidney J. Weinberg, Jr. Chair in Natural Sciences and Professor of Chemistry Mary Hatcher-Skeers, became the associate dean of faculty for racial equity (ADRE), a new role designed with responsibilities that include identifying and implementing antiracism and equity goals at Scripps. In 2018, Professor of Biology Jennifer Armstrong, became the associate dean of faculty. In this role Professor Armstrong helps oversee curricular and institutional-level assessment activities for the college.

Scripps Strong: Response to COVID-19

The novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has proven a challenge to higher education institutions nationwide, and Scripps College has certainly not been immune to its effects, especially as our hallmark characteristics include small in-person interactive class engagement, vibrant co-curricular activities, and supportive residential experiences. Following the rapid progression of COVID-19 in Los Angeles county and California, Scripps College

and the other Claremont Colleges followed state and county guidelines by [closing the college to the public on March 11, 2020](#), just before that year's spring break. Students were asked to not return after spring break and commenced remote instruction on March 30, 2020. This situation continued through the 2020-21 academic year, as a result of Los Angeles County public health requirements.

Academic support such as academic advising, career counseling, faculty office hours, [the Writing Center](#), Scripps Communities of Resources and Empowerment (SCORE), and tutoring services among others were converted to remote delivery. Scripps College, as part of The Claremont Consortium, expanded mental health support for students through the telehealth provider TimelyMD. Scripps continued the [Off Campus Referral Program](#) to improve access to mental health resources, with qualifying students receiving financial assistance to facilitate access to providers. Rent assistance and technology grants were offered to students as a buttress to the upheaval. Cornerstone Scripps events such as [Capstone Day](#) and the [Senior Art exhibition](#) were moved online. Additional resources were provided for faculty in collaboration with consortial partners. For example, the [Claremont Center for Teaching and Learning](#) (CTL) offered training on remote teaching and pedagogy. A full account of actions the College took in response to COVID-19 appears on the [Scripps' COVID-19 Response page](#). In fall 2021, Scripps College welcomed students back to campus to engage in in-person instruction with [comprehensive safety processes in place](#). The Scripps College community united; our mantra was [Scripps Strong](#). Because of the campus community's willing compliance with COVID-19 related policies, at the end of the fall 2021 semester, the vaccination rate among students was 99%, and among employees was 97%.

For the first time in three years, an [Annual Commencement](#) for the Class of 2022 was held in person. A week after the Class of 2022 Commencement, the Class of 2020 and Class of 2021 graduates and loved ones were invited to Scripps to finally have their own day of celebration, closure, and to reunite with friends that the COVID pandemic had kept physically separated for too long.

Students were very happy to pivot back from a virtual to an in-person environment, once again enjoying the academic, co-curricular, and residential life at Scripps. However, the extended hiatus from campus meant a break in the passing down of norms and traditions from more senior students to newer members of the community. Scripps College is actively working on bridging this gap.

The Scripps community showed [tenacity and perseverance](#) in response to COVID, staying steady through a hiring freeze, a moratorium on salary increases, suspension of non-essential expenditures, temporary cessation in retirement contributions, reduced compensation for then President Lara Tiedens and the Scripps senior staff, and the establishment of a 10 percent budget cut for fiscal year 2021. Necessary resources for the immediate impact of COVID-19 were acquired by employing a temporary endowment payout of 6.6% in the 2020-2021 fiscal year. By spring 2022 all temporary austerity cuts and measures had been restored, including replacing retirement benefits that would have accrued during the suspension. The endowment draw-down was restored to its prudent normal level of 4.6%. In May 2022, Scripps' associate vice president for business affairs and assistant treasurer [reported that](#) as of our last audit in June 2021, Scripps' investment pool was valued at \$542 million, a 43% increase over the previous year's audit. Through shrewd fiscal management and substantial work by the institutional advancement team, leading to generous donations, Scripps continues to thrive financially, as shown in our [most recent financial report](#).

Preparation for Thematic Pathway for Reaffirmation

After our interim report was approved by WSCUC in early spring 2019, the Accreditation Steering Committee (consisting of the vice president for academic affairs and dean of faculty, associate dean of faculty, vice president for student affairs and dean of students, and director of assessment and institutional research/accreditation liaison officer) began discussions of possible themes in preparation to submit our request in fall 2019 to participate in the Thematic Pathway for Reaffirmation (TPR). We submitted a request on November 7, 2019, and received approval to participate in the TPR from WSCUC on February 14, 2020.

The Scripps TPR Steering Committee shaped its discussions around identifying an appropriate theme by using the [Scripps Centennial Plan](#) as a guide. Over summer and fall 2020, the TPR Steering Committee incorporated recommendations from President Lara Tiedens and her senior team, deliberated on appropriate themes, and amended our approach as needed. We started with a larger overarching theme and two subthemes, but for clarity and optimal future utility in support of Scripps' core mission, in fall 2021 we settled on *Inclusive Student Success* and *Innovative Learning Organization* as our TPR themes and guideposts for the College's self-study. Throughout this process, the steering committee consulted with and was grateful for the sage input of numerous leaders and stakeholders across the college.

Two factors influenced our choice of TPR themes. First, *Inclusive Student Success* and *Innovative Learning Organization* contained actionable initiatives that directly engaged Scripps students, faculty, and staff. Second, the themes offered opportunities to gather these constituents' perspectives and to examine success markers, especially as Scripps implements our strategic plan. Given the investigative nature of the new TPR approach, and the guidance to narrow the focus of our themes, we used the following two queries to identify the focal points of our themes: "*How do we use inclusive and innovative practices to ensure that all incoming students have access to a full Scripps education, so that they flourish as individuals and have success?*" and "*How do we ensure that inclusiveness and innovation are embedded in a Scripps education for students, while staying true to Scripps values?*" Given the traditional and distinctive feature of the humanities as a cornerstone of a Scripps education, it was important to spotlight that emphasis as an enduring commitment during our self-study. In Component 8 we offer results of our inquiry.

COMPONENT 2: COMPLIANCE WITH STANDARDS

The Compliance with WSCUC Standards and Federal Requirements Worksheet was completed as a collaborative effort between the office of assessment and institutional research and the dean of faculty's office. In reflecting on the experience, we found that no major issues arose during the completion of the compliance form. There were a few instances where handbooks such as the student handbook, or policies, for example those speaking to academic unity, were accessible only through webpages internal to the Scripps community; these were made public. Overall, however, evidence of the criteria for review were published and publicly accessible on Scripps' website.

Our review indicated that institutional policies, statements, reports, and data are transparent, clear, and routinely updated. Evidence of standards of performance for learning experiences, such as class syllabi, were easily located due to ongoing syllabi documentation practices. Evidence of an assessment and program review infrastructure is apparent and reflects a well-used implementation process documented at each step.

One area that could benefit from additional documentation on the Scripps website is the budgetary process. For clarity we outline our regular procedure here. Each year the chair or co-chairs of the Presidential Budgetary Advisory Committee (PBAC) give community-wide presentations about the budget process, institutional investments, and endowments, and they provide explanations of the imminent budget allocations. This material could be published online for community members in abridged formats, and plans are already in place to do so. In addition to achieving greater transparency with respect to institutional processes, Scripps plans to make explicit its commitments to anti-discrimination. We are publishing easily accessible information on the website about the anti-discriminatory policies that Scripps College routinely follows in recruiting new students.

COMPONENT 8: INSTITUTION-SPECIFIC THEMES

The TPR process has presented us with a chance to take a step back, especially at a moment when it feels like we may finally be able to get out of COVID-survival mode, and to reengage with a broad swath of Scripps College stakeholders around the themes of *Inclusive Student Success* and *Innovative Learning Organization*.

The themes we picked made ideal foci for investigating Scripps' evolution around diversity and inclusion and the humanities. There were several burning questions that we sought to answer. While the two themes are pertinent to multiple stakeholders (students, faculty, and staff have all been engaged in reflection), our questions were particularly suited to informing our mission-centered goal of meeting students' holistic needs. To that end, we engaged Scripps community members in discussions about how we define student success in general, and how we make sure that all students feel included and welcome fully to participate in all aspects of the educational experience. Additionally, as we strive to innovate better to meet student needs, we asked how we can continue to shine a spotlight on the humanities and embed them within the Scripps curriculum? Our analysis and conversations have yielded new insights into our stakeholders' points of view. We carry forward with a renewed appreciation of the Scripps community's serious commitment to advancement of our mission. We owe gratitude to the diligent and comprehensive work done by the Centennial Plan strategic theme teams, whose proposed initiatives contribute substantially to the self-study process.

The Self-Study Process

For our TPR self-study, we first identified and explored appropriate data reflecting markers and metrics to inform questions raised by our themes. Sources of data included Common Data Sets, Scripps Fact Books, WSCUC Key Indicator Dashboards, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) submissions, reports to external bodies and organization, student and other stakeholder surveys results, and program reviews. An additional source of data came from stakeholder reflection sessions. When faculty met with the associate dean

of faculty and the director of assessment and institutional research for assessment discussion sessions (see above, Component 1 section), they were asked to share their reflections and thoughts on *Student Success* in general, *Inclusive Student Success* more specifically, and *Innovative Learning Organization*. The director of institutional research and assessment also met with the interim vice president for student affairs/dean of students and current Student Affairs staff. Past Student Affairs staff, including the previous vice president for student affairs/dean of students and former assistant dean/director of case management, also were consulted.

We found faculty and staff to be accommodating and generous both in meeting with TPR steering committee members and with their feedback. Students, solicited in partnership with Student Affairs offices, provided feedback through an online padlet with words associated with the themes, and engaged through tabling at Scripps Tea, a weekly Scripps tradition. Student research assistants in the office of assessment and institutional research were heavily involved in the theme reflection process, gaining awareness and knowledge of the TPR process, creating content for the TPR process (including [an FAQ](#) on accreditation from a student's point of view), and providing their own perspectives on the themes. We did find it more difficult to capture students' feedback about the TPR themes because student focus groups did not yield attendees.

TPR Theme #1: *Inclusive Student Success* (CFR 1.1, 1.4, 2.8, 2.10, 2.13, 4.3, 4.5, 4.6)

Overview

Scripps' students, faculty, and staff bring diverse identities and backgrounds, which enrich Scripps' culture and education. Scripps College is committed to its [Principles of Diversity](#) and to core values of anti-racism, equity-mindedness, and justice.

The [Inclusive Student Success \(ISS\) theme](#) was framed to capture the various initiatives Scripps College has engaged in over the last decade and plans to build on in the future. Importantly, this theme identifies how the

College's efforts have created a climate that strives to be diverse, equitable, inclusive, and just. When initially conceptualized in 2017, community feedback that helped refine the *Inclusive Student Success (ISS)* theme included the following questions:

- What aspects of the whole student need more attention than we currently provide? What initiatives would support development in those areas?
- What initiatives might produce more diversity in the student, faculty, and staff populations?
- What initiatives would result in a sense of belonging amongst all students?

At community workshops held in 2017, participants suggested areas where each strategic pillar could be implemented and then formed consensus regarding the top three items. The top three suggestions by community members for Inclusive Student Success were *diversity and inclusion*, *institutional story*, and *culture of trust*. This context directly influenced the way we subsequently engaged with Scripps stakeholders for our self-study and the top two suggestions resonated through our self-study.

Access: Scripps' Student Financial Aid Commitment

One significant question that emerged from the theme of Inclusive Student Success was querying how we ensure that students from any economic background feel included and welcome, even as prospective students. Access to Scripps College's academic and co-curricular experiences and resources starts with access to the College itself, and we wondered how incoming students' access to Scripps is perceived and realized.

Affordability: Scholarship Support for Financially Disadvantaged Students

We are proud to say that Scripps College [meets 100% of demonstrated need](#) for all admitted students who meet the eligibility criteria and established application deadlines. We continue to pursue funding lines to increase our financial aid commitment for students. We promise students that they will be financially supported with minimal debt through their time at Scripps, with an ultimate goal of offering need-blind admission. For now,

being need-aware means that we commit to ensuring that the students we accept will be funded for the full Scripps educational experience, so that they are not excluded from activities due to lack of funds. The Financial Aid office works towards this end, crafting optimally packaged combinations of grants, loans, and work awards.

Critical to Scripps' commitment to student access through affordability is the College's support of financial aid awards. Institutional support for need-based grants and scholarships in 2007 was \$8.6 million. The College has nearly doubled its support for need-based grants and scholarships, providing support in the amount of \$15.6 million in 2019-2020. For the most recently reported 2020-2021 year, that number was impacted by COVID-reduced student enrollment (\$12.3 million), but given renewed pre-COVID enrollment numbers, we expect a bounce-back for the 2021-2022 reporting year.

The [Presidential Scholarship Initiative](#) is crucial to widening student access to Scripps College. This initiative, which aims to provide funds to cover the full cost of attendance for Scripps College's lowest-income students, has been transformative in reducing loans for our neediest students. The funding target for the Presidential Scholarship Initiative was set at \$10 million in 2017, a goal Scripps surpassed in spring 2021. In academic years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022, 53 and 51 students (respectively) were awarded Presidential Scholarships. In addition, funds from the Presidential Scholarship Initiative were used to reduce packaged loan amounts by \$1,000 for all eligible need-based aid seniors. Loan reduction efforts (including other no-loan packages such as the James E. Scripps Scholarship, the Drake Scholarship, the QuestBridge Scholarship, the New Generation Scholarship, and the O'Connell Scholarship) meant that for the 2021-2022 academic year a total of 105 need-based aid recipients (about 10% of Scripps enrolled students) received no-loan financial aid packages. Ways to recruit and fund aid for financially disadvantaged students continue to be identified and pursued. The College is currently a finalist for a grant from the [Schuler Access Initiative Foundation](#), aimed at providing financial support to "substantially expand access for both undocumented students and Pell-eligible students to attend highly selective liberal arts colleges." The College continues its partnership with the [QuestBridge program](#) with an

average of approximately 8 Quest Scholars enrolled annually since 2015, and an additional 10-12 low-resourced QuestBridge participants who enroll annually

External Ambiguity around Financial Aid Metrics

During our investigation, we observed that the story communicated externally around Scripps' financial aid commitment depends on the media source and where a potential student looks. This year a [media report](#) lists Scripps in a table of the top five private, non-profit institutions having the highest average private debt for graduates in California, listed in the article as \$76,406. Scripps College appears in the 2022 [College Affordability and Transparency List](#) for 4-year or above, private non-for-profit institutions with the highest tuition, shown as \$57,188, and has appeared on both this and the highest net prices list multiple times over the past decade.

However, these messages, publicly accessible and potentially discouraging to prospective lower income Scripps students, exist simultaneously with reassuring and much more appealing reports. In 2020, LendEDU listed Scripps College as #22 out of 798 private and public four-year colleges analyzed for their [College Risk-Reward Indicator \(CRR\) Rankings](#), with CRR calculated using the formula: Average Early Pay / Average Student Loan Debt at Graduation. [Niche](#) rates Scripps College's scholarships and financial aid an overall grade of "A" based on average net price, earnings potential, student and alumni reviews, and additional factors. On Niche's website, they state that 48% of Scripps students receive the subset of institutional grant aid, and 55% receive some kind of financial aid altogether. Their dashboard shows a net price breakdown of \$40,259/year, but with an average total aid awarded of \$37,329/year. How can these differing metrics simultaneously describe Scripps College and how do they fit into a firm financial aid commitment to students?

Context Illuminates the Financial Aid Story

Two factors obscure a full and true picture: mismatched reporting to publishing dates and highlighting one single data point without vital context. When context can be included, the news and data reports coalesce, and

a comprehensive story emerges, consistent with Scripps’ theme of inclusivity through access and affordability.

For example, although the local news media article cited above was published in 2022, the source of what the article references is [the Institute for College Access & Success](#), and ultimately 2019-2020 data taken from [Scripps’ 2020-2021 Common Data Set](#). The data source does not report just one single data point (as the article does), but presents it in a table with other columns including *Average Debt of Graduates*, *Percent of Graduates with Debt*, *Average Private Debt of Graduates* (the metric zeroed in on by the article), and *Percent of Graduates with Private Debt*. To present the *Average Private Debt of Graduates* as \$76,406 is misleading without the accompanying *Percent of Graduates with Private Debt*. The percent of the Scripps College graduating cohort with private debt is 2% of students or 5 students in total. Indeed, the metric that better indicates indebtedness is *Average Debt of Graduates* or average cumulative student debt from any loan program—\$21,311 for the 2019-2020 year. This number indicates the average debt that students accrue who take on any federal, institutional, or private loans (33% of students for the 2019-2020 graduating class). These numbers present a more encouraging as well as realistic picture for potential students and their families. Indeed, the percentage of Scripps students who have taken out a private loan since 2015 has been on average 2.7%. For clarity, the financial aid indicators cited in this paragraph are tabled below:

Metric	Reported	Scripps Data for 2019-2020	Source
<i>Average Debt of Graduates with Any Debt</i>	<i>[Not reported]</i>	\$21,311	Scripps College 2020-2021 Common Data Set Section H5
<i>Percent of Graduates with Any Debt</i>	<i>[Not reported]</i>	32.6% (74 of 227 students)	
<i>Average Private Debt of Graduates with Private Debt</i>	<i>Local news media</i>	<i>\$76,406</i>	
<i>Percent of Graduates with Private Debt</i>	<i>[Not reported]</i>	2.2% (5 of 227 students)	

Scripps [WSCUC Key Indicator Dashboard \(KID\)](#) for student debt proved an illuminating and valuable tool during

our self-study. The dashboards visualize two other student debt metrics, *Median Student Debt* and the *Cohort Default Rate*. These dashboards explain Scripps' presence on lists that are appealing to prospective students. A cursory look shows a relatively straight line of median student debt across the 2014-2019 time period, as graphed on the dashboard, ranging from a low of \$13,650 in 2014 to a high of \$14,829 in 2019. Looking more closely, the graph shows that Scripps' median student debt is below both the WSCUC institutions and national medians. If the median student debt is averaged across 2014-2019, Scripps students have \$14,022 median student debt, contrasted to WSCUC institutions (\$22,129) and nationally (\$22,299). The Scripps median student debt has remained consistently low even as, we acknowledge, tuition prices have increased. This effort to keep pace with increased costs shows results in the low cohort default rate of Scripps students. The average cohort default rate for 2014-2020 on the KID dashboard reveals a 1.0% rate for Scripps students, in contrast to a 4.3% rate across WSCUC institutions and a 7.1% default rate nationally.

Additionally, the percentage of Scripps College students receiving Federal Student Loans remains low, an average of 32% over a 2014-2020 timespan versus the 49% WSCUC average and the 53% national average. Such a low federal loan percent does add complexity to the financial aid commitment story, shown in the lower percent of Pell grant recipients (11% over the 2014–2020-year time range versus a 39% WSCUC and national average). Scripps aims to provide maximum institutional grants and no-interest institutional loans. Indeed, for 2018-2019 financial aid recipients, Scripps grants, loans, and work constituted 77% of the aid awarded to students. Another piece of pertinent data was captured from the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) Institute College Senior Surveys. Over the past three years, the percentage of graduating seniors who have self-reported being “Very Satisfied” or “Satisfied” with their financial aid package has increased from 47% in 2019 to 50% in 2020 and 59% in 2021.

Sharing Scripps' Financial Aid Story

As an institution we are mindful that without full context, markers that indicate progress toward goals of

primarily institutional financial support with minimal loans also can be a red flag for low-income students, as Pell grant recipient headcounts and percentages are often used as an indicator of the access to low-income students. We realize too the pitfalls around external storytelling with some traditional financial aid markers, as well as the opportunity to emphasize for students the framework behind metrics externally reported and the way inclusivity is embedded into Scripps financial aid support. We will identify further avenues to communicate a comprehensive aid and debt profile to prospective students and to the public, integrating a full set of markers and context around those that can be misconstrued, thus reframing and correcting our financial aid story.

Embedded: Inclusiveness at Scripps

Before students become part of the Scripps community, we welcome and include them through financial aid policies that aim to minimize student debt and increase affordability, especially for those with great financial need. Once students have matriculated at Scripps, they join a community that prioritizes belonging, diversity, and inclusion policies and practices that are embedded into the fabric of the College.

We center our Principles of Community and Principles of Diversity in the [Scripps academic catalog](#), with the goal of “seek[ing] to attract a diverse student body and to build a diverse faculty and staff” explicitly stated. The 2013 Board-approved [Diversity and Inclusivity Strategic plan](#) stated additional rationale for inclusion goals and initiatives: “Diversity at Scripps College advances academic excellence.” Coming directly from this plan, the [Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access \(IDEA\) initiative](#) was launched in 2014 as a “comprehensive plan to align resources, programs, and events to advance inclusion, diversity, equity, and access throughout the Scripps community” and, through a multi-pronged approach, to guide the Scripps Community toward its goal of increased inclusion. As the IDEA initiative states, Scripps “honors diversity as a key component of the academic, co-curricular, and residential life of the College.” In 2018, the [Committee of Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity](#) (CIDE) was established, replacing the former President’s Advisory Committee on Diversity and Inclusivity (PACDI). CIDE was formed to engage and communicate with the Scripps community around equity and access

issues and to push forward these goals. The committee builds on, recommends, and monitors Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access (IDEA) initiatives.

A presentation on IDEA Initiative progress during a senior staff retreat in summer 2021 reflected the thoughtful, intentional steps being taken to cultivate an inviting environment for all at Scripps College, and especially those in historically marginalized populations. It is not sufficient simply to recruit Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) faculty, staff, and students without a supportive, equitable environment; IDEA initiative efforts have worked toward improving and sustaining such an environment. As described in the 2021 progress presentation, each high impact area identified through the IDEA Initiative as ripe for incorporation of diversity and inclusion policies and actions has been assigned recommendations. Articulating these planned policies and actions allows both overt commitment of the college and also institutional accountability through tracking. Broad high impact areas include people, climate and culture, and education.

Examples of initiatives that have resulted directly from the IDEA Initiative are described below and were identified through discussion with the vice president/secretary for the Board of Trustees and convener of the IDEA initiative; past Students Affairs staff; the past vice president of student affairs/dean of students; and the past assistant dean/director of case management. In what follows, we offer examples from each high impact area.

Impact: Building Community through IDEA Initiatives

As we looked closely at the theme of *Inclusive Student Success* at Scripps and at the ways it is embedded in the College's operations and policies, specifically through Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access (IDEA) initiatives, we asked, "How are students and our Scripps community affected by Scripps' diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ) commitment?" Below we highlight examples of the impact of our IDEA initiatives. Many of these initiatives were built on and culminated from decades of dedicated work by generations of Scripps faculty, staff,

and students in addition to counterparts across the consortium.

People -- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Leadership: The new position of [associate dean of faculty for racial equity \(ADRE\)](#) was created in spring 2021, made possible through a generous donor gift. Professor of Chemistry and Sidney J. Weinberg, Jr. Chair in Natural Sciences Mary Hatcher-Skeers was chosen to serve in this role for an initial two-year term. In the role of ADRE, Hatcher-Skeers focuses in part on faculty representation and on developing strategies for the hiring and retention of historically marginalized faculty. Hatcher-Skeers serves as one point of the triumvirate Equity and Justice (EJ) Leadership team, along with Denise Nelson Nash, vice president/secretary for the Board of Trustees and convenor of the Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access (IDEA) initiative, as well as with Marissiko Wheaton-Greer, assistant dean and Scripps Communities of Resources and Empowerment (SCORE) director. As outlined in the first issue of the [Scripps IDEA Initiative Newsletter](#) in November 2021, rather than relying on one chief diversity officer, work in diversity, equity, and inclusion was elevated to the three-person EJ leadership team. Hatcher-Skeers also serves on the multi-stakeholder [Committee on Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity \(CIDE\)](#). In late June 2022, the first diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ) progress report was shared with the Scripps community, listing DEIJ progress to date, including several outcomes described in this section as well as future targets.

People -- Policies to attract and retain diverse talented faculty and staff: During the interview process, all candidates for a staff position must attest to the following statement, “Active support for the College’s Principles of Community and Principles of Diversity in the performance of job duties.” In January 2016, senior staff adopted search committee guidelines for director-level and above positions. They call for the formation of search committees including diverse perspectives, backgrounds, and demographics in their membership. On the faculty side, in late spring 2021, the Faculty Executive Committee and the full faculty approved pivotal search procedure policy changes aimed at increasing Scripps’ diversity and inclusion efforts. Updated steps include the integration of the associate dean of faculty for racial equity (ADRE) into [faculty search procedures](#) at multiple

points. For example, the ADRE meets with members of the search committee before they draft their position announcement to share current assessments of the number of faculty of color and women faculty members at the College and to discuss the department's or program's specific outreach plans for developing a diverse candidate pool. The ADRE reviews the draft position announcement developed by the search committee, then discusses the selection criteria used by the search committee in evaluating candidates. Finally, to increase the visibility and accessibility of this initiative, the faculty handbook section relating to the Faculty Diversity Statement and faculty search procedures was relocated to the faculty resources web page. We will be tracking demographic trends and changes in the diversity of applicant and candidate pools as we move forward.

Climate & Culture -- Campus Climate Survey: In October 2021, in partnership with the Liberal Arts College Racial Equity Alliance (LACRELA), Scripps launched the student component of the [National Assessment of Collegiate Campus Climates \(NACCC\)](#); the staff component was administered in spring 2022. Faculty will have the opportunity to participate in spring 2023. While Scripps College has participated in climate surveys before, their focus has been much narrower, as for example in the tri-annual Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium (HEDS) Sexual Assault Campus Climate Survey. The goal of the NACCC addresses DEIJ purposes by providing contextual data about stakeholder perceptions of the racial climate on campus, including: affirmation and mattering (defined as others noticing and caring about what respondents think, want, and have to say); encounters with racial stress; and appraisals of institutional commitment. The NACCC is administered through the University of Southern California's Race and Equity Center (about which see [Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access \(IDEA\) Initiative newsletters](#)). The NACCC provided a customized report of the student survey early fall 2022, reporting a student response rate of 17.5%, and including comparison data with selected peer institutions. Raw data will be used by the office of assessment and institutional research to run additional, disaggregated analyses. The Committee of Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity (CIDE) will take the lead on reviewing the report results and using the data to make action step recommendations to the Scripps senior leadership team.

Education -- Training in Anti-Racist Learning: The College has [partnered with the California Conference for Equality and Justice \(CCEJ\)](#) since 2018, and during 2020-2021 worked together to present a racial justice training series for students, faculty, and staff. The Racial Justice Training sessions were stand-alone dialogue-centered workshops with faculty and staff participants, focused on topics critical to foster understanding in an inclusive community. Session topics included *Valuing Black Lives* and *Cultivating Values-Aligned, Interdependent Relationships*. As mentioned above, Scripps College joined the new Liberal Arts College Racial Equity Alliance (LACRELA). In 2020, LACRELA was formed in partnership with the University of Southern California, with 51 member colleges and universities. Benefits include monthly eConvenings led by experts in the field who focus on different aspects of racial equity. As an inaugural LACRELA member, Scripps sends representatives to the eConvenings, who then share their learning with staff and faculty through the College's ConverAction discussion series. Topics have included *Fostering and Sustaining Inclusive Classrooms for Students of Color* and *Accountability and Incentives for Advancing Racial Equity*. More than 80 faculty, staff, and trustees have attended these sessions in total, and [all LACRELA eConvening session materials](#) are made available to the Scripps community.

Education – Curricular and Student/Community Events & Workshops: The 2019-2020 IDEA Initiative Year-End report spoke to several initiatives focused on decolonizing Scripps and providing financial, academic, and social support to ensure the success of Indigenous students. One stride in this direction was the approval of a [Native American/Indigenous Studies \(NAIS\) minor](#) at Scripps College in November 2020, which was the result of tireless advocacy by faculty and students across the 5Cs, including a 2020 Scripps faculty working group. A sample of student events geared toward creating community and educating participants on DEIJ topics included the fall 2021 Equity and Justice (EJ) student community dinner, the spring 2022 EJ/Scripps Communities of Resources and Empowerment (SCORE) student leader lunch, and an all-community Gender Identity and Pronouns workshop.

Impact: Demographic Trends

Scripps College's commitment to inclusivity, listed in the [most recent DEIJ report](#), manifests in terms of the array of diversity, equity, inclusivity, and justice (DEIJ) initiatives described above. A question of great interest to us concerns how (or whether) Scripps' commitment results in improved demographic metrics.

Community Demographics: An obvious marker of impact would be improved faculty and staff headcounts by demographics as well as student enrollment by demographics. We examined several relevant dashboards on the [WSCUC KID website](#), the IDEA Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion [dashboard](#), and the College's [Fact Book](#) and [Common Data Sets](#). This examination allowed Scripps to respond to one of the recommendations of the 2018 Interim Report committee, namely to provide year-over-year changes in the demographic profiles of students, faculty and staff since the last reaffirmation.

The percentage of students of color as of fall 2021 was 41%. Over the 2014-2020 time range the students of color percentage averaged 40% and fluctuated from a low of 37% in 2016 to a high of 44% in 2020. As a subset, the percent of Black students averaged 4% during the same period, starting at 3% in 2014, and staying at 4% since then.

For staff, an average of 54% staff were people of color from 2014-2020. Considering staff by job classification for 2020-2021, staff of color made up 59% (113 of 191) at the coordinator level, 39% (26 of 66) at the middle management level, and 57% (4 of 7) at the senior staff level. Sixty-nine percent of staff were female.

For the faculty, looking from 2014-2020, the average percentage of faculty of color was 24%, ranging from 20% in 2015 to a high of 27% in 2019. Sixty-two percent of faculty overall were reported as female. The headcount of full-time tenured female faculty increased from 31 to 35, comparing 2016-2017 to 2020-2021, with the headcount of male full-time tenured faculty decreasing slightly in the same time period.

Overall, we observed incremental changes in demographic trends across faculty, staff, and student headcounts over the past few years. The data indicates that increased diversity among faculty, staff, and students requires more work. Scripps is committed to this endeavor as evidenced by the new faculty hiring processes and the most recent iteration of the IDEA initiative.

The work of the President's Advisory Committee on Diversity and Inclusivity (PACDI) and the first IDEA Initiative, IDEA 1.0, built a solid foundation on which the Committee of Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity (CIDE) and DEIJ leadership are building. Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access (IDEA) 2.0 is an initiative from the current Centennial strategic plan that will continue, reaffirm, and expand the steps started in IDEA 1.0. The goal of IDEA 2.0 is to "build a stronger, more inclusive community in which members understand, appreciate, and learn from each other's differences of identity, experience, and access to resources." A complementary goal of IDEA 2.0 is to cultivate a greater sense of belonging. Such an initiative not only enhances students' experiences while at Scripps but also equips them to enrich and transform their post-graduate communities.

Demographic enrollment markers are slow-moving. We are carefully cultivating a welcoming environment and will use these headcount and percentage breakdown figures (along with other relevant metrics such as campus climate data) to monitor demographic trends.

Inclusive Student Success Reflection Sessions

As part of the TPR self-study, we engaged with community stakeholders, asking them first for their definition of success for a Scripps student before narrowing the question to ask specifically about the *Inclusive Student Success (ISS)* theme.

Evident across both discussion sessions was the caring regard that faculty and staff have for Scripps students and their needs. Faculty and staff want each Scripps student to feel seen, heard, and supported in every facet of their life. The word "holistic" emerged repeatedly.

Faculty Participants: Faculty tended to define success at a more granular, department specific level, and then at a more humanistic level, with broad overlaps across disciplines. Remarkably both for the success and *Inclusive Student Success* definition discussions, faculty answered the prompts similarly despite their differing disciplinary homes.

Faculty described *Student Success* as students mastering relevant skills, tools, knowledge, critical thinking (willingness and ability to problem solve), the ability to communicate and collaborate with others, and being prepared for highly selective positions or post-graduate education in the field. Faculty's ideas of *Inclusive Student Success* were student-centered, helping students perform "where they want to be" and to internalize the tenet that "the others are not your standard, you are your own standard." Faculty in general tended to articulate that they wanted students to enjoy their field, engage in intellectual inquiry, challenge hierarchies or traditionalism, recognize their own assumptions, and be versatile. Faculty members identified educational goals such as the academic journey itself, developing one's intellectual curiosity, discovering one's passion, and acquiring a new way of seeing the world. These goals, they conveyed, could be incorporated into any career or life path Scripps students might take. As one faculty member said, "Do what you want to do, let's do that!"

Faculty discussions around *Inclusive Student Success* tended to be extended and very engaging. There were several common themes about ISS that resonated across academic disciplines that are summarized below:

- *Providing access to everyone.* This involves removing barriers to course-taking (such as the expense of supplies), providing multiples modes of instruction and assessment whenever possible (universal design), and enabling students to major in a specific field regardless of their finances. Scripps' removal of lab fees was brought up as an example of creating access. "Access to everyone" exemplifies the overlap of the *ISS* theme with the *Innovative Learning Organization* theme, where faculty creativity was required to provide access and meet students' needs inclusively. Faculty noted that in their role "this is what we do." Faculty suggested peer mentors as supports for our first-gen students and others who may be more

comfortable asking a peer for support.

- *Allowing room to grow and to fail.* This centered on faculty wanting students to feel comfortable experimenting (through low stakes activities and assignments), and to understand failure in the courageous pursuit of something difficult as a natural part of the learning process. Students who can navigate failures with a growth mindset build resiliency and gain invaluable information for future challenges.
- *Representing the experiences of all students in the classroom.* This idea spoke to ensuring the incorporation of a multiplicity of student views, perspectives, and interests in a fashion that does not feel forced.
- *Creating a classroom space where students feel welcome and able to participate.* As a faculty member stated: “When I hear the word[s] inclusivity and learning, in very simple terms, I think about being in the classroom with 12 students and whether all of them are participating, listening to one another, or building a community for the class because they learn more when they do that.”

Two additional items were generated from faculty discussions. First, faculty of color carry an added burden as mentors/advisors/counselors to students of color, and feel that they are “wearing 500 hats,” straining their own mental health and wellbeing. Second, race and ethnicity-centered discussions that often occurred in Core I were mentioned as a potential trigger for students of color. Faculty expressed concern about loading just one CORE course with the double goal of teaching writing skills and critical discussion of race/ethnicity as potentially untenable. These concerns are being addressed through our CORE reimagining process, a process we delve into later in the *Innovative Learning Organization (ILO)* section of this component.

Staff Participants: Success was defined by Student Affairs staff as holistic, with the overarching goal of making sure that students would leave Scripps with a “feeling of wholeness, emotional maturity match[ing] with their degree.” An observation was made that with the break that COVID created in the continuity of norms, staff have

struggled to help fill the emotional maturity gap seen in some of our students. Tangible life-after-graduation skills also matter to staff, who help Scripps students learn how to navigate their future environments by themselves. Student Affairs staff described *Inclusive Student Success* as students seeking a college experience where they would not have to question their belonging to the Scripps community.

Student Participants: Students commented on the idea of success in the context of being shaped by one's engagement in the campus community. Students defined student success in the following ways:

- Having “the resources and support to build and live the life that best supports your soul.”
- “Ensuring ongoing support for first gen alum & first gen program & support in admin staff/resources.”
- Gaining skills needed for a post-graduate job and career.
- Showing courage by “dismantling systems!” and “trying your best and having it pay off.”

Student responses to the theme of *Inclusive Student Success* centered on everyone feeling welcome. For example, one student stated that “creating spaces meant for everyone, thinking about the obstacles that students face in regards to school in an intersectional way; providing culturally appropriate spaces & events for everyone; making everyone feel welcome & WANTED!” and having access for all. They recommended that the College “add more financial support for FLI [first-generation and/or low income] students, [g]rants that are not loans, summer storage grants, and housing options during winter & summer.”

Summary of ISS Findings: As part of our examination of the *ISS* theme, we considered access to Scripps College, finding that student debt has stayed at a low constant even as tuition prices have risen. This speaks to Scripps' financial commitment to students, sustained by increasing amounts of institutional scholarship and grant awards. We continue to work to understand the views shared in various forums, the stories they tell, and to identify opportunities to tell our own story about our commitment to student access and success through financial aid. Although enrollment has not changed noticeably in the last decade in terms of student diversity,

our retention numbers traditionally do not differ for BIPOC students when compared to white students. Scripps College has strong numbers of female faculty and staff, and a reasonable distribution of BIPOC staff to support students. These are points of pride and position Scripps well for further improvements.

Scripps seeks to promote a college experience open to differing identities and voices that imbues its community with confidence, courage, and hope. A diverse community is an imperative for academic excellence. The *Inclusive Student Success* theme embodies goals and objectives from the 2007 Diversity Strategic plan, the 2013 Diversity Strategic Plan, our current Centennial strategic plan, the Committee on Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity effort ([CIDE](#)), and the Inclusion Diversity Equity Access ([IDEA](#)) Initiative. The overarching goal of all these efforts is to demonstrate the College's increased commitment to economic, ethnic, religious, disability, political, gender, and cultural diversity, including Scripps ongoing commitment to anti-racist structures. Scripps creates and implements DEIJ initiatives to foster an inclusive and inviting Scripps campus climate.

Scripps stakeholders define success as ensuring that all students are well-prepared for a career post-Scripps and, while at Scripps, can enjoy, engage, and thrive in any academic field. Stakeholder responses about Inclusive Student Success centered on access and belonging. A consensus emerged that students should feel no barriers to becoming a Scripps student or to engaging fully in their curricular and co-curricular experiences. Stakeholders spoke to the importance of students feeling a sense of belonging while at Scripps, whether in the classroom or as a valued part of the community.

Inclusive Student Success Opportunities

The College takes pride in its accomplishments while acknowledging that we have more work to do. As an institution, we move forward confidently and hopefully in pursuing *Inclusive Student Success*. Our study of the data reveals an environment with policies and practices being put in place to welcome all community members. Additionally, Scripps has become ever more transparent around making multi-year data on academic outcomes

by race/ethnicity and demographic trends publicly accessible (e.g., on the [IDEA Dashboard](#)).

The findings of our self-study suggest multiple opportunities for moving the *ISS* theme forward. For example, Scripps can: (1) find more ways to tell the comprehensive story of how Scripps College supports students financially; (2) add additional data points to annual Key Performance Indicator presentations as metrics of success such as belonging data by race/ethnicity from Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) Institute surveys and campus culture data captured through the National Assessment of Collegiate Campus Climates (NACCC) surveys; and (3) continue our forward momentum through DEIJ-focused recruitment and retention strategies. The first opportunity reflects the concern that especially as tuition costs rise, traditional markers do not tell a complete story of Scripps' financial aid commitment to the students it admits. We can and should identify additional ways to frame and accurately communicate our institutional story. Regarding the second opportunity, small sample sizes hinder breakdown analyses of the data on belonging that we collect from student surveys such as the Campus Senior Survey, preventing trend observation and conclusive interpretation. We look forward to future breakdown analyses of HERI Institute data and are looking into ways to facilitate this by increasing survey response rates. With respect to the third opportunity, Scripps enthusiastically commits itself to DEIJ efforts for students, faculty, and staff. We have implemented significant changes from the moment students are recruited through their completion of studies and post-graduation as well as to faculty and staff search processes and learning opportunities around DEIJ topics for all community members. As we weave inclusive policies into our day-to-day work at Scripps, we will continue to celebrate changes we note while monitoring progress and/or setbacks.

TPR Theme #2: Innovative Learning Organization (CFR 1.5, 2.4, 2.1, 2.8, 3.3, 4.3, 4.4, 4.6)

Overview

Since Scripps' inception, the humanities have been central to the College's mission. Scripps College has

intentionally focused on advancing teaching and learning across and beyond the organization, while staying true to its mission: “to educate women to develop their intellects and talents through active participation in a community of scholars.” That community of scholars is comprised of dedicated teachers who value the humanistic preparation all students receive throughout their Scripps education.

The theme [*Innovative Learning Organization \(ILO\)*](#) was framed as Scripps’ roadmap for the direction of teaching and learning practices. The theme asks how we will “employ innovative strategies to take advantage of 21st-century approaches to education while preserving what is best about our traditions.” At the 2017 community-wide strategic planning workshop, attendees provided suggestions on how each strategic pillar could be implemented. The top three suggestions by community members to implement the *Innovative Learning Organization (ILO)* theme were: #1. *Technology*, #2. *Core Curriculum*, and #3. *Innovative Teaching*. These same suggestions emerged during the TPR self-study stakeholder reflection sessions.

The related guiding questions that were generated from the 2017 community planning workshops under the strategic pillar of *Innovative Learning Organization* serve as a guide for our *ILO* inquiry.

- ❖ What initiatives would unleash innovation at Scripps/enhance how Scripps becomes a leader in the revitalization of liberal arts education?
- ❖ How could technology be used to transform the Scripps experience?

[Access: A New Framework for the Core Curriculum](#)

Students’ first engagement with and access point to the humanities at Scripps College occurs in the [Core Curriculum in Interdisciplinary Humanities](#) program. The TPR process gave us the opportunity to engage faculty and students in conversation about Core. Feedback from our sessions as well as through other parallel discussions on campus led us to ask how the Core Curriculum could be reimaged in innovative ways to meet the needs of our present and future students.

Structure of the Core Curriculum

The Core Curriculum at Scripps College has been a touchstone in a Scripps student's academic journey, even as its format and approach has altered over the years to incorporate changing student needs and higher education priorities. The current Core program is a reinvention of the institution's original "Humanities" sequence, and its present structure consists of a sequence of three courses: Core I, Core II, and Core III, offered in the first three semesters of a students' career at Scripps.

Common goals across the Core Curriculum include promoting interdisciplinary study of some of the major debates and concepts that shape the modern world, providing a shared intellectual experience for Scripps students, helping students to develop critical thinking skills through the lens of contemporary humanistic practice, and incorporating issues of race/ethnic studies and gender/women's studies. The learning goals for the different Core courses manifest students' progression through the Core Curriculum sequence. The Core I goals are for first-semester students to:

- #1. Have a shared intellectual experience.
- #2. Be introduced to interdisciplinary approaches to studying problems of historical and contemporary interest.
- #3. Develop analytical skills in reading and oral expression through small-group discussions.
- #4. Develop writing skills that emphasize argumentation and textual analysis.

For Core II, students who complete the course are expected to be able to:

- #1. Understand how and why different disciplines approach seemingly similar objects of contemporary interest and/or historical importance from different perspectives, leading to different conclusions and material consequences.
- #2. Use various disciplinary methods.
- #3. Develop their own written and oral arguments in interdisciplinary contexts.

Finally, as first-semester sophomores, students in Core III:

- #1. Independently and creatively develop their understanding of different disciplines and interdisciplinary inquiry acquired in Core I and II.
- #2. Explore and interrogate the historical construction of a particular field of inquiry.
- #3. Formulate, research, and execute a substantial project of their own design.

A primary goal of [Core I](#) is to create a unifying intellectual experience through its structure. The course, organized around a common syllabus, is team taught, with fifteen to eighteen faculty members drawn from across the college's academic divisions. In the second semester of their first year, students choose from a range of Core II courses, some of which are team-taught, where students delve more intensely into methods, issues, and problems introduced in Core I. In Core III, students choose a more specialized topic out of numerous options, out of which they [develop independent research and projects](#).

There is a symmetry to the Scripps students' academic path referred to as "the bookends," providing a distinctive education. Students start Scripps with the 3-semester Interdisciplinary Core Curriculum and end their Scripps journey with the senior thesis, a similarly shared College requirement that is different based on major. Requiring the Core Curriculum for degree completion highlights Scripps College's continued pledge to center humanistic inquiry and pedagogy within a Scripps education.

Program administrators include a Core director, who is a faculty member elected to the role for a 3-year term and who is appointed to the Elizabeth Hubert Malott Endowed Chair for the Core Curriculum in Interdisciplinary Humanities, an assistant director who is also a faculty member, and a full-time Core program coordinator. The Core director receives advice from a Core Steering Committee composed of faculty members representing each college academic division (arts, letters, natural sciences, and social sciences), the past Core director, the assistant director for Core, and the director of the Humanities Institute.

Since 2010, the Core Curriculum has focused on the overarching theme “*Histories of the Present.*” This theme was chosen to highlight the critical examination of the ideas, values, and concepts that changed our contemporary world and to expand its focus explicitly beyond western Europe. The previous theme, “*Culture, Knowledge, and Representation,*” was in place from 1997-2010. Within the broad “*Histories of the Present*” theme, a sub-theme is chosen every third year. The sub-themes to this point have been “*Human Nature and Human Difference,*” “*Violence,*” “*Community,*” “*Truth,*” and the just-begun “*Crossroads.*” Although the sub-themes change, the structure of Core occurring during the first three semesters has remained constant.

An examination of Core Curriculum student learning outcomes assessment, summarizing multi-year Core rubric ratings, indicates trends both within and across the Core courses. Reviewing a decades-worth of Core assessment data, there are modest positive increases in overall rubric ratings for Core I and Core II courses. Core III ratings have remained relatively steady since 2012-2013. The highest rubric ratings were seen in Core II for learning outcomes of demonstrating knowledge of various disciplinary methods and effectively communicating arguments orally. The Core Restructuring committee described below has access to the Core student learning outcomes assessments and will consider the goals of the courses as well as how the courses have tried to achieve these goals as they reimagine the next Core cycle.

Feedback from Past Core Curriculum Reviews

The Core Curriculum was last revised over a decade ago (2010) following a 2007 Core Program review and extensive faculty discussions reexamining the Core Curriculum themes and framework. Feedback from the most recent Core Curriculum external review (in 2017), responses to Core Program student and faculty surveys conducted as part of the 2017 self-study, faculty conversations, and TPR self-study reflection sessions reveal a program that stakeholders are eager to continue, but in a modified form.

Aggregated feedback from course evaluations and faculty and student surveys referenced in the most recent

2017 Core Curriculum self-study speak to a program that in general not only distinguishes Scripps as a liberal arts college, but also fulfills several of its cross-course goals. Challenges identified from the feedback focused both on the structure of Core and its place in the Curriculum, with clear divisions in faculty opinion. Questions centered around the meaning of interdisciplinary for the Core program, the objectives of Core I, the role of writing in Core I, the unique objectives of Core II, and the 3-semester length of the Core program.

Two specific examples of areas identified as challenging for the Core program include the goal of students becoming better writers and its interdisciplinary nature. For the former example, some feedback focused on adding to the Core program's learning objectives the goal of improving students' writing skills. This was felt all the more important since the elimination of the College Writing Requirement, Writing 50, previously a first-semester course. Self-study reports from both the Core Curriculum (in 2017) and the Writing Program (in 2018) propose adding the teaching of writing in Core I. To some faculty members, however, such a linkage is untenable as Core I has many other learning objectives. With the elimination of the writing requirement, enhanced focus on writing was added to Core II.

To the latter topic, interdisciplinary teaching in Core I has been known to push faculty outside of their comfort zones by having them teach in areas in which they have little or no expertise. Interdisciplinarity is integral to Scripps, however, and to many Scripps faculty provides "an exciting opportunity embodying the aspirations of a liberal education." Some faculty mentioned the Core teaching requirement as a reason for joining the Scripps faculty. Interdisciplinarity continues to be a goal of the Core program with greater challenges in Core I and more success in Core II and III.

In addition to and following up on these two challenges (writing and interdisciplinarity), the external reviewer team for the Core Curriculum self-study (2017) provided suggestions ranging from organizing faculty program development around facilitating difficult critical conversations, having guest speaker experts for specific Core I

topics, providing mentoring opportunities for junior Core faculty, and continuing to invest human and funding resources to the Core to safeguard against an unreasonable burden on faculty. Beyond specific targeted actions, Scripps was urged to take a step back and consider the goals of Core altogether: what ideally should students take away from such a program? The Writing Program's external review team (2018) suggested upgrading the Writing Program in terms of people, resources, and status so they could serve as consultants for Core faculty and students. Some of the steps that have been taken since the 2017 review include offering Core faculty workshops on diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ) issues, hiring Core writing peer mentors, and hiring two full-time Writing Center professional staff members who teach in Core I and support the enhancement of writing in Core II.

Feedback from Faculty Reflection Sessions

During reflection sessions with faculty members, the topic of the Core Curriculum came up frequently. While faculty expressed unanimity about Core's pivotal role in a Scripps education, they shared mixed feelings about the program. The disharmony concerned how Core should be presented to students and how it should be structured. The main areas of concern included the intertwining of writing skills and critical conversations around race/ethnicity as goals of Core I. Faculty of color especially shared that the impact of Core I race/ethnicity discussions on students of color placed additional demands on them.

Reimagining Core

Curriculum design, philosophy, and revision is faculty driven at Scripps. In spring 2022, the Faculty Executive Committee (FEC), based on the myriad evidence of need and in discussion with the full faculty, established the Core Restructuring Committee and charged it with reviewing and revising the current Core Curriculum. Given the importance of the task, the FEC has proceeded intentionally, crafting an FEC Core Restructuring Plan. On the topic of membership, it states: "The goal of the committee composition is to have representation of faculty

experienced with leadership in Core, faculty who have taught in Core (specifically Core I), faculty of various ranks, and faculty from all of the academic divisions of the College.” The Core Restructuring Committee consists of two student representatives and eight faculty members, selected with these criteria in mind.

The committee will consider the pedagogical goals of the course and how the course can remain relevant to our students, recognizing that a complete reimagining of the Core Curriculum may be appropriate. The FEC anticipates that the process will be completed in December 2023 for implementation in fall 2025.

Embedded: Innovation at Scripps

In addition to providing initial access to an evolving and responsive Humanities Curriculum as students begin their journey at Scripps College, how do we ensure that students benefit from needs-driven and Scripps-values-centered innovation throughout their years of study? Below are two example of initiatives that highlight our embedding of the *ILO* theme in our academic programs.

Innovation as Computational Skills

Aligning with the “*Technology*” theme that materialized from the 2017 community workshop rankings, an initiative emerged from the *ILO* theme working group: “Building computer science capacity and capability,” refined as “Interdisciplinary Computational Programs.” The *ILO* working group was led by Vice president for Academic Affairs/Dean of Faculty Amy Marcus-Newhall and Associate Professor of Classics David Roselli to ensure a Scripps-centric and interdisciplinary approach. Starting in 2018, Associate Dean of Faculty Jennifer Armstrong led the Computational Implementation team and focused on concrete action steps.

The pedagogical goal expressed as “Interdisciplinary Computational Programs” intends to infuse the teaching of Computer Science skills across disciplines. The five undergraduate Claremont Colleges are collectively experiencing a high demand for computer science courses, leading to overcrowding and lack of guaranteed

access to computer science courses for Scripps students. Scripps College (like Claremont McKenna College and Pitzer College) does not host its own computer science department. Through its computational initiative, Scripps College did not seek to duplicate efforts and create a Computer Science major. Rather, we wished to infuse computer science and data science into our existing course offerings for Scripps students, embracing the importance of computation across disciplines.

In Fall 2018, the Fletcher Jones Foundation [awarded \\$1 million](#) to Scripps College to establish the Fletcher Jones Scholar in Computation, a grant matched by donations. As described in our proposal to Fletcher Jones:

The creation of The Fletcher Jones Foundation Scholar in Computation will empower Scripps to offer courses in computer science with priority enrollment for Scripps students. The introductory computer science courses and the elective disciplinary courses also will be open to non-computer science majors across TCC thereby expanding the number of students who can access instruction in computational skills.

Anchored by the goal of infusing computation across multiple Scripps departments, this position is a 6-year rotating endowed faculty chair. In Fall 2019, the Fletcher Jones Scholar in Computation was hired in the Media Studies department to bring [creative, cutting edge computational opportunities](#) to Scripps students.

In addition to our new Fletcher Jones Scholar, we also hired three new tenure-track faculty members whose experiences are focused on computation in the areas of Math, Media Studies, and Physics. Scripps now offers numerous computer science and data science courses, such as the data science course *DS 001 Introduction to Python and Data Analysis* and the media studies course *MS 053 Introduction to Computational Media*. Scripps also hosted a 10-week intensive Applied Machine Learning course in conjunction with Google and sent students to a coding program offered by Adjacent Academies in partnership with Davidson College. In 2019, [a minor in Data Science](#) was approved by our faculty. With a goal of infusing computation throughout the curriculum, new and revised courses that utilize data science range from *ECON 125 Econometrics* to *BIOL 138 Applied Ecology*

and Conservation to PSYC 182 *Machine Learning Using Neural Signals* and PSYC 183 *Data Science Ethics & Justice*. In Spring 2022, faculty approved a [Computer Science minor](#) to further enrich Scripps' offerings.

We recognize the dedicated work of cross-campus stakeholders in advocating for these initiatives. They have come to fruition as a result of years of working groups and collaboration, grant preparation and awards, and hiring efforts. As markers of progress, we will track course enrollment numbers, course evaluations, and targeted questions in student surveys moving forward.

Innovation as New Practices

In summer 2018, the Mellon Foundation [awarded Scripps a four-year \\$800,000 grant](#) to support the [Mellon Interdisciplinary Humanities Initiative](#) (MIHI). This initiative includes summer fellowships to provide Scripps students the opportunity to conduct faculty-mentored research grounded in the humanities, with ancillary professional development opportunities for faculty research mentors. The ability to conduct faculty-mentored original research centered in the humanities is highly appealing to many of our students; the grant addressed a critical need. To assess the initiative, in 2021 the MIHI coordinator worked with the office of assessment and institutional research to ask summer fellowship students to share their expectations of the fellowship prior to their experience and to solicit their feedback at the close of the program. Of those who responded, 88% strongly agreed that the fellowship helped them to improve their research skills and found value in writing the final research report. Summer fellowship participants present the results of their summer research at the [annual Summer Research Tea](#) held each fall. A summer fellowship awardee reflected on the presentation of their work at the Tea: "The most rewarding part of this fellowship was the wonderful conversations I got to have with participants about identity, language, and the Scripps community."

The Mellon Interdisciplinary Humanities Initiative also supports innovative curricular work in the humanities through interdisciplinary clinic courses. These clinic courses achieve goals of the *ILO* theme working group, to

engage with the greater Los Angeles Area and highlight and nurture the “A” in STEAM. In the clinic courses, Scripps students extend their coursework and skill development beyond classroom walls, actively engaging with one or more community partner(s) as a group. Why is such an initiative so important to us? Our Mellon grant application articulated Scripps’ commitment to humanities education:

At Scripps, where a third of our students choose to major in the humanities, and all our students engage with our 3-semester Interdisciplinary Humanities Core Program, we acknowledge that this exploration of history, language, and culture are essential to critical thinking, effective communication, and creative problem solving. The skills imparted by a comprehensive humanities-based course of study form a key foundation for the formation of ethical, inclusive, and responsible citizens. This is essential to the mission of Scripps College and the students that we graduate.

The Mellon-funded clinic courses invite students to engage in interdisciplinary work beyond the four walls of a Scripps College or consortium college classroom. Their immersion in the human experience enriches their learning, in connection with work that faculty pursue passionately. When the clinic courses were first initiated, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of Faculty Amy Marcus-Newhall explained, “For faculty, the clinics are an extension of the dedicated work several already have been doing in the community with groups that include incarcerated women, immigrants, and local schools.” The Mellon grant, as detailed in the Year-4 summary report, affords faculty the opportunity to develop new clinic courses. Examples of humanities course community partnerships include links with the local [Chaparral Elementary](#) school, the [dACenter for the Arts](#) (a non-profit arts space in a neighboring city), and [Critical Resistance](#), a grassroots movement seeking to end the modern prison industrial complex. Faculty evaluations of clinic courses included feedback on the personal impact of the course, e.g. *“Though this class required quite a lot of time and energy, it was probably the most rewarding class I have ever taught, marrying both my professional and teaching practices.”*

Mellon grants seek to create foundations that inspire additional initiatives, developing legacies of action and

engagement rather than simply addressing an immediate targeted need. Scripps will soon reach the end of the current MIHI grant. We have benefited from the opportunity to build a program that furthers Scripps humanistic endeavors and supports both faculty and student creativity and risk-taking.

Innovative Learning Organization Reflection Sessions

As part of our TPR self-study, we sought out and received valuable feedback around the *ILO* theme and reached a deeper understanding of how innovation is defined.

Faculty Participants: Faculty were asked to give their authentic feedback. The theme name itself, *Innovative Learning Organization*, received some criticism. Some faculty preferred terms such as change or creativity.

Faculty feedback included the following ideas:

- *Innovation is embedded in the very nature of Scripps faculty teaching.* Faculty across the disciplines stated that innovation, specifically change inspired by student needs, drives the alterations they make in their pedagogy. Many mentioned that they were already making changes in their teaching to enhance student learning, in ways not always connected to technology. For example, faculty mentioned approaches such as “ungrading” (See [Susan Blum’s Ungrading \[2020\]](#)), and several faculty mentioned the spring 2021 Center for Teaching and Learning workshop *Ungrading* led by Scripps’ associate professor Michelle Decker.
- *Innovation is inclusive.* Despite querying faculty about themes as individual projects, and even when foregrounding the *ILO*, faculty’s definitions frequently integrated the other theme, *Inclusive Student Success*. For many faculty, innovation involves superseding canonical, global, cultural identity, and/or western norms, and moving into teaching focused on social justice. For any innovative strategy to be worthwhile, faculty shared, the academic needs of individual students must be met so that they can fully engage with the course.
- *Innovation involves rethinking the traditional classroom experience.* Faculty discussed creative

approaches taken to teach remotely during the pandemic and unexpected insights that arose from those adaptations. Additionally, several courses were highlighted as being innovative in that they challenged the tenet that learning needs to occur within four walls. These courses included [Political Economics of Food](#), which features an intergenerational partnership with elder co-learners from [Pilgrim Place](#), a “vibrant and inclusive senior community committed to justice, peace, and care of the Earth,” and [Inside-Out Classes](#), “part of the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program, a national program in which college students and young incarcerated students come together in an integrated learning environment.” Faculty also discussed moving away from using textbooks for courses, integrating peer-reviewed readings and open-source materials instead.

- *Innovation requires courage and brings its own challenges.* Faculty emphasized that innovation requires support: preparation time and the latitude to allow for experimentation and growth. Faculty members shared that innovation requires bravery; it is hard to try something new, knowing that it might fail. Faculty believe that innovation thrives when failure is allowed and regrouping receives support and encouragement.

We were intrigued that the concept of giving space for and permitting failure also came up in our faculty discussions of the ISS theme. Faculty had observed that for students fully to challenge themselves and take intellectual risks, they must be granted the latitude occasionally to fail. Faculty held that classes should be structured to promote risk taking that could result in failure; students’ brave attempts should be valued, and failure should not compromise their success in a course.

Staff Participants: The main staff feedback on the *ILO* theme was obtained during a meeting with the interim vice president for student affairs/dean of students and Student Affairs staff, who delved into the hindrances to innovation. Conversations revealed that the consortial nature of Scripps might impede innovation; when change must be coordinated with four other colleges, it can get slowed down. Some voices offered that Scripps has

traditionally been overly cautious. The overall recommendation thus concerned willingness to fail; innovation viewed with clemency about outcomes would benefit students. Student Affairs staff affirmed that staff share a responsibility for learning and teaching, so the responsibility does not rest solely on faculty.

Student Participants: Possibly because of its title, students felt that Innovative Learning Organization seemed administrative rather than student-centered. Students suggested alternative words for innovation, such as “creativity,” “break-through moments,” and “everyone benefits.”

Summary of ILO Findings: Scripps encourages and supports transformative teaching and learning. Faculty embrace collaboration within Scripps, throughout the consortium, and with community partners, with the goal of effective and excellent teaching. The humanities have been and continue to be central to Scripps, even as the context, tools, and methodology for nurturing critical thinking, conversation, and the exploration of ideas shift over time. Faculty and staff seek to expand an array of distinct innovative strategies, taking advantage of novel and brave approaches to education including the Core Curriculum, while preserving what is best about the College’s traditions.

Innovative Learning Organization Opportunities

For Scripps College the theme of *Innovative Learning Organization* means keeping the humanities integral to a Scripps education, even as conscientious professionals continuously experiment with new forms and methods and refine the curriculum and co-curriculum. Thoughtful planning for the future means that we anticipate students’ needs and move forward with evidence-based initiatives and policies that are in turn followed by assessment.

We see an innovative future that presents exciting opportunities: continuing to embed appropriate technology; supporting faculty’s creative pedagogical endeavors; and retooling key components such as the Core Curriculum.

We learned during our investigation that the concept of courage is baked into innovation. In the interest of

students' academic, physical, and mental well-being, now and in the future, the College commits to facilitating risk-taking through experimentation and evaluation by faculty, staff, and students, with mechanisms in place to assess results and apply the lessons learned. We understand that it will take practice and bravery to support the freedom to fail, so we move forward hopefully, confidently, and courageously.

COMPONENT 9: CONCLUSION

May life be free and full, life be unencumbered,

Vision and growth through the years may it hold.

Thy many gifts to us, thy benefits unnumbered

May we return, Alma Mater, threefold.

-- 2nd half of Scripps College Alma Mater "*Thy Many Gifts.*"

A decade on from our last reaccreditation visit, we find Scripps College in a place of strong momentum and transition. The TPR has given us the opportunity to delve into and gain new insights into two essential strategic themes that will guide the transformation of the College moving forward. As we reflect on our self-study process, we are grateful for the opportunities for conversation and study that it stimulated.

Our investigation into the themes of *Inclusive Student Success* and *Innovative learning Organization* yielded specific action steps such as revising the rubrics used for curricular assessment to include context, ensuring that the financial aid portrait painted for students is comprehensive. During this year our faculty have taken steps to begin the review and restructuring of our Core Program. We found much to consider, articulate, and implement at a higher level, fostering an environment where experimentation and risk-taking is acceptable and appreciated, identifying and tracking students' sense of belonging to the Scripps community from the moment they choose to apply, and making sure that an application to Scripps is appealing to people in all potential student demographics.

Scripps College stands aware of challenges presented by its very nature, a small liberal arts college and a women's college. We seek to ensure the necessary evolution of the College while staying true to our foundational mission and values. Additional opportunities emerge from the recent arrival of new senior administrative leadership in several crucial roles, including Suzanne Keen, our president, DeMethra LaSha

Bradley , vice president for student affairs/dean of students, and from our upcoming search for a new vice president for academic affairs/dean of faculty (as this is Dean Marcus-Newhall's final year in this role) Fresh eyes and new ideas will reinvigorate the institution, just as each new student generation challenges us both to live up to our traditional values and change our ways through purposeful innovation.

We stand poised to take on these challenges confident in our mission and shared vision for the future of Scripps students, who will make a difference in this world by: “think[ing]clearly and independently, and [with] the ability to live confidently, courageously, and hopefully.”