

Chapter 8

Student Experiences and Services

Overview

The student experience at Lancaster Bible College (LBC) begins with inquiry by prospective students and continues beyond graduation as our alumni live lives influenced by their LBC experience. Three departments on campus primarily oversee this progression: Enrollment Services, Student Services, and Alumni Relations.

The purpose of Enrollment Services is to identify, recruit, and admit students who are seeking educational and spiritual growth in preparation for Christian service. The Student Services Department exists to help fulfill our mission by cultivating a culture that encourages students to assess life and circumstances in light of a biblical worldview. Through intentional investment and deliberate care, Student Services challenges students to live a life marked by integrity and effort, develop healthy habits of stewardship and living, grow in their God-given passions and abilities, and serve the college community, the Church, and the world. The mission of Alumni Relations is to enrich the alumni experience by engaging and enhancing LBC's alumni community with the college and with each other, while providing support as they proclaim Christ by serving Him in the Church and society.

This section of the self-study report examines how these three departments reinforce the mission of the college while examining key issues relating to the following MSCHE standards.

Standards

MSCHE Standard 8: Student Admissions and Retention

The institution seeks to admit students whose interests, goals, and abilities are congruent with its mission.

MSCHE Standard 9: Student Services

The institution provides student support services reasonably necessary to enable each student to achieve the institution's goals for students.

A reading of this chapter will also lend support to our compliance with MSCHE Standard 7.

MSCHE Standard 7: Institutional Assessment

The institution has developed and implemented an assessment plan and process that evaluates its overall effectiveness in achieving its mission and goals and its compliance with accreditation standards.

Compliance Documented

In keeping with a comprehensive report with a focus on key issues, the reader is directed to our Documentation Roadmap showing evidence of our compliance with all appropriate fundamental elements of [Standard 8](#) and [Standard 9](#). We track the assessment and planning aspects of these standards through Taskstream workspaces for Admissions, Student Life, Resident Life, Financial Aid, Health Services, Solution Center, Athletics, Career & Counseling, and Adult Learner Services. While the Documentation Roadmap and Appendices of this chapter include quite a few examples of evidence documentation, one of the more notable ones tied to our expanding outreach to adult students is [Appendix 8D](#) where findings from the Adults Student Priorities

Survey (ASPS) and the Priority Survey of Online Learners (PSOL) are analyzed. The results of the ASPS show that LBC students in our accelerated undergraduate degree programs have a higher rate of satisfaction with their college than the national comparison group in all categories. Areas of particular strength identified by the survey results include; faculty being knowledgeable in their fields, excellence of instruction, quality of academic advising, and LBC's adherence to our Core Values and Goals.

The remainder of this chapter includes additional evidences of compliance within the framework of the key issues we have chosen to focus on in this study.

Research Questions

“The primary purpose of the self-study report is to advance institutional self-understanding and self-improvement” (*Self-Study: Creating a Useful Process and Report*, 2006, p. 4). With that purpose in mind, the following research questions guided the study group in preparing this section:

1. What changes or additions need to be made in our current advertising/recruitment plan as we move from a regional to a national institution?
2. What evidence is there that the Enrollment Services team is adjusting to a changing demographic of students (at all levels) yet remaining steadfast in mission?
3. How effective are we at raising awareness of support services to all students in the LBC community?
4. How effective are the services/experiences we provide to online students in supporting comprehensive development, achievement of learning outcomes, and support of our

mission? What evidence is there that the student service needs of the Capital Seminary & Graduate School are being met regardless of location or instructional delivery system?

5. What evidence exists that our strategy for financial aid and our scholarship fund are meeting the needs of our current student population and are poised to be successful for a growing number of incoming students in the future?
6. How does the percentage of our students taking out loans and our cohort default rate compare to national and other norms? What steps, if any, can be taken to address any issues found?

Analysis of Key Issues

Enrollment Services

Move from a Regional to a National Institution

LBC believes it has grown from a regional to a national institution. In addition to the acquisition of additional locations and instructional sites, LBC is offering more “salt and light” majors that attract more Christian students who desire to have a solid professional education with a biblical worldview in order to be representatives of Christ in the secular workplace. Rather than focusing exclusively on majors that prepare students for full-time professional Christian ministries, LBC offers majors that are beyond church and para-church organizations. New majors such as Social Work, Communication, and Business Administration, as well as re-named programs such as Counseling (formerly Christian Counseling), Music (formerly Church Music), and Intercultural Studies (formerly Missions) now have the potential of attracting a larger audience from beyond the region.

In order to capitalize on the new and re-purposed majors and to move LBC from a regional to a national institution, our marketing and recruitment plan needs to identify and create relationships with a larger network of prospective students. The majority of prospective students investigate institutions online prior to any form of formal communication. As a result, the college's website must be consistent with its culture and its mission, and appropriately engage students as they begin to explore their potential journey at LBC. Building strategic relationships with various feeder organizations in the communities where we are located reinforces this online experience. To that end, the college is applying to our adult online and graduate school recruitment the strategies that proved successful in developing productive connections at the traditional undergraduate level.

An optional analysis from page 32 of *Characteristics of Excellence, 2006*, calls for conducting a "review of the enrollment management plan for recruitment, retention, marketing, and advertising." LBC has been doing so on a limited basis, but for maximum effectiveness we need to be intentional about consistently increasing and developing key relationships.

Currently, for the Greenbelt, Maryland location, our marketing team is working to identify the best strategic partners as well as media outlets. Additionally, we are diligently seeking the best connections for our videography and photography needs in our other locations as well. Many more such efforts are needed to help make LBC known to the maximum number of people who are missionally suited to our institution in the areas surrounding our various locations.

The Marketing Department has to work with the offices of Advancement and Enrollment Services to conduct a more systematic and "periodic review of admissions catalogs, viewbooks, websites, recruiting and other relevant materials for accuracy and effectiveness" in building

brand awareness in each new location we serve (an optional analysis from *Characteristics of Excellence*, 2006, p. 32). Many of these sites are not familiar with the core of LBC, so the first step is to establish our identity within the Christian community with whom we are making contact. Building brand identity needs to be strategically executed, and will take time to cultivate our institutional brand awareness. Our website is our first impression.

As LBC expands, we need to identify which marketing materials can be used across all locations and which need to be contextualized for the individual site. In order to be efficient, effective, and professional with such a vast array of materials, we need to look for ways to best manage the inventory across all of the sites. Consequently, we need to develop the tools and techniques to ensure brand consistency across all sites. We will need to identify employees to function as site liaisons to our Marketing Department in order to keep communication lines flowing and create a constituent marketing message that can be used across locations. Additionally, we need to gain an understanding contextualized to each location to determine the most effective communication/marketing strategies. We need to research exemplary business models in order to provide the best models for LBC to utilize.

Therefore, increasing our network of media partners who know our mission and vision and who have resources near our various locations is the primary objective that will propel our marketing plan from locally effective to nationally effective. Though time-consuming, these relationships need to be developed and our vendor partners in the area of marketing need to be trained to clearly understand our unique mission, vision, and strategies. Building brand identity will be key to drawing in the right people with our marketing and recruiting plans. With such growth, astute

organization and communication will be pillars of our success as we move from a regional to a national institution.

Another factor that impacts LBC's move from a regional to national institution is our ability to adjust to the changing demographic of students at all academic levels while remaining steadfast to our mission. For traditional undergraduate admissions, a few key factors in the demographic of new students have caused adjustments in recruiting strategies. The key factors driving changes, taken from the [Barna Report on Biblical Higher Education](#) (Appendix 8A) and the Office of Admissions [New Student Survey in 2014 and 2015](#) (Appendix 8B), are that:

1. Prospective students want to integrate faith with learning.
2. More students are traveling farther from home to come to LBC.
3. The top five institutions to which our students are applying include two which are outside our regional area.

Using these as benchmarks, we are aware that our geographical footprint has expanded and that our closest competitors are no longer necessarily in Pennsylvania and New York. The LBC brand is now being held in high regard in biblical higher education and Christian circles outside the region. Therefore, the traditional undergraduate Admissions Office has changed recruiting strategies in these ways:

1. Our Charger Days (on-campus recruitment event) mailing has been cast in a wider circle, expanding from a 100-mile radius to a 175-mile radius. Further, Admissions has begun to work closely with the Marketing Department to update print and video marketing materials.
2. In 2015, the admissions staff traveled to more college fairs, covering New Jersey, Ohio, upper New York, and Maryland. In 2016, we will expand further into North

Carolina and South Carolina. The staff visited 12 additional college fairs in 2015-16 and are including additional Christian conferences (like Creation Music Festival).

3. For 2015-16, we accepted students in a teach-out from two Christian colleges, one in Wisconsin and one in Florida. We have reached into these markets and expect to see additional students from these regions in 2016. (See also Financial Aid section later in this chapter.)
4. The experience of campus visits has been restructured to accommodate more students traveling from greater distances to explore our new facilities and majors. The 2015-16 academic year saw a 68% increase in campus visits from the previous year.

For Accelerated Undergraduate Degrees (AUD), our Adult Learner Services team is working to develop and build recruiting strategies at all locations. One overall strategy we have employed is to have more information sessions available at the different locations. Prospective students are encouraged to sign up for an information session at the campus location. While only 50% of those who sign up actually attend, the percentage of attendees who enroll remains high. The AUD admissions team tracks those students who sign up but do not attend, creating a personalized recruitment plan for those individuals.

Adult Learner Services is also working on expanding the demographic of AUD students at various locations. At our Greenbelt location, the average student is 47 years old. While this location continues to attract this demographic, the “ideal” student is between ages 28-35 and has a clear focus on what God is doing in his or her life. Greenbelt recruiters are partnering with local churches/events/conferences to target this age demographic.

Another avenue of AUD recruiting has been in our partnerships with non-accredited Bible institutes. Through these partnerships, students can come to LBC to complete their undergraduate education. (See Chapter 4 for more about LBC's Memoranda of Understanding with non-accredited institutions as well as research regarding their students' success at LBC.) Partnerships with these types of institutions, especially those associated with large churches, are already having a significant impact on AUD enrollment considering their current enrollment, the large number of alumni from these institutes, and the regional networks of the pastors. In addition, Adult Learner Services recently brought in a recruitment marketing specialist who is helping to develop recruitment plans and communication systems to meet the needs of LBC's adult student population.

Diversity

During our 2007 Self-Study process, the following suggestion was made:

The Evaluation Team endorses what seems to be an awareness and sensitivity on campus to the issues of diversity and suggests that the college create diversity initiatives or plans at every level in order to intentionally create the diverse environment that is being discussed on so many different levels. The initiatives would then provide specific areas for assessment and future planning.

In response to this recommendation, our 2012 Periodic Review Report noted, "LBC is promoting and creating a culture of diversity on campus by engaging different student cultures. LBC also continues to reach out to multi-cultural students through focused recruiting."

While LBC’s overall ethnic diversity has broadened due largely to the acquisition of the educational programs of another metropolitan school and the addition of urban locations and instructional sites, the Lancaster campus has also become more ethnically diverse since the 2012 Periodic Review Report. According to 2014 Lancaster County census information, 91% of Lancaster County residents are White, non-Hispanic. LBC’s Lancaster campus population of White, non-Hispanic students is 76%. When compared to the racial and ethnic diversity of four other schools in the area, LBC is near the middle of the five institutions.

Table 8.1

Ethnic Diversity - Local Campuses							
			Total Student Enrollment - 2014 IPEDS Data				
	2014 Census Lancaster County	Lancaster Bible College	Elizabethtown College	Lebanon Valley College	Millersville University	Lancaster Bible College	Franklin & Marshall College
White only	91%	76%	86%	83%	78%	76%	59%
All others	9%	24%	14%	17%	22%	24%	41%

When comparing LBC to local public institutions drawing from urban areas, LBC is nine percentage points less diverse than the nearest campus of the Pennsylvania State University system and just seven percentage points less diverse than Harrisburg Area Community College’s multiple campuses.

Table 8.2

Ethnic Diversity - Urban Campuses				
		Total Student Enrollment - 2014 IPEDS Data		
	Lancaster Bible College	Penn State York	Penn State Harrisburg	Harrisburg Area Community College
White only	76%	67%	62%	69%
All others	24%	33%	38%	31%

The following table shows LBC’s ethnic diversity across all its campuses.

Table 8.3

Ethnicity by Campus - 2014						
	Lancaster, PA	Greenbelt, MD	Philadelphia, PA	Memphis, TN	Indianapolis, IN	Boca Raton, FL
Non-Resident Alien	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Hispanic/Latino	2.1%	3.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	11.1%
American Indian	0.2%	0.0%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Asian	1.2%	6.2%	1.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Black/African American	10.2%	50.4%	95.9%	92.0%	66.7%	5.6%
White	66.7%	10.0%	0.0%	6.3%	16.7%	50.0%
Two or More	2.5%	2.1%	0.0%	0.9%	0.0%	5.6%
Unknown	17.1%	27.4%	2.0%	0.9%	16.7%	27.8%

Enrollment Services and Student Support Services

The Solution Center

One of the key issues identified by our self-study steering committee was the creation of our Solution Center. In 2008, LBC moved to an enrollment management format to combine six departments into one building, the Esbenshade Enrollment Management Center. The six major departments are Admissions, Registrar, Business Office, Financial Aid, Information Systems, and the President's Office. Since the first four of these six are so closely interrelated for incoming students, having all four located together allowed prospective students to come to one building to take care of all their enrollment needs.

Yet, as LBC has continued to grow, both on campus and elsewhere, two realizations began to surface. First, while having these four departments housed together reduced the number of buildings prospective and enrolled students had to visit, several separate departments were still involved in completing their tasks or answering their questions. Second, a central physical location was not meeting the needs of our non-traditional students, those taking courses online or at our additional locations and instructional sites. Thus, the "one-stop-shop" was still elusive to

most. After observing a service center model at another college, it was decided that a Solution Center model would benefit students and other constituents of the college. This model was initiated in December of 2013.

Whether through the actual physical location, through solutions@lbc.edu, or through their direct phone line, the Solution Center provides all students, guests, and employees with one-stop access to assistance in the areas of the Business Office, Financial Aid, and Registrar's Office. This approach is much more effective in meeting students' needs (see [Appendix 8C](#) for more information and evidence). The Solution Center also works closely with Adult Learner Services to meet the unique needs of adult and seminary/graduate students.

Adult Learners

This study group was tasked with conducting an “analysis of support services available to students, including any distinctions among physical sites or modes of delivery” (*Characteristics of Excellence, 2006, p. 35*).

Ample evidence was found that the student service needs of the Capital Seminary & Graduate School are being met, regardless of location or instructional delivery system. Almost from the start of our adult learner programs, LBC has provided our adult students with the services needed for their success. In 1996, two years after the start of our adult undergraduate program and one year after the start of our graduate school program, our adult students were asked to complete a satisfaction questionnaire in preparation for our 1997 self-study. The results of those questionnaires, in conjunction with feedback on individual course evaluations, indicated students in these programs were satisfied with the academic factors of the programs and with the service provided to them as adult students. Since that time, additional assessments of student satisfaction

with support services have been conducted via graduating student surveys and interviews, focus groups, and alumni surveys.

Most recently, in March of 2015, Adult Learner Services conducted a survey to determine what evidence exists that student service needs of the Capital Seminary & Graduate School are being met regardless of location. Due to the low response rate at five of our locations at the time (Springfield, Virginia; Boca Raton, Florida; Indianapolis, Indiana; Memphis, Tennessee; and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania) findings were reviewed for our two largest locations; Greenbelt, Maryland (23 responses) and Lancaster, Pennsylvania (18 responses).

In comparing the Lancaster and Greenbelt sites, the response from the students was found to be similar. The majority of seminary/graduate school students in Lancaster had positive interactions with their advisor. The majority of students also indicated prompt and adequate feedback was received from instructors. Several Lancaster-based students cited “care of the student” or positive personal treatment as what matters most about being an LBC student. Eighty percent of the Lancaster-based students indicated they felt part of the LBC community. Greenbelt students gave similar responses regarding interaction with their advisors as well as prompt and adequate feedback received from instructors. Several Greenbelt-based students indicated the kindness of the staff as part of their experience. Seventy-seven percent of the Greenbelt-based students indicated they felt part of the LBC community.

In addition to this in-house survey, LBC has administered the Adult Student Priorities Survey to our on-campus Accelerated Undergraduate Degree students and our seminary/graduate students twice in the past four years, first in 2011 and most recently in 2015. Results from the Adult Student Priorities Survey (ASPS) and Priorities Survey for Online Learners (PSOL) from 2011

and 2015 were compared to see if LBC student satisfaction has changed. Adult Learners rated their satisfaction with LBC's Instructional Effectiveness, Safety and Security, Academic Advising, Admissions and Financial Aid, Academic Services, Registration Effectiveness, Service Excellence, and Campus Climate. Online Learners rated their satisfaction with Institutional Perceptions, Academic Services, Instructional Services, Enrollment Services, and Student Services.

Each of these 13 categories was rated higher in 2015 than in 2011. The same was true for the national comparison group. Overall, based on the data collected through these two Adult Learner Services Surveys, it appears that the student service needs of Capital Seminary & Graduate School are being met, regardless of location or instructional delivery. A more complete report on the findings of these surveys can be found in the [ASPS and PSOL summary reports](#) (Appendix 8D; see also [2011 and 2015 ASPS](#) [Appendix 8E], and [2011 and 2015 PSOL](#) [Appendix 8F]).

Financial Aid

This study group sought out “evidence of the utilization of information appropriate to the review of financial aid practices, to reflect whether practices adequately support admission and retention efforts” (*Characteristics of Excellence*, 2006, p. 33). The findings were mixed regarding LBC's strategy for financial aid and scholarship funding. The evidence in the data below suggests many positive factors, including an increase in institutional gift aid and increased discount rate for 2015-16. Though outpacing our peer group, we must take into account that we have more to do in fully meeting the needs of our student population.

Average Financial Aid Package vs. Costs

Data published in our financial aid brochures notes that the average financial aid package, including federal loans, in 2009-10 was \$12,199 and the average package in 2015-16 was

\$13,777. This is an increase of 12.9% over seven academic years. In contrast with institutional costs in 2009-10 at \$22,620, the 2015-16 cost was \$28,330, an increase of 20.1%. Financial Aid packages have not increased at the same pace as college costs. Even with the discount rate surge (which is included in the average financial aid package), this is a gap of 7.2%. In other words, students are expected to pay 7.2% more of college costs in 2015-16 than in 2010-11. Consideration should be given to looking at the surge in the discount rate. It is possible that teach-outs connected with two failed Bible colleges (Appendices [8G](#) and [8H](#)) might have contributed heavily to the discount rate surge. LBC honored the tuition rates the students were paying at their prior institution and awarded over \$500,000 to 37 students from these two schools. As of Fall 2016, 14 of the 37 students are still involved in the teach-out programs and continue to tap into the discounted rates.

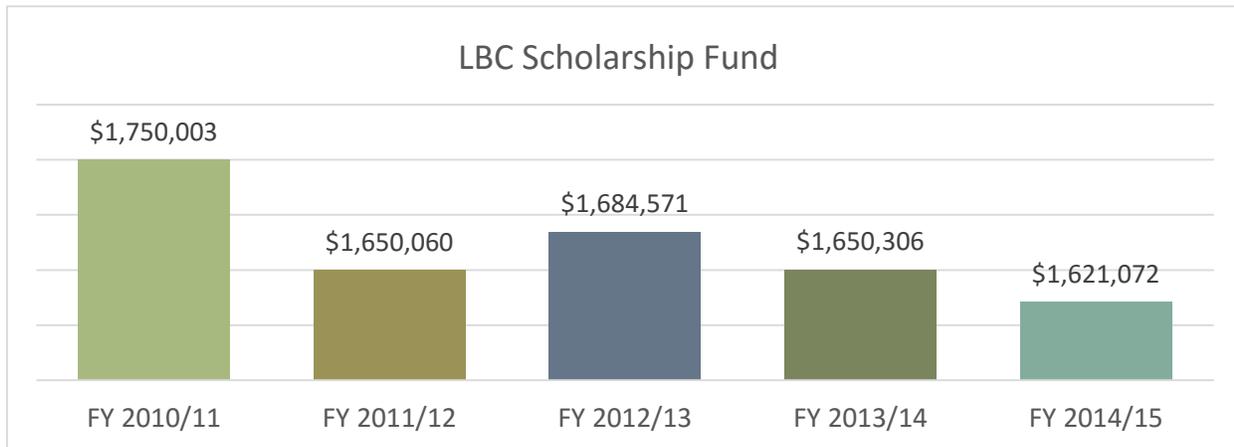
Institutional Gift Aid and Scholarshare

The [2015 Bethel Study of CCCU Institutions](#) (Appendix 8I) shows that between 2011-12 and 2014-15, the total amount of institutional gift aid at LBC rose from \$3.3 million to just over \$4 million, an increase of 34.2%. The Council for Christian Colleges & Universities (CCCU) reports that in 2014-15, 4.0% (median) of institutional gift aid had a specific funding source. [LBC reports](#) (Appendix 8J) 2.8% of its institutional gift aid having a specific funding source. We have room to grow here.

LBC's Scholarship Fund was established in 1989. For the last 26 years it has served a key function providing tens of millions of dollars in scholarship aid to our students through gifts from our faithful donors. Today, scholarship assistance is about \$2,000 on average per student, but we are giving over \$5,000 on average in aid to those same students. The amount of funds we

are able to raise from our supporters for the scholarship fund has not grown at the same pace as our student body. The Scholarship Fund has shown a decrease of 7.4% over the past 5 years, though subsequent trending has been more positive.

Chart 8.1



These numbers point to the need for a new strategy or new kind of scholarship fund. Our Advancement Department is developing strategies to broaden our donor base.

Discount Rate

The LBC discount rate for 2014-15 was reported at 27.1%. This rate has remained relatively flat for several years. However, the estimated discount rate for 2015-16 increased by over 7% to 34.8%, due in large part to LBC honoring the tuition rates of those students participating in teach-outs from two closing institutions. Comparatively, the Bethel Study reports that the 75 participating institutions indicated a discount rate range from 23.2% to 67.9% in 2014-15 (median is 40.0%) and in 2015-16, the projected discount rate ranges from 18.7% to 58.6% (median is 41.5%).

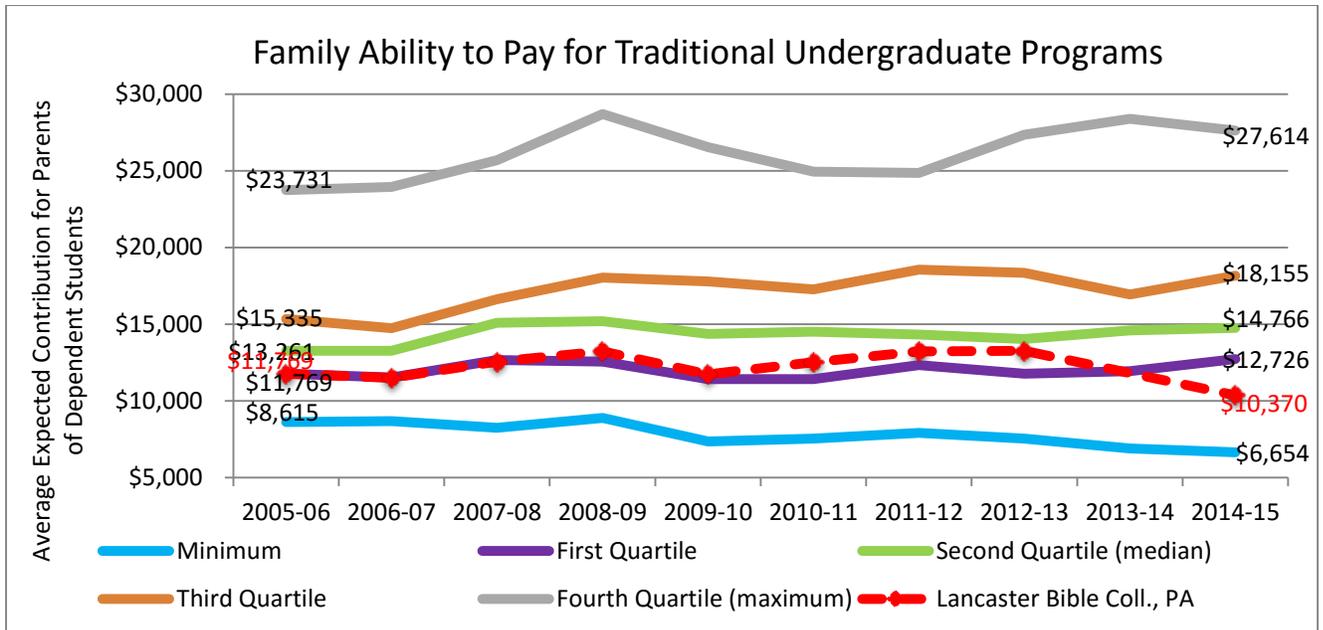
Price Compared with Family Wealth and Need

Using the Federal Methodology, 71% of LBC’s students demonstrate financial need. In 2014-15, the average need of these students was \$12,447 per student. The average gift these students

received was \$9,515 per student (76.4%), representing a gap of \$2,932, or 23.5%, per student. However, compared to responding schools in the Bethel Survey, the average school meets a student’s need (range from \$12,447 to \$37,052) with 56.4% of gift aid. LBC is 20 points ahead of this average.

While it appears we are meeting the needs of students as compared to other institutions, a key data point is the student’s ability to pay for an LBC education. The Bethel Study generates a Wealth Index, comparing institutional costs with family wealth. LBC costs are lower than many schools, but our students come from families with lower incomes. LBC has a negative variance of \$2,220, meaning family income falls short of paying for an LBC education. The average variance is negative \$2 and the median is negative \$352 among the CCCU participating institutions.

Chart 8.2



Average Loans

The Common Data Set’s suggested formula for determining average student loan debt recently changed. The data suggests that, for the 2015 Cohort, 79% of LBC students borrowed an average

of \$24,681 in combined federal and private loans and \$24,054 in federal loans only. The Institute for College Access & Success (ticas.org) reports that, nationally, 69% of 2014 graduates borrowed an average of \$28,950. The same site states that 70% of college grads borrowed an average of \$33,264 in Pennsylvania. Although the new data suggests that LBC has more borrowers, the average debt remains well below state and national averages.

Cohort Default Rates

LBC alumni have loan default rates consistently lower than the national rate, as reported by the National Student Loan Data System.

LBC Cohort default rates:

National Cohort Default Rates (Appendix 8K):

2010 Three year CDR 5.2%	2010 – 14.7%
2011 Three year CDR 4.3%	2011 – 13.7%
2012 Three year CDR 5.7%	2012 – 11.8%
2013 Three year CDR 4.2%	

Steps LBC Has Taken

The Financial Aid Office conducts the following activities to help address financial literacy and smart borrowing:

1. Financial Literacy (advisor emails, Financial Aid newsletters, [CashCourse](#) [Appendix 8L]): Participation rates of traditional undergrad students have ranged from 8% to 22%. Student feedback directed to the financial aid advisor has been overwhelmingly positive.
2. Delinquency Letters (A bi-annual letter to borrowers who are delinquent, but not yet in default on federal student loans.): The Assistant Director of Financial Aid tracks responses to these letters in an Excel spreadsheet. Phone responses range from 0 to 4%. From the April 2015 delinquency letters, four students responded out of 108 contacts. Two of those four contacts resulted in resolved loan delinquencies.

3. Exit Loan Counseling (information sessions, one-on-one counseling, notices, and letters with documentation): All graduating students are required to complete exit loan counseling prior to receipt of their diploma. Exit loan counseling brochures are mailed to all non-returning and withdrawn students. The cohort default rate for LBC students is markedly lower than the national average.

Student Support Services

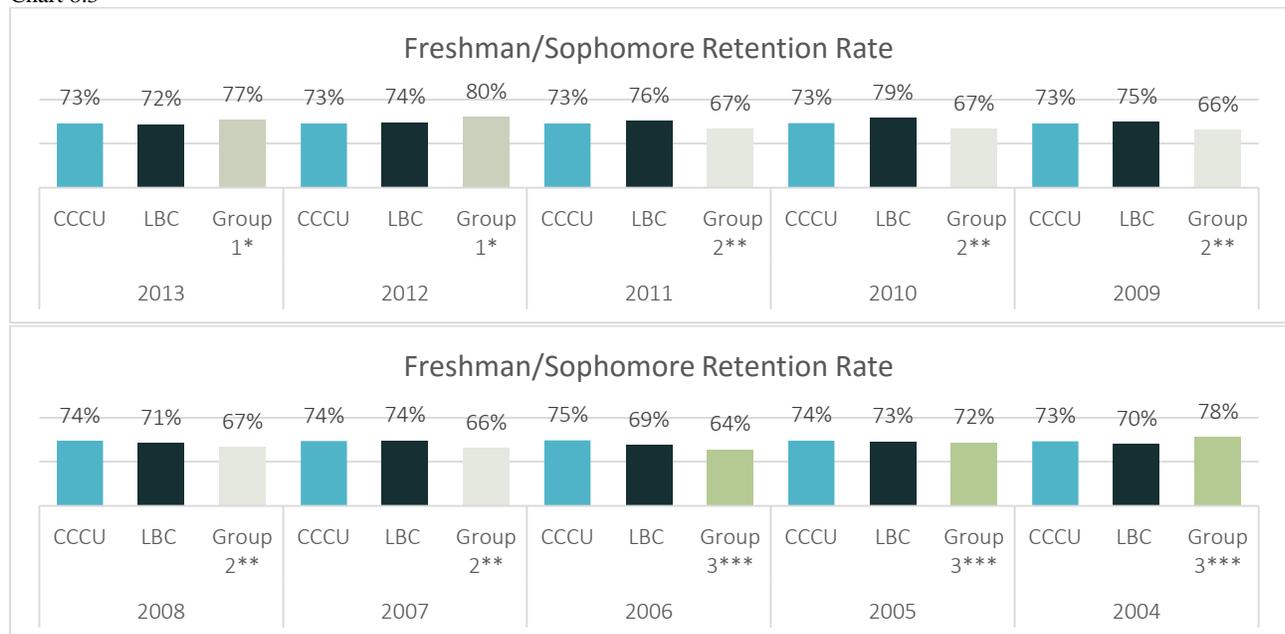
Retention

An optional analysis of Standard 8 is to provide “evidence of the utilization of information appropriate to the review of student retention, persistence, and attrition, to reflect whether these are consistent with student and institutional expectations” (*Characteristics of Excellence*, 2006, p. 33). With that as a goal, in 2015, using Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) data, LBC conducted a [comparison study](#) (Appendix 8LL) of our Freshman-to-Sophomore retention rates and our First-time/Full-time Degree/Certificate graduation (within 150%) and transfer out rates from 2004 to 2013. We compared these rates to two groups: (1) 21 Association for Biblical Higher Education (ABHE) and Council for Christian Colleges & Universities (CCCU) institutions, and (2) either 22 IPEDS-chosen faith-based institutions or 52 ABHE institutions. [The change in the second comparison group was made in 2007. The first group is referred to as the CCCU comparison group and both of the second groups are referred to below as “faith-based institutions.”] This study observed the following trends.

- From 2004 to 2013, LBC’s Freshman-to-Sophomore Retention Rate fluctuated by just ten percentage points from 69% in 2006 to a high of 79% in 2010, and in 2013 stood at 72%.

- LBC’s Freshman-to-Sophomore Retention Rate has ranged from eight percentage points below to 12 percentage points above the average of faith-based institutions with no apparent trends in the fluctuation.
- LBC’s Freshman-to-Sophomore Retention Rate has ranged from six percentage points below to 13 percentage points above the average of member institutions of the CCCU schools with no apparent trends in the fluctuation.
- On an average, over these ten years, LBC’s Freshman-to-Sophomore Retention Rate averaged 3.1 percentage points above the comparison groups.

Chart 8.3



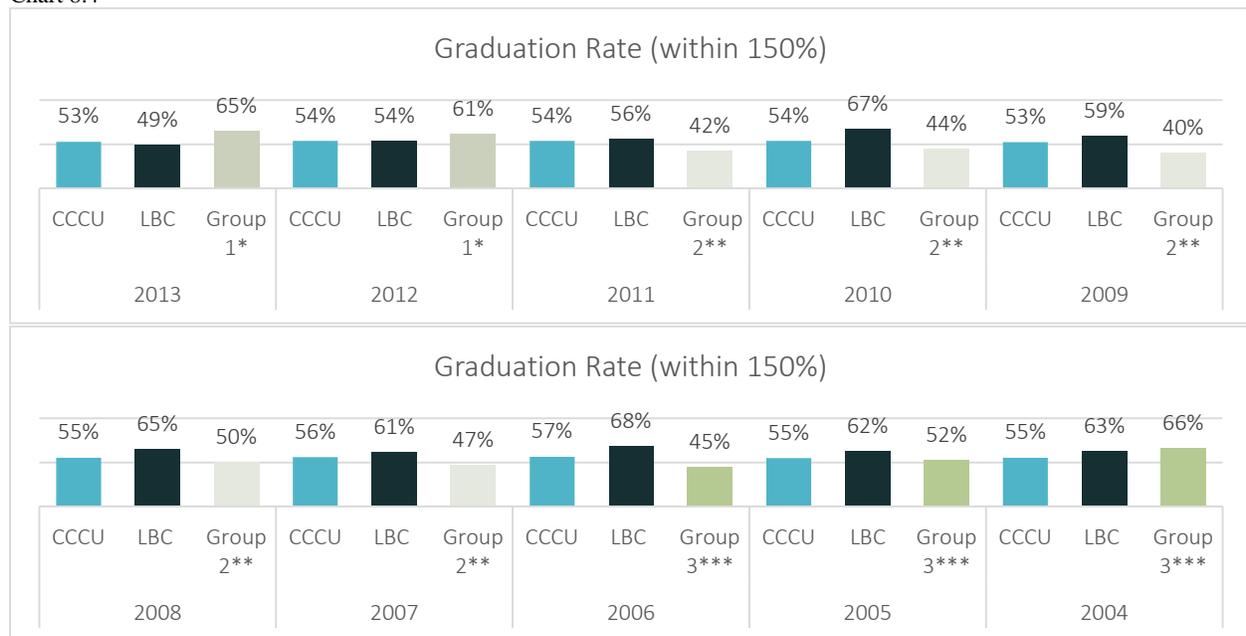
*21 ABHE/CCCU institutions **50-53 ABHE institutions ***21-23 IPEDS-chosen faith-based institutions

- From 2004 to 2013, LBC’s Graduation Rate fluctuated by 18 percentage points from a low of 49% in the most recent year of the report (2013) to a high of 67% in 2010.
- LBC’s Graduation Rate has ranged from 16 points below to 23 points above the average of faith-based institutions. This large fluctuation can be traced to a change in the makeup of the faith-based comparison group to provide LBC with a more accurate benchmark of peer

institutions. We now are falling slightly below the average of this more aspirational comparison rather than significantly higher than the former ABHE comparison group.

- LBC’s Graduation Rate has ranged from three percentage points below to 13 percentage points above the average of member institutions of the CCCU with no apparent trends in the fluctuation. The -3 percentage points was the only year where LBC’s Graduation Rate fell below that of CCCU schools.
- Over these ten years, LBC’s Graduation Rate averaged more than 16 percentage points above the comparison groups.

Chart 8.4



*21 ABHE/CCCU institutions **50-53 ABHE institutions ***21-23 IPEDS-chosen faith-based institutions

- The only cause for concern has been the decrease of our Freshman-to-Sophomore retention rate by two to three points each year for the last three years. This report was shared with the Senior Vice President for Student Experience for dissemination and discussion with his staff.

Most of the student support services addressed previously in this chapter impact retention to some degree. There are other services with a more direct impact on the retention of students.

These support services include the Ally Center (academic support), the Counseling & Career Center (C3), Health Services, and Pastors-at-Large. With the exception of Health Services, the other three programs have been initiated relatively recently with the goal of improving our retention rates. Early measures are encouraging.

Awareness of the resources available to each student for his or her success is crucial. This study group addressed our students' awareness of support services at all locations, and its impact on retention. Sufficient evidence exists to conclude that students at LBC, especially traditional undergraduate students, have a healthy awareness of the support services offered to them. Students expressed services are promoted through a variety of means. In the [2015 Self-Study Student Survey](#) (Question 23, Appendix 1K), students were asked how often they used services on our campus, followed by how they were made aware of those services. The chart below reflects awareness of campus resources of both our traditional (TRAD) and adult students (ALS).

Table 8.4

Student Awareness of Support Services										
<i>How students were made aware of resources</i>	Chapel Announcement		Friend/ Fellow Student		Advisor / Instructor		Poster/Display /Flyer		Unsure	
	TRAD	ALS	TRAD	ALS	TRAD	ALS	TRAD	ALS	TRAD	ALS
Ally Center	8	0	7	0	20	5	5	0	6	11
Academic Mentoring	6	0	9	0	14	5	6	0	5	8
Writing Center	6	0	3	0	32	15	4	1	3	3
Off-campus tutor	1	0	2	0	2	2	1	0	23	8
Library	8	0	12	0	8	17	5	1	15	4
Study group	12	0	14	1	4	3	7	0	4	9
Career/ Counseling Center (C3)	12	0	10	0	1	6	14	0	5	5
Pastors at Large	17	1	3	0	1	2	2	0	10	9

More than half of our traditional undergraduate students are made aware of support services by way of college advertisements. This is certainly confirmation that announcements given in chapel, flyers in student mailboxes, and information given by instructors are effective channels for our on-campus community. Our adult learners were often unsure of the source, however, those who could remember the source overwhelmingly noted an advisor or instructor.

In addition to the Self-Study Student Survey, students also responded favorably in a [focus group](#) (Appendix 8M). When asked about their awareness of the services offered by the Ally Center, Writing Center, C3, Health Services, and the Pastors-at-Large, the focus group participants unanimously responded with a firm grasp of each service available on our campus. In regard to the Ally Center, which includes our Writing Center and Math Lab, all students participating in the focus group were well aware of its existence, and many acknowledged, without prompting, frequent use of these services they deemed valuable. One student said, “I’m not sure I would have made it through my first year here at LBC without the Ally Center.” When asked how they learned about the services, the students mentioned our Weekend of Welcome orientation program where the academic resources available to students are presented. The services provided by the Ally Center are covered in Chapter 9 where it is documented how these “support programs and services for low-achieving students [and others] are effective in helping students to persist and to achieve learning goals and higher education outcomes” (*Characteristics of Excellence*, 2006, p. 32).

While the Ally Center promotes retention through providing academic assistance, the Counseling & Career Center (C3) promotes retention through providing emotional, spiritual, and psychological assistance. C3 provides services to all students. Counseling services include one-on-one counseling, assessment inventories, and professional development resources. Career

services include professional/alumni connections, special events and programs, and assistance with employment opportunities. Every student in the focus group acknowledged counseling was available to any student at LBC, but few knew of the robust resources provided to them for Career Services. A student said, “I know they help people with their resume, but that’s about all I know.” Many echoed the same sentiment, understanding they were there to assist students but not having a very good knowledge of how much support was readily available. In regard to awareness, all students present indicated they were made aware by some type of LBC resource, but more than half of participants said they did not use the services offered by C3 until a friend recommended the services.

A [survey](#) (Appendix 8N) conducted by C3 in May of 2015 pointed to an extremely high satisfaction rate among those accessing their services. Around 93% of the 30 respondents agreed or strongly agreed that C3 helped them resolve concerns, 92% felt better equipped to manage future issues or concerns, 89% felt their relationship with God has moved in a positive direction, and 94% indicated their counselor seemed knowledgeable about their issues.

In addition to the spiritual counseling through C3 which promotes retention, students have several other options to assist them with their spiritual formation. The majority of our faculty and staff are actively involved in some form of informal or formal spiritual interactions with our students. Just about every student who completes an exit interview or exit survey upon graduation mentions the positive impact this life-on-life involvement had on him or her. Students also have access to Pastors-at-Large to assist with spiritual needs. During any one semester we may have three to five pastors serving in this capacity. They keep regular office hours to meet with students, yet spend most of their time interacting with students all over campus: in chapel, at lunch, over coffee, or just walking with students between classes. During the focus group held

with traditional students, the Pastors-at-Large ministry generated great discussion because they are so visible on our campus. One focus group student said, “It’s hard not to be aware of those guys,” and another said, “They may be the most visible service on our campus.” With the addition of Grow Groups this academic year, led by Pastors-at-Large during our chapel time, and the amount of time these men spend seeking out student relationships, they are a very accessible piece of our student support system. One young lady did comment, “I’m definitely aware of our Pastors-at-Large, but I don’t go to them... I wish LBC could have a lady or two on campus that does the same sort of thing.” LBC recently addressed this expressed need with the addition of a female Student Care Giver.

While not often considered a key factor in retention, the Health Services Office is one of the first support services traditional students learn about at LBC because they interact with this office as part of the enrollment process. Students at the focus group clearly articulated that Health Services provides basic medical care, blood pressure checks, blood drives, a health fair, and weekly health tips. While able to articulate some of the detailed services offered, there were students in the group who could not identify the Health Services Office location or its director, a concern that needs to be addressed.

As noted in this section, there is ample evidence LBC is effective in raising awareness of support services in the LBC community, especially at the location in Lancaster. Students have general and, in some cases, very specific knowledge of LBC’s support services because of the institution’s promotional efforts. There is, however, as demonstrated in the focus group, disparity between students’ awareness and their use of these services. Student Services needs to make a concerted effort, possibly through the Resident Assistants, to be sure on-campus students take advantage of these services as needed, especially since these services are a primary means of

retaining students and helping them to succeed. With advisors and faculty identified as the primary contact for our adult students regarding support services, Adult Learner Services should continue to work with these individuals to develop a more systematic way of presenting information about the services available to them at LBC.

Key Strengths Noted in This Section

1. LBC's ethnic diversity is increasing, due in part to additional urban locations, and on the Lancaster site as well.
2. The Solution Center has a tremendous impact on making it simpler for prospective students, current students, visitors, and even faculty and staff to find answers.
3. Adult learners continue to be satisfied with most aspects of their LBC education.
4. LBC's cohort loan default rate continues to be well below the national norm.
5. LBC's retention and graduation rates continue to be above the average of our peers.

Suggestions

1. Our marketing and recruitment plan should identify and create relationships with a larger network of media vendors that can provide us with localized resources to do business in the new sites the institution now occupies.
2. Marketing should work with Advancement and Admissions to conduct a more systematic and periodic review of admissions catalogs, viewbooks, web sites, recruiting and other relevant materials for accuracy and effectiveness in building brand awareness in each new location we serve. As LBC expands, we should identify which marketing materials can be used across all sites and which need to be customized for the individual site.

3. LBC should consider investing in workflow software in order to manage the increase in the number of requests and contacts coming in to the Marketing department.
4. The college should continue to monitor the key data points regarding financial aid.
5. Adult Learner Services should continue develop a more systematic way of presenting information about each of the services available to adult students at LBC.

Recommendation for Growth and Improvement

1. The College needs to investigate our freshman-sophomore retention rate to determine the underlying causes for the 2- or 3-point decline each year for the last three years, and to take appropriate action. Likewise, the College needs to more closely follow our transfer rates, especially among upperclassmen.