

## **Standard Ten Public Disclosure**

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### **Description**

Goodwin College endeavors to present materials that are accurate, timely, and comprehensive both in print and on its website. The college catalog and the website are the primary sources of information to the general public about the college. Additional sources of information can be found in our advertising material, the President's Annual Report, Goodwin Magazine, general bulletins posted in the building, and our college e-newsletter.

### ***College Catalog and Student Handbooks***

The catalog is the primary written source of information published by the college, and it serves several purposes. The catalog is the authoritative document that states the contract between the college and the students. It clearly states the college's Mission, purposes, and all accreditations and approvals. It describes all academic information, including, but not limited to, programs of study, student learning outcomes, and general and program-specific graduation requirements. All course descriptions, including prerequisites and corequisites are listed. Beginning with the 2009-2010 catalog, course descriptions include the semesters in which the course is scheduled to be offered to help students in planning toward program completion. All courses are offered at least once over two consecutive years since Goodwin College operates on a three semester schedule. In the event that a program is terminated, the courses remain available and are listed until all matriculated students have completed the required courses. Only then are courses removed from our catalog.

The catalog is a comprehensive document that clearly presents all academic regulations and services. The credit system, student classification, and grading system are all included. Information about attendance, academic honesty, appealing grades, satisfactory academic progress, academic probation, and reasons for student dismissal are also listed. Students who wish to add, drop, or withdraw from a course or the college, or seek a temporary leave of absence, can refer to the catalog for the appropriate procedures. Finally, the catalog outlines the college's expectations for student conduct.

In addition to academic regulations and policies, the catalog articulates general admission requirements for all degree and certificate programs. Requirements for programs with selective admission are listed in the individual program pages. Information and procedures for receiving transfer credit, experiential credit, credit by examination, and credit for performance on standardized tests are also contained within the catalog.

The catalog also discloses policies and information to students, parents, and other interested members of the public. An explanation of financial need and sources of financial aid, the method of notification of awards, the information contained in a student's award notice, and processing procedures are clearly defined. The catalog itemizes all tuition and fees. The college clearly articulates its refund policy for registered students wishing to withdraw from school or from individual courses. The Institutional Refund Policy applies to all students, regardless of Title IV eligibility. The refund policy for students participating in Federal Title IV student aid programs is a synopsis of the Return of Title IV Funds section and not the entire policy. The catalog does state, however, that a student may have access to the entire policy along with worksheet examples in the Financial Aid Office's Policies and Procedures Manual.

Finally, the catalog serves as a source of information regarding the administration of Goodwin College and includes a comprehensive list of faculty, administrators, and Board of

Trustees. Faculty members are listed with their program affiliation, full or part-time status, and degrees earned with the institutions that granted them. Administrators are listed with their titles. Finally, a list of Board of Trustees members with their city of residency and professional affiliations is also included. A current catalog is made available to students upon enrollment. Additionally, individual program sheets, identical to those in the catalog, and program brochures are distributed to prospective students.

All academic and service departments review the catalog each spring. A revised catalog is published each May through the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. The revision sets out any major institutional changes such as new program and course offerings or changes to policy. Concurrently, it is posted to the website under the 'current' and 'future' student tabs. Back issues of the catalog are also available on the website and in the library.

Much of the information in the catalog is also contained in our student handbook. New students receive a copy of the catalog during the admissions process and a copy of the student handbook during orientation. In September 2009, the student handbook was transformed into a daily planner that also contains study tips and important dates. Some academic programs publish their own student handbooks that contain specific information important to their students such as progressive discipline policies, clinical rotation policies, and a statement of professionalism from the programmatic accrediting agency. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness reviews all publications to ensure alignment with college policies and consistency with existing print and electronic publications.

### ***College Website***

Like the catalog, the Goodwin College website discloses our Mission, institutional and programmatic information, goals, and policies to students, parents, and the general public. The website helps visitors to learn more about the history of the college, the size and diversity of the student body, the campus setting, and the learning environment at Goodwin College. To assist future students and their parents to make informed decisions, our *Future Students* webpage contains links to Goodwin College information on the University & College Accountability Network (UCAN) and the National Center for Education Statistics, College Navigator. Goodwin College was among the first group of Connecticut colleges to voluntarily join the UCAN network.

In addition to pages devoted to each of our academic programs, the college website also announces co-curricular and non-academic opportunities available to students, as well as learning and physical resources that enhance the student experience, at the following page entries: News and Events, Current Students, Student Council, Student Services, Library, Learning Center, and Bookstore. Students have access to grades and transcripts by utilizing the website under the *Current Student* tab.

The website contains featured links to the administration including the Office of the President, Board of Trustees, the President's Cabinet, the President's Advisory Council, the Office of Institutional Advancement, and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. Each Trustee has his/her own page that includes a picture, a short biography and a personal statement of commitment to the college.

From the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, visitors can go to the Institutional Research page to read the college Fact Book that contains statistical information on enrollment, retention, placement and graduation rates, financial aid awards and cost of attendance, human resources, and financial information such as revenue and expenses. The Fact Book provides an analytical picture of the college. The page on Planning and Assessment has a link to the Strategic Plan, program review, and other assessment activities conducted by the

college. Additional questions can be addressed via a 'contact us' link to that office using the email addresses for each member of the department.

Our current website went live in December 2008. It was designed by a cross-departmental committee to provide current information and to ensure transparency and accountability to the general public. Its look and design reflects the culture and atmosphere of the college. The website committee meets monthly to create new pages and to update or redesign existing pages.

### ***Marketing and Communication***

Information about the college can also be found in our advertising material, the annual President's Report, our college e-newsletter, the Goodwin Magazine, and other communication activities. The messages in all marketing and advertising material reflect the mission statement of the college: students will participate in a nurturing college environment in their pursuit of education, commerce, and community. Brochures list potential careers based on program outcomes, and the average salary and employment growth for selected occupations are provided and cited through the Connecticut Department of Labor.

Students learn about Goodwin through their initial inquiries to the college (e.g., website, telephone, or returning direct mail or newspaper insert/pre-paid postage pieces). Students may also learn more about the college through information provided at college fairs, where Goodwin College displays academic programs and its profile. Brochures regarding admission, handouts about financial aid, and student inquiry cards are additional ways the public may learn more about the college.

Goodwin College also readily shares financial information about itself. The college publishes an annual President's Report which includes a fair summary of its audited financial statement. The President's Report is distributed to the Goodwin College community and is available on the college's website, and also in hard copy by request through the Office of Advancement. The publication is a dynamic piece and offers the general public insight into the greater college community. The President's 2008 Report also featured information on Goodwin's new River Campus and specifies grants donated to the college by various organizations to support the restoration of the land along the Connecticut River and for the building that serves as the main campus and home to the institution.

The college's e-newsletter is sent each month to over four thousand recipients including all current students, alumni, faculty, staff and over 2,000 supporters of the college in the broader community. Each edition contains ten to 20 short stories about recent college events and announcements in addition to web links to relevant or noteworthy websites or college web pages.

The college also frequently sends out targeted email announcements to students or employees that typically concern upcoming events or academic deadlines. In the rare instance of a serious crime on or near campus, emails are sent to notify students. In the event of an emergency, the use of email announcements is part of the response plan.

Posters provide another source of information about the college. Advertisements on upcoming educational and non-academic events and services appear throughout the college's campus. Because all students attend classes at the One Riverside Drive location, these posters, coupled with announcements in the college's monthly e-newsletter, alert audiences to campus events. The college submits information on events open to the

general public to local newspapers. A final source of information can be found on social networking sites.

Finally, the college is committed to keeping the general public informed. Last year, 269 media contacts resulted in 78 full print stories; 23 television stories; 4 radio stories; and 89 web stories. In keeping with the Policy and Procedure for Third Party Comment, Goodwin College has implemented a plan to publicize the NEASC Commission's upcoming review of our institution. The college does not have a campus or alumni newspaper, so it was decided to post signs throughout the campus, post notices on our website, send an e-mail to all students, staff and faculty, and place an article of notice in the Hartford Courant newspaper. The Hartford Courant was chosen because the paper has the most extensive coverage and circulation in our area.

### **Institutional Effectiveness**

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) is responsible for providing accurate, relevant, and timely information to interested internal or external parties as required by state and federal agencies. The Office includes a Director of Institutional Research who analyzes institutional data, creates reports, and consults on policies. The OIE is then responsible for their dissemination to the college community and general public. The Director of Institutional Research, originally hired in 2007, returned to permanent status in December 2009 after a leave for public service. OIE staff also work closely with other departments to provide information to the community. For example, they are currently working with the Financial Aid department to create a new consumer information webpage that complies with the reporting requirements outlined in the Higher Education Opportunity Act of August 2008.

The office is involved in the periodic review of printed and electronic publications. For example, the catalog is reviewed each year for thoroughness and accuracy after all the department chairs and program directors update the content during the publication process. All marketing materials are reviewed for accuracy and continuity of message by the Assistant Vice President for Enrollment Services before submission to the Executive Vice President and Provost for final approval. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness assesses the various marketing strategies and reports to the Cabinet level and the Board of Trustees. To keep our web site current, all departments have a designated, trained liaison responsible for monthly updates. Any major web modifications or significant changes go through the website committee, on which staff from OIE serve, for review and approval.

The effectiveness of our website is monitored by Google Analytics. For example, 17,679 visits to the former 35 page website were reported during the six month period before the new website was launched. For the six-month period after the launch, 117,876 visits to the 220 page website were reported. Furthermore, the number of pages viewed per visit increased from three to five and time spent on the site was almost a minute longer.

Finally, all departments participate in program review and use the results to improve. This year, three departments are assessing the usefulness of their web pages as part of their program review (i.e., bookstore, development, and financial aid).

### **Appraisal**

Goodwin College's evolution into a baccalaureate degree granting institution creates both opportunities and challenges for public disclosure. Procedures are in place or being written to assure the accurate and timely flow of information about the new academic programs.

Communication about the new baccalaureate programs is occurring primarily through our website and college catalog. The new baccalaureate programs are now fully integrated into both vehicles. Consistent with current practices, the new programs' structures, missions, student learning goals, academic requirements, course schedules, cost and financial aid, admission requirements and procedures, and related policies are fully disclosed in both the catalog and on the website.

The licensure and accreditation status of the new baccalaureate programs by the state and NEASC are made clear to all prospective students via the catalog, our website, and during the admission process. The Commission on Institutions of Higher Education accepted our substantive change proposal to offer baccalaureate degrees and advised us to proceed with our plans in March 2009. Since then, we have been very careful not to misrepresent the institution's accreditation by implying or inferring that we are currently approved to award baccalaureate degrees at this time.

Efforts in public disclosure have increased substantially since 2004. One process improvement is our new online catalog management system. In the past, the catalog was updated once a year. While the practice of archiving yearly electronic catalogs will continue, the new online system has the capability to inform students and the public of real-time program and procedural changes implemented between publications. Another advantage is that it stores the information in a central location in a very user-friendly format. The software used to create the online catalog has also resulted in a more efficient system for updating the catalog (e.g., built-in levels of review, passwords, etc).

While the catalog still serves as the primary source of information about the college, the college has increased its disclosure to the public through the President's Report. The college also provides more information to students through monthly e-newsletters and traditional campus bulletins. Our pro-active Communications Department will continue to research new ways to increase communications. For example, they created the college's Facebook and Twitter pages, recently published the first issue of a college magazine, and are working to install LCD announcement boards in the student lounge and in other high-traffic locations.

Another process improvement is the success of our new website. In July of 2008, a Website Committee was created by the Executive Vice President and Provost of the college in an effort to provide the most accurate and current information to those inquiring about Goodwin. The website committee is made up of members of various departments including Communications, the Department for Institutional Effectiveness, Admissions, and other staff and faculty members. Goodwin's first Webmaster was named and the college is seeking a content manager as well. A student focus group conducted as part of the Information Technology's program review reported that the new website is easy to navigate. Through a consumer information page accessed under the *Future Student* tab, the public can access information needed to make informed decisions concerning enrollment at the college.

The website clearly benefits students, their parents, and the broader community seeking to learn more about all aspects of the college. It is also important to note that the website also contains information that was formerly only available in print, including the Student Handbook, the Fact Book, and the college audited financial statements.

Advertising materials accurately reflect the programs of study offered and are consistent in portraying the mission of the college. The review process in place for all information given to the public has helped to ensure consistency and accuracy of message. However, the

addition of new degrees, programs of study and a new campus have made it a challenge to keep all of the 'in-house' materials up to date. Another challenge has been maintaining the availability of program brochures and information.

Communication at the college has improved since the introduction of shared governance. The increased number of vertical and horizontal lines of communication among staff has increased awareness at all levels.

### ***Areas of Achievement***

- Informing the public about news, student success, events, and other ways that we fulfill our mission on a regular basis.
- Publishing a comprehensive and well-structured catalog that is the central source of information for students, prospective students, and the community.
- Publishing employee, faculty, and student handbooks available in print or online.
- Implementing an online college catalog to improve the timeliness and accuracy of content, as well as the efficiency of the review process.
- Redesigned college website to increase the amount of information available to both internal and external parties. A dedicated webmaster maintains the website, and she is supported by a permanent website committee.
- Created a Communications Department to improve the flow of information within the campus community (e.g., e-news, Facebook page, magazine, etc.).

### ***Areas of Concern***

- As the college continues to improve the internal process for screening publications, critical dates for review and print of our internal and external publications need to be maintained on a planning calendar and put into practice consistently.
- As the college grows, maintaining the website to ensure timely and accurate information for students, staff, faculty, and the general public will be a challenge.
- Maintaining effective communications with a growing on-line student population.

### ***Projections***

To continue our good work in the area of public disclosure and to meet the challenges of continued growth and expansion, the college will focus on the following priorities:

- Create a more inclusive consumer information page that adheres to the guidelines required by the new Higher Education Opportunity Act.
- Increase the amount and improve timeliness of dissemination of information provided to the community.
- Write and implement procedures necessary to ensure the accurate and timely flow of information concerning licensure and accreditation of new academic programs.
- Continue to use technology to improve internal communications (e.g., LCD Bulletin Boards).
- Hire a web content manager by 2011.