



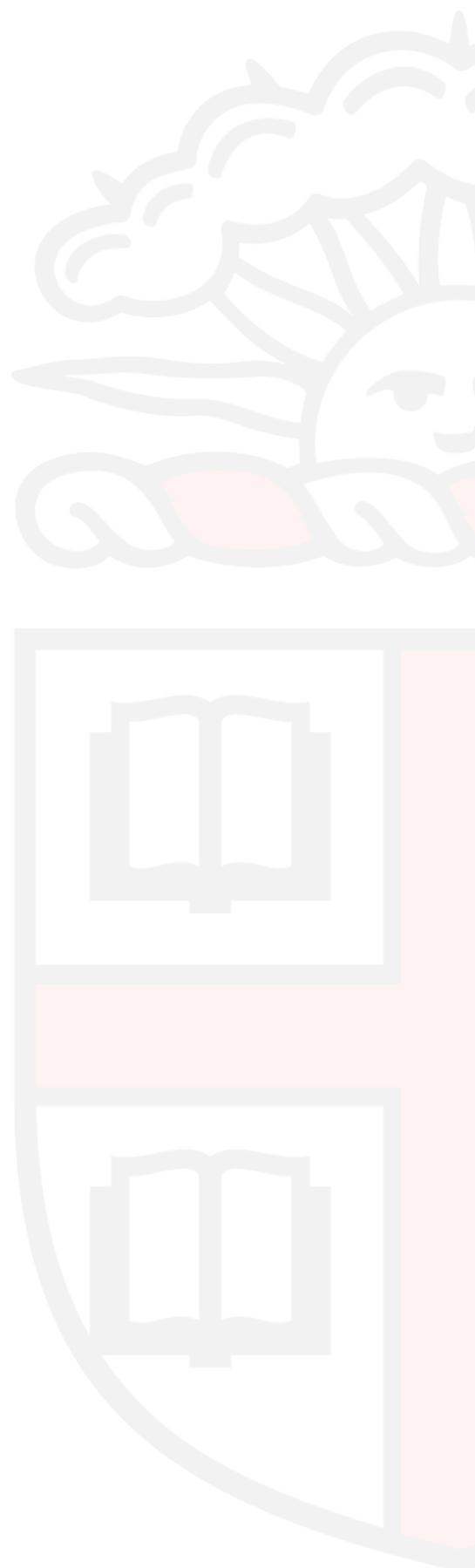
# FIFTH-YEAR INTERIM REPORT

TO THE

NEW ENGLAND COMMISSION  
OF HIGHER EDUCATION

**BROWN UNIVERSITY  
PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND**

**MARCH 2023**





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FIFTH-YEAR INTERIM REPORT TO THE  
NEW ENGLAND COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION**

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## Major Plans and Reports

[Building on Distinction](#)

[Operational Plan for Building Brown's Excellence](#) (revised, 2018)

[Operational Plan for Investing in Research](#)

Pathways to Diversity and Inclusion: An Action Plan for Brown University

[University DIAP](#) (2016)

[DIAP Phase II](#) (2021)

[Report of the Task Force on Doctoral Education](#)

[Report of the Education Innovation Committee](#)

## Other Resources

[Office of Institutional Research](#)

[University Bulletin](#)

[The College](#)

[Graduate School](#)

[School of Engineering](#)

[School of Professional Studies](#)

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[Healthy Brown](#)

## Frequently-used abbreviations

APC	Academic Priorities Committee
CCC	College Curriculum Committee
FEC	Faculty Executive Committee
OIED	Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity
OIR	Office of Institutional Research
RISD	Rhode Island School of Design
TPAC	Tenure, Promotions, and Appointments Committee
URC	University Resources Committee

## INTRODUCTION

Brown University is pleased to submit this Interim Report to the New England Commission of Higher Education. It provides an update to the 2018 comprehensive self-study, responds to issues raised in the external evaluation and subsequently, and provides information about actions and initiatives that have been taken in the five years since the decennial review. As is clear in the pages that follow, Brown has continued to make measurable progress on a number of fronts, in areas identified by the NECHE evaluation team and in those reflecting strategic priorities. The report provides evidence of both continuity and change and demonstrates the extent to which Brown has continued to advance since 2018.

At the same time, it is impossible to contemplate the last five years without acknowledging the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on every aspect of the University's operations and activities. The emergency slowdown in March 2020 and the gradual return to near-normalcy over the past three years has tested us, as it did every other institution in higher education (and beyond). Brown rose to the challenge of the public health emergency through the efforts of virtually every member of the community and was able to adapt successfully to evolving circumstances through a keen focus on its core mission and values and a foundational commitment to academic excellence.

This report is organized into three major parts. The first addresses several areas of emphasis identified by the Commission in its notification letters of October 22, 2018 (following the decennial review), February 4, 2021 (accepting the expedited review report on distance education), and January 19, 2022 (granting general approval to offer distance education). The Standards for Accreditation (1-7 and 9) are discussed in the second part of the report, with attention to significant changes since the 2018 decennial review. In Part III, we provide a reflective essay on educational effectiveness (Standard 8) detailing how we evaluate student achievement and success and continue to assess the quality of our educational programs. A brief conclusion outlines some issues we are likely to confront in the next five years.

Preparation of this report was organized by the Office of the Provost, and its content reflects contributions from colleagues across the campus, including (but not limited to):

Russell Carey, Executive Vice President for Policy and Planning  
Elizabeth Doherty, Deputy Provost for Academic Affairs  
Eric Estes, Vice President for Campus Life and Student Services  
Thomas Lewis, Interim Dean of the Graduate School  
Joseph Meisel, University Librarian  
Sarah Mullen, Chief of Staff to the Dean of the College  
Jennifer Nazareno, Associate Director of the Online MPH Program  
Shankar Prasad, Dean of the School of Professional Studies  
Joel Revill, Senior Associate Dean of the Faculty and Associate Provost for Special Projects  
James Tilton, Dean of Financial Aid (retired)  
Leah VanWey, Dean of the Faculty  
Michael White, Vice President for Finance and Chief Financial Officer  
Anne Windham, Senior Associate Dean of the Faculty  
Mary Wright, Associate Provost for Teaching and Learning and Director of the Sheridan Center  
Rashid Zia, Dean of the College

Special mention should be made of the contributions of Eric Kaldor, Senior Associate Director for Assessment and Interdisciplinary Teaching Communities, and Dana Hayward, Assessment Specialist, both at the Sheridan Center. And the report would not have been possible without the efforts of Katharine (Tracy) Barnes, Director of Institutional Research, and her staff (Karen Baptist, Kimberly Buxton, Margot Saurette, and Mary Heather Smith), who assembled and analyzed data and responded to numerous questions both large and small. Eva Neczypor in the Provost's Office also provided invaluable assistance.

*Providence, Rhode Island  
March 2023*

## INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW

Brown University is a nonprofit Ivy League institution distinguished by its unique undergraduate academic program, a world-class faculty, outstanding graduate and medical students, and a tradition of innovative and rigorous education that crosses and transcends fields of study. The University's mission—to serve the community, the nation, and the world by educating and preparing students (in the words of the College charter) to “discharge the offices of life with usefulness and reputation”—is fulfilled through strong faculty-student collaboration and a clear sense of purpose.

The seventh oldest university in America, Brown was founded in 1764 as the College of Rhode Island and renamed in 1804 in recognition of a gift from Nicholas Brown. A medical school was first established in 1811, but was suspended in 1827 and only revived in the early 1970s. Brown was an early adopter of the research university model in America, with its first graduate programs introduced in 1887. A women's college, Pembroke, was established in 1891; in 1971 it merged with the [men's] College. In 2010, the Division of Engineering became the School of Engineering, and the School of Public Health was established in 2013. The University's main campus covers nearly 150 acres on historic College Hill, and the campus in the Jewelry District is home to the Warren Alpert Medical School, the School of Professional Studies (formerly the Division of Continuing Education), research laboratories, and the South Street Landing administrative building.

Brown draws students from all over the United States and the world, distinguished by their academic excellence, creativity, self-direction, and leadership, and attracts faculty known both for prize-winning scholarship and research as well as their dedication to teaching. Brown is internationally known for its Open Curriculum for undergraduates, which does not require distribution or core courses outside the concentration. Three basic principles lie at the heart of the Open Curriculum: that students are active participants in learning; that acquiring analytical and critical skills is as important as mastering factual knowledge; and that learning requires opportunities for experimentation and synthesis that crosses boundaries that typically separate fields of study. More than 2,000 undergraduate courses support more than 80 concentrations, many of them interdisciplinary, and a wide variety of independent studies.

The undergraduate enrollment now stands at 7,100, and more than 3,000 graduate and medical students comprise approximately one quarter of the University's total student population. Through the Graduate School, Brown offers more than 50 doctoral programs and more than 30 master's programs across the life and physical sciences, social sciences, and arts and humanities. An executive MBA is offered through the School of Professional Studies in partnership with the IE Business School in Madrid, Spain. The Warren Alpert Medical School, which awarded its first M.D. degrees in 1975, promotes the health of individuals and communities through education, research, and excellence in clinical practice. Warren Alpert is the only medical school in the state of Rhode Island and the School of Public Health is also the only such school in the state, training future public health leaders and advancing knowledge on pressing health challenges facing society, while enhancing population health and well-being.

In 2014, at the close of a year-long celebration of Brown's 250th anniversary, under the leadership of President Christina H. Paxson, the University launched an ambitious strategic plan, *Building on Distinction*, to build resources to make Brown a leader in key areas of research, innovation and scholarship; catalyze entrepreneurship; improve the physical campus; amplify the student experience; and ensure students from all backgrounds are able to thrive at Brown. In 2016, Brown launched an action plan to create a more diverse and inclusive campus. By providing rich undergraduate and graduate experiences, together with strong programs in medicine, public health, and professional studies, the University fosters internal and external discovery at every level of the academic enterprise.

## ACCOMPLISHING THE GOALS OF BROWN'S STRATEGIC PLANS

### *Building on Distinction and the Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan*

For the last decade, Brown University has been guided by a strategic plan that articulates a broad vision for realizing the University's potential for excellence in teaching and research in fulfillment of its mission to "serve the community, the nation and the world by discovering, communicating and preserving knowledge and understanding in a spirit of free inquiry, and by educating and preparing students to discharge the offices of life with usefulness and reputation." The plan, *Building on Distinction*, was launched in 2014, 250 years after the University's founding—however, it looked not to the past but rather to a future that was grounded in enduring values and principles and aspirational in its ambitions. It included commitments to growth in four key areas:

- *Integrative Scholarship* to address some of the world's greatest challenges. Thematic areas include Cultivating Creative Expression; Understanding the Human Brain; Sustaining Life on Earth; Creating Peaceful, Just, and Prosperous Societies; Exploring Human Experience; Using Science and Technology to Improve Lives; Advancing Computational and Data Sciences; Deciphering Disease; and Improving Population Health.
- *Educational Leadership* to offer outstanding educational opportunities and prepare students to lead in the 21<sup>st</sup> century through innovations in educational programming, delivery, and experience.
- *Academic Excellence* to support scholarship, cultivate the diversity required for excellence, enhance students' access to a Brown education, and forge partnerships around the United States and the world.
- *Campus Development* to provide the infrastructure needed to support world-class education, research, and the community that is so central to Brown's mission and culture.

*Building on Distinction* was followed by an operational plan (2015) that translated these lofty ambitions into concrete and actionable items, linked to the investments that would be required to attain the goals. Centered on faculty, students, community, academic programming, and physical resources, they served as the basis for a table of needs for the capital campaign, *BrownTogether*, that launched that year. Described as a living document, the operational plan was updated in 2018—at approximately the midpoint of the campaign—to reflect emerging priorities. (That process is described in Standard 2.)

By any measure, the strategic plan has been enormously consequential. The impressive success of *BrownTogether*—which has raised \$3.5 billion towards a revised \$4 billion goal—has made it possible to invest in key areas. Even more important is the extent to which *Building on Distinction* has provided a clear and visible roadmap, and a number of the most significant developments of the last five years can be traced directly back to the vision laid out in the strategic plan.

First, interdisciplinary scholarship has become increasingly important as centers and institutes aligned with the integrative themes have expanded their impact. To cite just three examples:

- *Cultivating Creative Expression*. The Brown Arts Institute was formally established in July 2021. Reflecting the belief that the arts are integral to a Brown education, the BAI supports creative collaborations, interdisciplinary teaching, and engagement with important artistic developments. Funds have been raised to support visiting artists and professorships (including for new leadership appointed in the Departments of Modern Culture and Media, Theatre Arts and Performance Studies, and Literary Arts), for programming, and for a new performing arts center that sits at the heart of campus, embodying the centrality of the arts.
- *Understanding the Human Brain*. A transformational \$100 million gift from Robert J. and Nancy D. Carney established the Carney Institute for Brain Science as one of the premier brain institutes in the country, with links to affiliated departments across the campus and medical area and with an agenda that includes research, training, and outreach involving more than 200 faculty members from 20

academic and clinical units, along with undergraduates, graduate students, postdoctoral scientists, and academic research staff.

- *Creating Peaceful, Just, and Prosperous Societies.* The strategic plan has led to increased support for the Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs, enabling it to expand its impact. Successes include raising new endowed chairs to support joint appointments between Watson and other academic departments and the construction of a new building (Stephen Robert Hall, 2019). Other priorities that fall under this integrative theme include the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice (CSSJ) and the Center for the Study of Race and Ethnicity in America (CSREA), both of which have continued to promote teaching, research, and programming related to issues of race, ethnicity, and social justice.

The success of *BrownTogether* has also accelerated growth in other priority areas such as the School of Public Health, which is working to address pressing societal challenges in areas such as addiction, aging, health care, and pandemics by hiring new faculty and supporting new research centers. It has led to new investments in medicine and translational science, including the establishment of the Legorreta Cancer Center (2020), which is building research collaborations across the medical school and its affiliated hospitals with a particular focus on addressing the types of cancer that are most prevalent in Rhode Island.

*Building on Distinction* also included a commitment to strengthening the faculty ranks (which have expanded from 720 tenure-stream and lecturer-track faculty in 2014 to 848 today) and supporting their scholarship. It set a goal of raising 123 new endowed chairs to recognize outstanding colleagues, a goal that was surpassed in fall 2022 and has now been extended. Financial aid for students has been enhanced through The Brown Promise, which replaces loans with scholarships, a Veterans Financial Aid Initiative, which enables us to meet the full cost of attendance for qualified military veterans; the University is also raising funds with the goal of becoming need-blind for international students. Finally, funds raised through *BrownTogether* are helping to elevate our athletic programs, including with new facilities, and improve residential life. These and other developments are discussed in more detail in Standards 5 and 6.

### ***Advancing Goals for Diversity and Inclusion***

In 2016, Brown released *Pathways to Diversity and Inclusion: An Action Plan for Brown University*. Known as the DIAP, the plan articulated concrete actions and set measurable goals that would lead to changes in the composition of the campus community and—more importantly—transformation in practices that had led to the exclusion of people from historically underrepresented groups; it set explicit standards for accountability. Conceived of as a companion to, and extension of, *Building on Distinction*, it reflects the same commitment to strengthening Brown’s mission of education, research, and service and to achieving academic excellence in the context of a diverse and inclusive community.

In 2021, a second phase of the DIAP was launched, with a focus on assessing the progress since 2016 and setting new goals for effecting meaningful change. The process of developing the DIAP Phase II is described in Standard 2 and attention to diversity, equity, and inclusion is woven throughout this interim report—reflecting the commitments that are integral to Brown’s identity. Please refer to the DIAP Phase II [report](#) for a full description of those commitments and for data regarding our progress.

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The strategic priorities articulated in *Building on Distinction* and the DIAP were the result of a process of consultative planning that President Paxson began at the very outset of her presidency. Looking back, it is worth noting that the recommendations of a number of the constituent planning committees—on faculty development, financial aid, educational innovation, doctoral education, and signature research initiatives—have been implemented in the years since the planning for *Building on Distinction* began. Indeed, the period since the 2018 decennial review has seen major initiatives in a number of those areas, as will be discussed throughout this report. These efforts will transform Brown for generations to come.



## MANAGING LONG-TERM FINANCIAL CAPACITY

Realizing the aspirations of *Building on Distinction* requires new resources, with strategies for supporting continued growth that include tight management of budgets, prioritization of ongoing expenditures, and new revenues. Institutional leadership has developed excellent financial planning processes and is actively developing robust contingency plans to ensure that the positive momentum of the strategic plan is not lost should broader economic conditions turn negative for some period of time.

Since 2018, the University's financial performance and operations have continued to improve, which has made it possible to support existing commitments and fund important new priorities. Total net assets reached an all-time high of \$7.9 billion in June 2021, driven by outstanding endowment performance and the success of the capital campaign; a modest decline to 7.5 billion as of June 2022 can be attributed to weaker endowment returns. Total net assets, which were \$4.6 billion at the time of the decennial report in 2018, have grown by more than 60 percent since that date.

The success of the *BrownTogether* comprehensive capital campaign has been extraordinary. When the \$3 billion goal was reached more than a year ahead of schedule, the campaign was extended through 2024 and the goal increased to \$4 billion, of which more than \$3.5 billion has been raised. Important priorities for this phase of the campaign include raising funds to support research and education in medicine and public health, engineering, and the arts, along with student financial aid and career services. Funds will also continue to be raised in support of initiatives originally identified in the *Building on Distinction* plan.

The FY23 budget, developed by the University Resources Committee and approved last May, is a \$1.5 billion consolidated budget that included the lowest tuition increase (2.85 percent) along with the highest increase in faculty and staff salary pools (4.25 percent) in over a decade. It also included investments in financial aid, graduate student support, campus life and athletics, and facilities. The budget forecasts a very small deficit (\$2M), which is a significant decrease from FY22; efforts will continue to close that gap. The overall budget reflects Brown's commitment to academic excellence, a diverse and inclusive community, and a financially sustainable operating model. Full details are available in the URC [report](#).

Looking ahead, we will continue to be vigilant in stewarding Brown's financial resources, especially in the context of higher-than-expected inflation, volatility in capital markets, growing geopolitical uncertainty, and changes in the nature of work. Notwithstanding these headwinds—and the lingering impact of the COVID disruption—Brown is in a strong position due to a number of operational changes and strategic decisions, along with a strong underlying financial position.

### *Budgeting processes*

- A new budgeting system, Adaptive Insights, was implemented in FY20. The new model utilizes a zero-based budgeting approach that requires units annually to undertake a ground-up budget analysis that is designed to capture actual academic and administrative costs, with the goal of developing an increasingly predictable budget. The analysis is subsequently reviewed by partners in the finance division to ensure that spending plans align with strategic objectives. The move away from an incremental budgetary growth model represents a significant opportunity to control expenditures, and efforts are also underway to develop multi-year financial plans in order to minimize the number of incremental budget and personnel requests raised outside of the annual budget process.
- Policies for roll-forward and reserve accounts have been revised, and units must now include reserve accounts with their budget submissions. During a transition period, they are permitted three years during which they can utilize reserve balances.



### *New capital and other resources*

- The growth in endowment over the last decade has generated a substantial stream of new revenue, even as the University continues to reduce the payout (currently 4.8 percent) in order to preserve long-term purchasing power. Over the last three, five, and ten years Brown's endowment has grown by an average of 25%, 19% and 13.5% respectively. After an extraordinary return of 51.5% in FY21, the highest of any Ivy League school, it experienced a relatively modest decline in value in FY22 of -4.6%.
- In 2020, at the onset of the COVID pandemic, Brown took advantage of market conditions to borrow \$700M of new money debt, which essentially doubled outstanding debt. The historically low cost of capital created advantageous conditions for significant new borrowing, and the uncertainties regarding the duration of the pandemic's impact on operations suggested the need for prudent planning and foresight. As a result, Brown forward borrowed for debt that has now matured—and been paid down—over the last two fiscal years, essentially trading higher rate debt for lower cost debt. This has resulted in an extraordinarily low cost of capital for the University. With current interest rates, Brown is experiencing a significant positive arbitrage on its working capital.

### *Responsible planning and stewardship*

- The University recently implemented an enterprise “sources and uses” system that allows leadership to model investment scenarios with assumptions for available capital, debt capacity, fundraising, endowment performance and payout, etc. Within this system, models are developed for large infrastructure improvements, new buildings, and other major internal and external commitments that the University is considering, along with an analysis of the impact of any such investments on future financial performance.
- We have developed a sophisticated long-term liquidity model which is updated monthly. This predictive model considers debt maturities, cash flow cycles and other performance factors to ensure that liquidity is being actively monitored and managed. This tool is critical to managing the University's debt portfolio effectively.
- An office has been established with responsibility for the effective oversight, management, and deployment of gift and endowment funds in an effort to support the University's restricted fund resources. As Brown has seen remarkable success in endowment growth and fundraising over the last several years, this resource is key to the effective current and future management of these critical resources.

### *New commitments, aligned with our mission*

- Beginning with the 2022–23 academic year, Brown has increased its commitment to affordability and access by revising financial aid awards to eliminate the home equity component of primary residences in calculating a student's available financial resources. We are also committed to need blind admissions for international students over the next several years. These two financial aid investments will total ~\$24 million annually when fully implemented and are supported by new fundraising and increased endowment distributions due to market performance.
- As described elsewhere in this report, the next several years will see important investments in research, along with an anticipated growth in revenues across multiple areas.

As a result of the progress in the areas noted above, the institution's funding sources are stable and its planning processes are robust. With positive operating margins, consistent bond ratings of AA1, AA+ even in a context of significant new debt, and a strong liquidity position, Brown is poised to further invest in and support outstanding educational and research programs.

## STRENGTHENING REVIEW PROCESSES FOR TENURE-TRACK FACULTY

Brown has implemented a number of changes to the processes for reviewing faculty over the past decade, with the goal of ensuring that review, reappointment, and promotion standards establish and maintain a high and consistent standard of excellence and are aligned with our reputation as a leading research university with an outstanding faculty. Beginning with the implementation of a set of recommendations from the *ad hoc* Committee on Tenure and Faculty Development in academic year 2009–10, the University has continuously sought to strengthen review processes by (*inter alia*): ensuring that reappointment reviews are rigorous and consequential; expanding the role of the Dean in evaluating the suitability of referees for tenure cases; developing new practices by the University-wide Tenure, Promotions, and Appointments Committee (TPAC) that are designed to improve thoughtful consideration of tenure dossiers; and assessing departmental standards for review to confirm that they incorporate appropriate benchmarks for excellence in teaching, research, and service and communicate those expectations clearly. Each of these changes—which together include revisions to the process at the level of the department, the school, and the University—is summarized below.

At the outset of the tenure review process, a list of potential referees is generated by the academic unit in consultation with the candidate and reviewed by the cognizant (school-based) Dean. This procedural requirement is intended not only to uphold integrity in the review process by providing an opportunity to eliminate potential conflicts of interest but also to create a more robust and more diverse pool of potential reviewers. Following the 2018 decennial review by NECHE, the process was further refined to require the academic unit to include a brief description of each referee’s qualifications to evaluate the tenure candidate’s record, as well as a brief statement of the importance and impact of the candidate’s area of academic specialization within the larger field or discipline. These measures have had the effect of introducing additional institutional oversight of the integrity of the external evaluations.

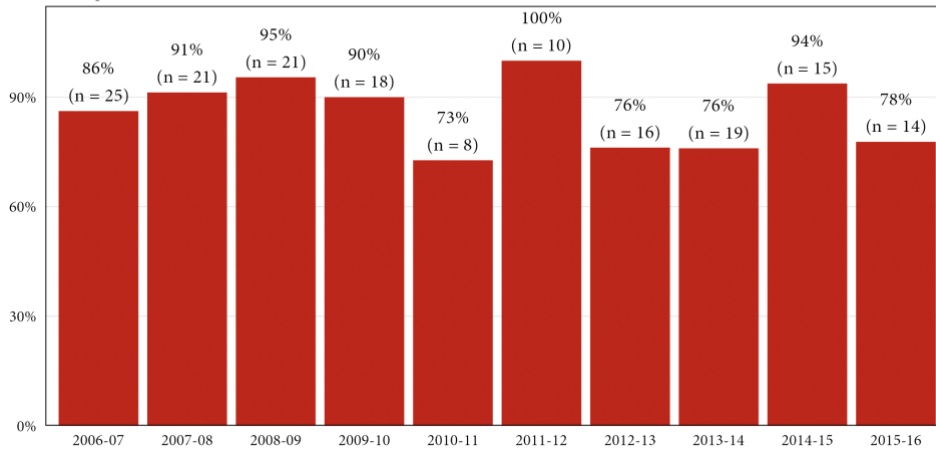
The TPAC review process itself has also been refined. Since academic year 2019–20, one TPAC member, typically from a cognate discipline and/or the same division, has been appointed to serve as the designated commentator for each tenure review case coming before the committee. The commentator is expected to provide a summary and critique of the evidence in the dossier and to direct the committee’s attention to any salient concerns. This has helped TPAC to focus its deliberations and be more efficient in its discussions of the merits of each dossier.

Every academic unit at Brown has its own internal “standards and criteria” for appointment, reappointment, review, and promotion, and part of TPAC’s charge is to evaluate those documents to verify that the standards have been applied in a particular case; more generally, TPAC seeks to ensure that they conform to accepted University practices. Beginning in 2020, an additional level of assessment has been established, in the external review process: the review committee is asked to examine the standards and criteria document and to comment on whether the standards are clear, rigorous, support excellence in teaching and research, and resonate with their sense of scholarly expectations in the discipline. After the findings of the external review are considered by the Academic Priorities Committee, suggestions or comments about the standards and criteria are conveyed to the academic unit and to TPAC.

Finally, and perhaps self-evidently, it is worth noting that the tenure review process represents only a single moment of assessment in the course of a faculty member’s career. With that in mind, Brown fosters a culture of continuous assessment through annual reviews of untenured faculty, which are overseen by the cognizant dean, and the reappointment review process, which is conducted by TPAC with responsibility for the final recommendation lying with the Provost and President. Both have become more rigorous and regularized over time, and while we have not sought to drive down reappointment rates through artificial means nor to impose an arbitrary cap on tenure approvals, the fraction of junior faculty being reappointed for the full four-year term has declined over time.

### Percentage of junior faculty receiving a four-year reappointment

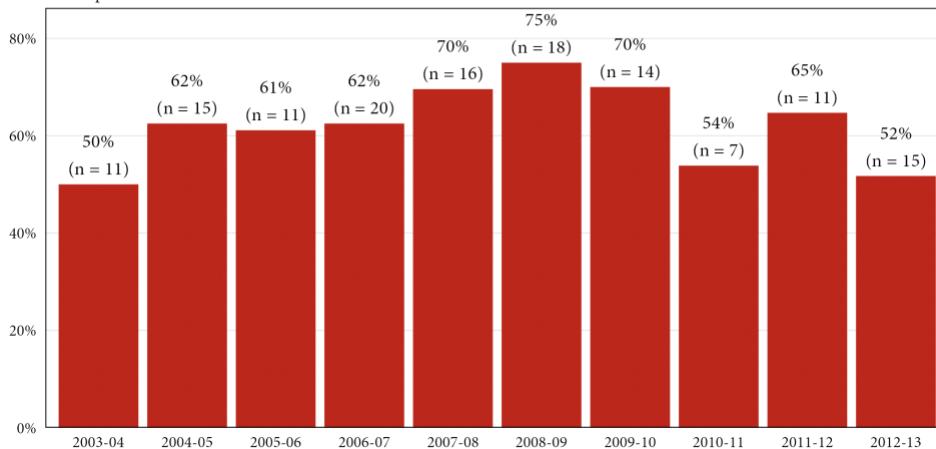
Among those who stood for reappointment only, excluding those who left or were tenured before  
Past top 5 cohorts combined: 82%



The cohort tenure rate, which tracks the percentage of tenure-track assistant professors through the probationary period to see how many are ultimately tenured, is now in the target range of 60 to 65 percent. We will continue to monitor this carefully, including with attention to the question of the impact of COVID-19 on the trajectory of junior faculty. We have taken a number of steps to mitigate disruptions to their teaching and research, providing additional supports such as extensions of contract, increased travel funds, targeted teaching relief, and funds for dependent care. It remains to be seen what the impact of the crisis may be on this generation of young scholars.

### Percentage receiving tenure at Brown

Among all those who entered with the cohort  
Past top 5 cohorts combined: 63%



These data may be taken as indicators, albeit indirect ones, of rigorous review processes. On a more positive and indeed more substantive note, Brown is also increasingly taking steps to mentor untenured faculty from the earliest stages of their careers, to expand opportunities for faculty development, and to develop and communicate best practices in the review process. We remain committed both to academic excellence and to fair, equitable, and transparent review processes.

## SUPPORTING EXCELLENCE IN GRADUATE EDUCATION

Brown continues to enhance support for graduate education, with the aim of attracting the most promising students, training them to a high standard, and preparing them for professional success. Outstanding master's and doctoral programs are integrally connected to the University's commitment to academic excellence, and investments in this area complement those we are making in research and scholarship, as outlined in the *Operational Plan for Investing in Research*.

### *Master's Programs*

There has been significant expansion of master's-level education over the last decade, with the number of degrees awarded increasing by more than 80 percent, from 479 in 2012 to 876 in 2022. The number of degree programs has likewise grown, with new programs in Medical Physics (2019), Design Engineering (2020), and Data-Enabled Computational Engineering and Science (2021) joining long-standing offerings in disciplines ranging from American Studies to Biostatistics, and from Education to Physics. Applications have increased by one-third over the past three years, with acceptance rates and yields holding steady over that period.

Many of these programs are overseen by the relevant academic unit (e.g., Sc.M. in Cybersecurity by the Department of Computer Science; Sc.M. in Medical Physics by the Warren Alpert Medical School; and A.M. in American Studies in the Department of American Studies), with a small number of Executive Master's degrees (Healthcare Leadership, Technology Leadership, and a joint Brown/IE MBA) operating under the aegis of the School of Professional Studies. In September 2022 the University launched its first entirely online degree program, a Master's in Public Health, offered through SPS in partnership with the School of Public Health.<sup>1</sup> The program, with an inaugural class of 61 and another 40 students beginning their studies this month, is already demonstrating that Brown is able to deliver the academically rigorous curriculum that is the hallmark of our educational programs, mediated through new technologies. It will enable public health professionals around the globe to enroll in a high-quality degree program that will prepare them to become the next generation of leading practitioners – and, with tuition that is lower than the on-campus MPH, there is evidence that the program is enrolling a more diverse pool of students. If this early success continues, the online MPH will serve as a model for other online programs.<sup>2</sup>

Regular internal reviews of Master's programs have been taking place since academic year 2017–18, though they were interrupted in 2020 due to the move to remote work during COVID. Areas addressed include: the rigor and breadth of the curriculum; selectivity and recruitment; the quality of advising; diversity, inclusion, and climate; and professional development opportunities for students. In some cases these reviews have led to major changes. As a result of the review of the MAT program, for example, the elementary education track was suspended in order to dedicate resources to secondary education. The curriculum was entirely revised, new leadership hired, and the funding model changed to make admission need-blind in order to attract the very best candidates. The program is now very strong, as evidenced by the fact that it was recently reaccredited by the State of Rhode Island for the maximum period. In other cases, such as History and Portuguese and Brazilian Studies, the review was one stage in the department's process of considering the balance of strengths and weaknesses of a program; in both cases the program was ultimately closed. See the E-Series forms for details.

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<sup>1</sup> A small professional A.M. in Biology, offered to Pfizer employees, was formerly offered in hybrid format but transitioned to being entirely remote in fall 2022.

<sup>2</sup> A fuller discussion of distance education in general, and the online MPH in particular, may be found in the *Report on the Establishment of Academic Programming Offered through Distance Education*, submitted by Brown University to NECHE in October 2021.

Finally, the School of Professional Studies has been reorganized and strengthened to support masters-level students more effectively across the more than thirty degree programs for early-career and professional students. Recently-appointed administrative staff are dedicated to meeting the needs of master's-level students in the areas of Student Affairs, Student Engagement, and Career Services and Professional Development. SPS also provides students with social and networking opportunities.

### ***Doctoral Education***

Excellence in doctoral education is fundamental to advancing Brown's mission as a leading research university. The strength of our programs has accelerated over the past decade: applicant pools have increased, admission has becoming increasingly competitive, and support for students has been improved. The University's commitment to enhancing excellence in doctoral education can be seen in various ways.

*Support for students.* Since a guaranteed minimum funding level was first introduced in 2006, support for students has expanded. Stipends have increased dramatically (\$42,412 for the current academic year) and students in the humanities and social sciences are guaranteed six years of support, which includes five summers that funded at the same level as the academic year; for the life and physical sciences, we guarantee five years of support, to include four summers. These levels compare very favorably to peers, and indeed our stipend is among the highest nationally (\$42,412 for academic year 2022-23), especially when taking into account the comparatively reasonable cost of living in Providence. There is also a comprehensive suite of benefits, including health and dental insurance. This reflects our commitment to attracting the very best doctoral students and enabling them to focus on their education while they are at Brown. We also continue to expand support for professional development and travel, and have granted extensions to those students whose progress towards was affected by the COVID pandemic to ensure that they have every opportunity to complete the degree.

*Evaluation and assessment.* Since the 2018 NECHE review, the University has continued to improve both the quality of data and the rigor of review processes. The Graduate School has developed comprehensive dashboards that summarize admission and enrollment statistics, time to degree, data from student surveys, and other information that inform an assessment of program quality. The dashboards are available to program leadership and the data is discussed annually with the Dean. To supplement the data on Alumni Outcomes that has been compiled by the Office of Institutional Research, Brown has also expanded our contractual agreement with Academic Analytics to include data on career placement of Ph.D. graduates, and we are more consistently tracking "wins" and "losses" in graduate admissions. Such measures are proving helpful in evaluating the strength of programs, and analyses suggest that Brown programs are competitive with many peers.

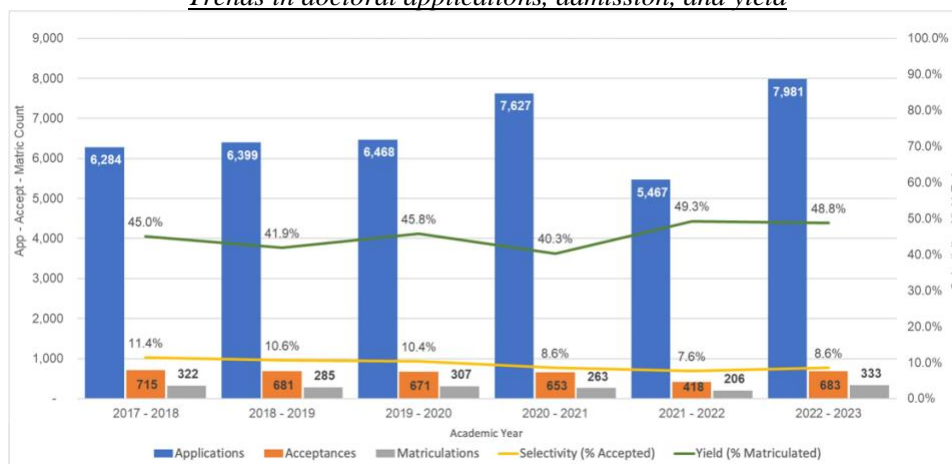
Program reviews, which are conducted by the Graduate Council, are now timed to align better with the external review process in order to assess the impact of any recommendations regarding graduate education that emerged from the external review; this should have the concomitant benefit of ensuring that the Graduate Council reviews occur somewhat more frequently as well. The Graduate School is also taking a larger role in overseeing revisions to doctoral programs that result from other changes, for example working with the Department of Molecular Pharmacology, Physiology, and Biotechnology as it was being dissolved to build on the strongest elements of the former educational programs and develop a new Ph.D. in Therapeutics, and collaborating with Music to pause admission for two years while a new department chair was recruited and significant revisions to the programs in Multimedia Composition and Ethnomusicology were undertaken by the faculty in consultation with the Graduate Council. In both cases, stronger programs emerged from this process.

*Task Force on Doctoral Education.* In the fall of 2021, then-Provost Richard Locke appointed a Task Force on Doctoral Education, charged with developing recommendations for promoting outstanding, innovative graduate education that supports the University's aspirations for excellence in research and

teaching. Central elements of the charge included identifying key components of excellence and developing strategies to advance them; defining effective structures of collaboration between the Graduate School and other units; and examining mechanisms for accountability and improvement for both programs and faculty.

The task force’s report highlighted a number of strengths of Brown’s doctoral programs: applicant pools are growing, admission is more competitive, and yields are improving.

*Trends in doctoral applications, admission, and yield*



Recent years have also seen growth in the number of self-identified HUG students who have applied to, been accepted into, and matriculated in Brown’s doctoral programs. Between 2012 and 2016, the percentage of matriculating domestic students from Historically Underrepresented Groups ranged from 13–15 percent. In the years 2018 through 2021, that percentage ranged from 27–31 percent.

*Admission Data, Students from Historically Underrepresented Groups*

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Applicants (%)	12.7	13.2	13.5	13.4	14.2	17.8	19.2	19.7	22.3	19.7
Admits (%)	14.7	14.3	11.0	14.4	15.9	23.4	27.1	25.5	25.3	29.0
Matrics (%)	14.7	15.1	13.2	14.5	12.5	23.7	30.9	29.7	29.0	27.4

The Task Force also identified some challenges to be addressed, a number of which are similar to those that emerged from reviews of Master’s programs, including issues of climate and uneven advising. There are also external forces to be reckoned with, in the form of a declining academic job market in some fields, which make the need to improve professional development more acute.

*Looking ahead.* Two processes currently underway demonstrate Brown’s continuing attention to enhancing the quality of doctoral education. First, a detailed plan to implement the recommendations of the Task Force on Doctoral Education over the next two fiscal years has been developed. The short-, medium-, and longer-term changes to be undertaken address admission and recruitment; curriculum (with an accelerated program review schedule); advising, mentoring, and climate; interdisciplinary opportunities; and professional development. The plan also includes a proposal to improve data and information systems. Please see the E-Series Forms. Second, increased collaboration between doctoral programs and the relevant Dean will ensure that the size of programs and the level of support is aligned with overall academic planning and priorities.



## SUPPORTING DISTANCE EDUCATION

Effective November 19, 2021, Brown University was granted general approval by NECHE to offer academic programming through distance education. The foundations for this had been laid over more than a decade, with a growing roster of hybrid and blended programs at the graduate level and a small but successful number of remote courses offered to undergraduates, primarily in the winter and summer sessions.<sup>3</sup> The strategies and supports that were put into place from March 2020 onwards as a consequence of the turn to remote learning during the COVID-19 crisis accelerated our experience with online modalities and demonstrated that the University was well-positioned to develop additional opportunities for remote learners. Doing so is not only consistent with our mission but strongly resonates with the commitments to increasing equity and access to a Brown education and enhancing the diversity of the student population. We moreover believe that the measures that are being taken to support digital education, especially in terms of careful attention to course design and learning outcomes, will in fact enrich teaching and learning for all students, whether residential or remote.

This approach has been sustained and expanded over the past year or more, including through the efforts of the Education Innovation Committee, which was convened in February 2021 and tasked with exploring how strategies that were used to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic could be further leveraged to provide greater flexibility around teaching and learning in order to enhance the experience of students and faculty. The report of the Committee recommended expanding off-campus experiential learning opportunities for students, developing models for flexible teaching and research for faculty, and investing in the infrastructure needed to support digital education programs.

In keeping with the first of these, we are working to expand opportunities for undergraduates to combine internships away from campus with remote enrollment in one or more courses. Curricular options are being designed to accommodate remote coursework so that students who are pursuing study abroad are also able to take a required course at Brown. See also Standard 4.

The Education Innovation Committee also recommended exploring strategies for providing faculty with options for flexible teaching and research. University policy requires faculty who are not on leave to be in residence, and while Brown offers sabbatical and other paid leave opportunities it has not heretofore been possible for a faculty member to work away from campus while still fulfilling teaching, advising, and service responsibilities. Introducing more flexibility in the residency requirement would enable a faculty member to teach remotely on occasion in order to pursue a singular opportunity away from campus that offers benefits for the individual's scholarship and/or to Brown, its students, and the broader community. Work is underway to permit limited-term and small-scale experimentation with remote teaching, and to develop an assessment plan to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of this approach.

The final set of recommendations address the need to build the digital infrastructure to support the successful design and delivery of fully-online, low-residency, and hybrid educational programs—and we believe that doing so will contribute to the excellence of residential education as well. The University has made significant investments that have put us in a strong position to enhance digital education offerings: restructuring the Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning to include a centralized Digital Learning and Design (DLD) team; a strategic redesign of the School of Professional Studies (SPS) to focus on master's and professional education, including online programs; and active engagement with the Office of Information Technology (OIT) to ensure that we have the technical capacity and secure environment to offer digital education programs across a range of platforms and learners; and establishing the Academic Innovation Unit, charged with developing the strategy, resources, and infrastructure for digital education.

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<sup>3</sup> A fuller discussion may be found in the October 2020 *Application to the New England Commission of Higher Education for General Approval to Offer Programs through Online or Remote Education*.



Taken together, these strategies have the potential to expand access, increase flexibility, reach new communities of students, and permit both students and faculty to pursue valuable off-campus opportunities for study and research. Moreover, investments in technology and digital infrastructure to advance remote learning can also support innovative teaching and learning practices more broadly. As we pursue them, though, we are also mindful of the need to take care to preserve Brown's character and culture as a residential university that places a high value on community.

### *Case Study: An online MPH degree*

In September 2022, Brown launched a new Master's in Public Health (MPH) degree program, which was designed from the outset to be offered entirely online, with the goal of expanding access to public health education to professionals around the globe. A team of faculty and senior academic administrators from the School of Public Health (SPH) developed the curriculum in conjunction with the requirements of the School's accrediting body, the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH). Following the standard process used for all new Brown courses and programs, the online MPH was reviewed and endorsed by faculty committees at the Department, School, and University levels in the fall of 2021. SPH then submitted a substantive change proposal to CEPH, which approved the program in January 2022.

SPH has hired new core faculty for the program, including teaching scholars and professors of the practice. They are working closely with the Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning's Digital Learning and Design (DLD) team to develop courses that apply cutting-edge approaches to digital pedagogy in order to maintain a high level of student engagement: synchronous discussion sessions with faculty via Zoom, student / faculty discussion boards to review reading materials, self-directed knowledge checks with immediate feedback, and innovative and engaging micro-lectures that leverage computer and physical animation.<sup>4</sup> Integrated language support is also provided throughout every course. Brown maintains the integrity of the educational program through identity verification with secure two-factor authentication and by associating student information in Banner with a photo.

One distinctive aspect of the program is that public health case studies are embedded throughout the curriculum for faculty to teach these cases from their expert perspective. For example, a case study on the impacts of COVID-19 can be discussed in various ways through courses such as public health leadership, social determinants of health, health policy, communication, interventions, evaluations, research methods, etc.). We are one of the few programs in the country that utilizes case-based learning in the curriculum. Another feature of the online program that differentiates it from the traditional residential one is that we offer two health leadership courses and a public health communications course as part of our core curriculum to help students build skills related to leadership, data analysis, and communication.

Sixty-one students registered in the inaugural 2022 fall cohort. In addition to those from North America, the cohort includes students from India, France, Canada, and South Africa. Students of color comprise more than one-half (52%) of the class, and nearly one-third (31%) are from an historically under-represented group. As of mid-December 2022, none of the 61 registered students had withdrawn from the program, attesting to the program's high level of student engagement. A second cohort began the program in the spring 2023 semester, enrolling another 40 students.

The early success of the online MPH suggests that there may be opportunities for SPS, in collaboration with academic departments, to develop additional programs that draw on our strengths in teaching and research and are more affordable and accessible to new communities of students.

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<sup>4</sup> Examples of asynchronous microlectures delivered by the program's teaching scholars and produced by DLD media specialists can be seen [here](#).

## STANDARD ONE: MISSION AND PURPOSES

As was the case for all institutions, the COVID-19 pandemic was a defining experience of the last five years. Following the emergency slowdown of campus activities in March 2020 we rapidly set about developing policies and practices that would prioritize individual and community health while also maintaining our ability to fulfill our core mission. Those efforts were guided by a series of values and principles that shaped all of the decisions that were made over the subsequent months and years and informed the statement we made in the earliest days of the pandemic—when so much was still unknown about its likely course—about protecting Brown’s mission of education and research:

**We are committed to protecting Brown’s mission of education and research, including focusing resources on Brown’s highest priorities.** In making choices about what aspects of our work to preserve and grow, academic areas—education and research—will take precedence over activities that are less central to the University’s core mission. Across all areas of the University, we will work as a community to set priorities so that our students continue to have excellent educational and co-curricular experiences, our faculty’s scholarship and research is appropriately supported, and our work is conducted as efficiently as possible.

While the pandemic tested the University in a variety of new and unexpected ways, our fidelity to these values remained firm throughout. We resumed research operations in the late spring/early summer of 2020 and were able to welcome returning students to campus that fall for in-person learning. We adjusted the academic calendar during 2020–21 to reduce the population during the academic year, implementing a three-semester model and observing stringent health and safety protections. But the core values and experience of a Brown education in a residential academic community remained in place.

Responding to the COVID-19 emergency required intensive planning by individuals and offices across Brown. However, it neither entirely disrupted the regular business of the University nor derailed efforts to undertake new initiatives. In fall 2022, the University adopted the *Operational Plan for Investing in Research*, a detailed roadmap developed under the leadership of former Provost Richard Locke for propelling Brown’s research and scholarship to a new level of excellence. The research Brown produces plays a critical role in benefiting communities locally, nationally, and around the world. With increased investment in research across all disciplines—in areas ranging from treatments for Alzheimer’s disease and unraveling the mysteries of RNA to confronting social and economic inequality, addressing climate challenges, and deepening our understanding of the historical and cultural legacies that shape current issues—Brown stands ready to make a transformative impact on the lives of individuals, families, and communities. These investments build upon the foundation of the University’s strategic plan, *Building on Distinction*, and will further expand our ability to carry out this critical aspect of our mission. We moreover believe that a sharper focus on supporting research is not in tension a commitment to world-class undergraduate education. In fact, a large number (70 percent) of undergraduate students report that they actively engage in research during their time at Brown; these plans will only increase and improve those opportunities.

Another significant undertaking related to the University’s mission and purpose was a more than year-long review undertaken by a Land Acknowledgment Working Group appointed by President Paxson. Their work included delving into bodies of scholarship, knowledge-building with members of our community, and learning directly from the Narragansett Indian Tribe. The land acknowledgment statement they developed recognizes and honors the fact that the University is located within the ancestral homelands of the Narragansett Indian Tribe. The University moreover committed to a set of actions to educate our community and support broader engagement with the tribe and other Indigenous peoples of the region. The deep reflection and historical context that accompanied the LAWG recommendations illustrate and reinforce Brown’s mission of “serving the community, the nation, and the world by discovering, communicating and preserving knowledge and understanding in a spirit of free inquiry.”

## STANDARD TWO: PLANNING AND EVALUATION

The reaccreditation team for the 2018 comprehensive review commended Brown for being unusually strong in the areas of planning and evaluation, with their report noting that the University “knows what it wants to achieve, has processes in place to allow it to monitor progress towards goals, and takes corrective action as necessary.” Planning efforts have continued unabated over the last five years, informed by careful assessment of progress and priorities. They rest on the two commitments that have given focus and direction to our work over the past decade: the strategic plan, *Building on Distinction*, and the commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion that led to *Pathways to Diversity and Inclusion: An Action Plan for Brown University*. Both plans were developed under the leadership of President Paxson through transparent and inclusive processes, and both have been updated in the last five years. Taken together, these are the twin pillars that articulate our priorities and guide our work. Please refer to section 1 in part I of this report (areas of emphasis), above, for a fuller discussion of accomplishments related to *Building on Distinction* and *Pathways to Diversity and Inclusion*.

### ***Building on Distinction***

In summer 2018, the *Operational Plan for Building Brown’s Excellence*—the document that translates the strategic vision of *Building on Distinction* into action—was updated through a process that included careful assessment of the progress that had been made in each of the strategic plan’s areas of focus.

The *BrownTogether* capital campaign, launched in 2015, had reached its midpoint; it was therefore an opportune moment to take stock of successes and consider how to extend the momentum of the planning that was underway. The process, coordinated by the Provost, included extensive consultation with key academic leaders and senior administrative officers about evolving priorities as well as an evaluation of progress towards the original fundraising goals. The result was a revised plan calling for continued support for areas that are central to *Building on Distinction*, focusing on people (faculty, students, community) and academic programming (teaching and research), and complemented by investments in physical resources that help advance education and scholarship. There is a high degree of continuity with the 2014 operational plan, and indeed many goals had already been reached (including a number that are described elsewhere in this report), but new challenges and opportunities had emerged. Throughout the process, care was taken to consider the strategic investments that would be required in order to realize the vision for excellence articulated in *Building on Distinction*.

October 2022 saw the release of the *Operational Plan for Investing in Research*, which provides a framework for expanding Brown’s research enterprise through targeted investments in space, faculty, staff, and students along with improvements to administrative support structures that enable research. Developed over many months and as a result of a process that engaged faculty and staff across a range of constituencies, the plan aims to further Brown’s position as a leading research university by leveraging a distinctive intellectual culture that prizes collaboration and interdisciplinarity. Closely aligned with the priorities and framework of *Building on Distinction*, the plan outlines how Brown will expand its research enterprise by increasing the number of research faculty and staff; investing in core research infrastructure; identifying capital projects that will expand laboratory space; and soliciting proposals for initiatives that build on existing strengths and are consistent with the integrative themes identified in *Building on Distinction*. Our ambition is to grow research across all disciplines in the next five to seven years.

The research plan builds on investments that have been made in recent years, including in growing the faculty ranks and increasing the number of graduate students. It also reflects an expansion of research that was already underway. As documented in the plan, Brown faculty have increased their research productivity and impact over the past decade: from 2013 to 2020, on a per-faculty-member basis, the number of articles published rose 15 percent, the number of citations increased by more than 40 percent, and the number of conference proceedings grew by nearly 20 percent. Brown’s federally sponsored

research expenditures have increased by 41 percent over the last five years, the highest growth among our peers (though we still lag many of them in total expenditures). And planning has already begun for a new integrated life sciences building that will provide laboratory space, core research facilities, and an animal care facility, as well as for critical updates and renovations to other space across campus. New investments to support research will therefore fall on fertile ground.

### ***Pathways to Diversity and Inclusion: An Action Plan for Brown University, Phase II***

The original action plan, *Pathways to Diversity and Inclusion* (known as the DIAP), was released in 2016 and established a set of concrete goals and actions for building a more fully diverse and inclusive academic community. Five years later, in 2021, the University re-committed to the DIAP, reflecting on the progress that had been made and the work that remained to be done, and set new goals to sustain progress and address emerging issues. The original plan established metrics and methods of accountability that created a foundation for assessment, and DIAP Phase II was based on this evaluation. It included explicit attention to the status of major goals, including doubling faculty from historically underrepresented groups, diversifying the graduate, undergraduate, and medical school student bodies, and promoting hiring practices to increase the diversity of staff and providing professional development opportunities to further their careers at Brown. This assessment revealed that we had made measurable progress in each of those areas. The initial fundraising goal of \$165 million had also nearly been attained, with commitments of \$157.3 million.

As discussed in the preceding section, DIAP Phase II outlines new and continuing actions to be taken in six priority areas: People, Academic Excellence, Curriculum, Community, Accountability, and Knowledge. It also designates members of the President's Cabinet as the responsible officers for ensuring that progress is made and provides a timeline for implementation.

### ***Evaluation***

As is evident, planning and evaluation are deeply intertwined—indeed, virtually inseparable—at Brown. There is a broad commitment to continuous assessment, to revising approaches in ways that are consistent with the original vision and with the University's mission and values, and to transparency in documenting outcomes. This is true both at the highest level, for example in the strategic plans discussed here, but also on the day-to-day basis in terms of evaluating academic programs and developing plans for improvement. Many of those efforts are described throughout this report.

Over the last three years, and as a consequence of the COVID-19 crisis, it has been easier to sustain our internal efforts at assessment and planning: the College Curriculum Council and Graduate Council have continued to evaluate degree programs, the Office of Institutional Research has continued to refine the data dashboards that make it easy to access data, and new plans have taken root. For example, the Office of the Dean of the Faculty, in partnership with the Registrar's Office, has developed a curricular planning tool that enables academic departments to project course offerings, sabbaticals, advising, and coverage for major departmental service for the next three years. This will improve the ability of programs to plan curricular coverage (which is critical in light of the improved leave policy; see Standard 6) and the ability of students to plan their course of study. We have also continued to use surveys to inform planning. This spring, the University is administering a survey of tenure-stream and lecturer-track faculty through the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education, as well as a campus-wide climate survey.

It has been more difficult to regain momentum with respect to processes that require engagement of those outside of Brown. For example, the external review process paused in 2020 and has restarted only slowly. Although we have conducted a small number of external reviews in the last two years, re-energizing this process and beginning a new cycle of reviews is a high priority.

### STANDARD THREE: ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE

The period since the 2018 review has seen improvements to representation and governance in the form of adjustments to meeting formats and modalities, revisions to the structure of the Brown University Corporation, and a comprehensive effort to review and regularize policies.

#### *Increased Participation in Governance*

While Brown has long had a robust and transparent formal governance structure, the decennial review noted that the institution could benefit from greater participation, especially of faculty. One unanticipated outcome of the pandemic has been how using Zoom and other forms of technology to facilitate meetings has actually enhanced participation across many fronts. During the height of the pandemic President Paxson and other senior leaders frequently hosted town hall events for faculty, staff, and students that were attended by hundreds of community members; sessions were frequently conducted for parents and families as well. Regular meetings of the faculty, Cabinet, committees, staff groups, and others also transitioned to Zoom and saw similar upticks in participation and engagement. A number of these continue to be conducted via Zoom (or revert to Zoom on occasion) to enable greater levels of participation. For example, the monthly faculty meeting is on Zoom and the number of attendees and level of participation have been higher than our prior experience with in-person meetings. On the administrative side a virtual monthly meeting of the Administrative Leadership Group—middle and senior level managers—also has high attendance and enthusiastic participation. We continue to consider the trade-offs between in-person and virtual meetings. The Faculty Executive Committee has conducted surveys regarding modalities which revealed a preference for the webinar and Zoom formats; we will continue to assess and adjust as needed. But in what is doubtless not the only irony of the pandemic, the turn to remote technologies has actually strengthened inclusive and participatory governance and helped to sustain and even expand the sense of community that is so important to Brown's identity.

The Brown University Corporation returned to in-person meetings in October 2021 but has also revised its practices through the use of technology. The three major committees—Academic Affairs, Budget & Finance, and Campus Life—now hold what we describe as informational meetings a week or two prior to the on-campus meetings in October, February, and May. Held via Zoom, the informational meetings allow for an efficient transmission of updates and presentations so that the in-person meetings can be reserved for strategic discussions and other items that fully engage Corporation members.

#### *Changes to Governance Structures*

There have been a number of significant revisions to the committee structure of the Brown University Corporation since the decennial review. First, in 2021 the former Committee on the Warren Alpert Medical School (WAMS) was restructured to become the Committee on Medical and Health Affairs, which encompasses the Alpert Medical School and the School of Public Health and is jointly staffed by the deans of both schools. It is able to address the connections between the two and between them and our affiliated hospitals. President Paxson initiated this change to ensure that the Corporation would have a standing committee that recognizes the extent to which medicine and public health are increasingly intertwined, for example in the areas of data-informed population health management, the treatment of opioid addiction, and pandemic response. For Brown, a governance committee that spans medicine and public health sends a strong message that WAMS and SPH are allies and collaborators.

The establishment of the Corporation Committee on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, also in 2021, was a transition of a previously existing *ad hoc* committee to a standing committee. The move to regular committee status signaled the University's enduring commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion and our goal of becoming a national leader in this area. It is charged with overseeing strategies for maintaining an equitable working and teaching environment and increasing diversity and inclusion,



consistent with the goal of improving Brown's strength in education and research. The committee advises the President and the Corporation on matters related to advancing Brown's mission of academic excellence by diversifying the faculty, staff, and student bodies; increasing departmental and university accountability; and implementing a set of curricular, co-curricular and student life enhancements that promote the success of all students within an open and supportive intellectual environment.

Finally, an Ad Hoc Committee on Athletics was established, with responsibility for the University's athletic program, including priorities, strategic plans, opportunities for investment, emerging trends, areas for improvement, and policy issues. It will monitor progress on the implementation of the strategic plan for the Athletics Department and ensure that Brown's commitment to improving excellence in athletics is sustained. The Ad Hoc Committee will collaborate especially closely with the Academic Affairs and Campus Life committees on matters related to the academic experience, personal growth, and health and wellness of student athletes and also work closely with the Facilities and Campus Planning Committees.

### ***Policy Review and Revisions***

A major emphasis in the last several years has been to review all extant policies over a phased, multi-year timeline and to approve new policies as they are developed, with the goal of ensuring that policies are updated and accessible. The Policy on Policies governs the development, revision, approval, publication, and management of Brown University policies, and we have established the Comprehensive Policy Review Project which ensures that policies are written in a consistent format and posted on the University Policy website. University Compliance works with academic and administrative departments to confirm that policies clearly document the rights, responsibilities, and expectations of the Brown community and to eliminate redundant, conflicting, or outdated policies.

We made significant revisions and improvements to the University Code of Conduct in 2022. The Code of Conduct effectively gathers the standards that all community members—undergraduate, graduate, and medical students; faculty, instructors and postdoctoral scholars; staff; visiting scholars; Corporation members, volunteers, and Brown sponsored-ID holders—need to abide by. It reflects the University's values of integrity, honesty, and fairness and expresses a shared commitment to upholding the highest ethical, professional, and legal standards. The revisions made in 2022 provide for clear and concise details of the responsibilities assigned to members of the Brown community. The Code of Conduct is now organized into four standards: (1) We Respect Academic Freedom and the Freedom of Expression and Inquiry; (2) We Treat Each Other with Respect and Dignity; (3) We Act with Integrity; and (4) We Respect the Use of University Resources and Property. All members of the Brown community are expected to be familiar with and abide by the University Code of Conduct and are periodically asked to read and sign a statement attesting to their commitment to adhering to it.

### ***Transitions in Academic Leadership***

Since the comprehensive evaluation a number of normal but important transitions have taken place among the senior academic leaders of the institution. Most notably, Provost Richard Locke concluded seven impactful years of service at the end of 2022 to take a leadership position at Apple University. A national search led to the appointment of Francis Doyle, Dean of Engineering and Applied Sciences at Harvard University, who will take office July 1, 2023. (Former Dean of Engineering Lawrence Larson is serving as interim provost this semester.) Other significant appointments in the past year include the appointments of Mukesh Jain as Senior Vice President for Health Affairs and Dean of Medicine and Biological Sciences and of Tejal Desai as Dean of Engineering. The new deans and the incoming provost are highly aligned with President Paxson's vision and priorities and in support of *Building on Distinction* and the operational plan for investing in research. Brown's senior academic leadership is strong, experienced, and collaborative. Our academic ambition and momentum are only expected to increase over the course of the next five years, and beyond.

## STANDARD FOUR: THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Brown's efforts to improve graduate education and to expand access to its academic programs through distance education are described in more detail elsewhere in this report. In addition to special initiatives in those and other areas, the University continues its regular programs of review, assessment, and improvement to ensure that the quality of its academic programs and the standard of student achievement are consonant with its mission "to serve the community, the nation, and the world...by educating and preparing students to discharge the offices of life with usefulness and reputation." At both the undergraduate and graduate levels, student learning is supported by engaged and attentive faculty and facilitated by robust support structures.

### *The Undergraduate Program*

Brown has long been recognized for the flexibility and rigor of its undergraduate curriculum and for the intellectual independence of its students, who explore their interests in classrooms and laboratories and through an expanding number of research, internship, and community engagement opportunities. The Open Curriculum, which has been the cornerstone of a Brown education for more than fifty years, is characterized by both breadth and depth: students are encouraged to sample different academic areas, to draw connections across them, and to concentrate (i.e. major) in one or more areas of particular interest. Even in the absence of distribution requirements, a Brown education is informed by Liberal Learning Goals (which were revised and approved in 2022) that articulate the importance of both breadth and depth and encourage the development of core skills including (*inter alia*) facility with speaking, reading, and writing; intercultural competence, a commitment to diversity and engagement with the community; and an understanding of human behavior, of organizations and power, and of the past. There is evidence that courses across the curriculum help students to meet those goals. See Standard 8 and the E-Forms.

Progress towards the A.B. or Sc.B. degree is guided by an extensive network of academic advisors in the College and in the academic departments, and supported by a suite of sophisticated and accessible online tools, including Courses@Brown, which enables students to explore course offerings by searching on different criteria; Focal Point, where concentration requirements, learning goals, advising resources, and alumni outcomes are published; and the Advising Sidekick (ASK), which provides planning resources, coordinates information for advisors and advisees, and tracks progress towards fulfilling concentration and degree requirements. Policies for degree requirements, the award of credit (including A.P. and transfer credit), academic standing, study elsewhere, honors and Latin honors, and other academic matters are readily accessible through the Registrar, the College and Graduate School, and associated websites.

*Expanding educational opportunities for undergraduate students.* Since 2019 Brown undergraduates have been able to earn certificates while also completing a concentration. Developed in consultation with the College Curriculum Council and the Academic Priorities Committee and formally approved by the faculty, certificate programs enable students to integrate coursework, co-curricular commitments, and experiential learning in an area of interest.<sup>1</sup> Certificate programs provide a structured pathway for interdisciplinary learning, whether in Data Fluency, Engaged Scholarship, Entrepreneurship, or Intercultural Competence. They are intentionally interdisciplinary and complementary: certificates may not be developed in areas in which a concentration already exists and they may only be earned in an area that is distinct from the individual student's field of concentration. To date, 37 students have earned certificates; that number is expected to grow rapidly as the fields in which they can be earned expand and more students become aware of them.

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<sup>1</sup> These are modeled in part on the "fields of advanced specialization" for doctoral students, introduced in 2016 to enable them to earn recognition for work done in an interdisciplinary field of study as a complement to the Ph.D.



New opportunities are also being developed for students to combine Brown coursework with experiential learning or study away from Providence. An Education Innovation Committee was formed in 2021 and charged with identifying ways to enhance the model of a Brown education by leveraging new capabilities for distance learning—many of which were a result of innovation during the COVID-19 pandemic—that advance student-centered education, promote greater flexibility for students and faculty, and create new pathways of access. This effort is beginning to bear fruit. For example, three six-month immersive pilot programs are being developed to enable students to combine an internship with remote enrollment: in Berlin (Research and Entrepreneurship), Boston (Biotechnology and Life Science) and one that could be located anywhere in the United States (Campaigns and Social Change). We are also working to increase study abroad opportunities that permit students, particularly those in STEM fields, to enroll in required courses remotely. To support such initiatives, representatives from the Office of the Dean of the Faculty and the Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning are collaborating with academic programs to identify accessible options in the form of fully-online classes, recorded lectures with Zoom-only sections, or some hybrid format. While we expect that the roster of such course offerings will remain limited, they also have the potential to expand access for students whose circumstances (financial, geographic, medical, etc.) prevent them from being at Brown. The University was granted general approval by NECHE to offer distance education in 2021.

### ***Assuring Academic Quality***

Academic programs at both the undergraduate and graduate levels are assessed regularly. The College Curriculum Council and the Graduate Council are charged with oversight of curricular offerings, the review and approval of new degree programs, and significant changes to existing ones. Both bodies include elected members, student representatives, and relevant academic administrators in their membership and as active participants in the review process.

*Undergraduate Concentration Reviews.* To ensure that Brown’s concentrations are held to a high standard of intellectual rigor, the College Curriculum Council reviews undergraduate programs on a regular cycle, informed by robust quantitative and qualitative data, guidance from the Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning regarding assessment and learning outcomes, the unit’s Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan, and by thoughtful discussion between the CCC and program leadership. Areas of evaluation include:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| - curricular planning and course sequencing     | - learning goals, knowledge, and skills |
| - capstone courses; culminating experiences     | - core competencies, including writing  |
| - diversity and inclusion goals                 | - inclusive pedagogy and practices      |
| - structure and goals of advising               | - support for instructors               |
| - academic climate and community                | - any changes since the last CCC review |
| - adherence to federal credit hour requirements |   |

Subcommittees of the CCC that conduct the reviews normally include at least one or two faculty members, an academic dean, and a student. A more recent development is the formal inclusion of more student input into the assessment through focus groups and/or interviews conducted by the Sheridan Center with concentrators to solicit their views on the curriculum, advising, and diversity and inclusion. CCC reviews are also attentive to new issues as they arise. For example, the expansion in the use of undergraduate teaching assistants (UTAs) in recent years led the CCC to develop guidelines for UTAs and to work with the Sheridan Center to develop resources to support UTAs and their mentors, to outline learning objectives for them, to articulate responsibilities and expectations, and to describe equitable practices for recruitment.

Concentration reviews regularly result in the development of strategies for improvement, detailed in the E-Forms. For example, the CCC worked with Classics and with Hispanic Studies to revise learning

goals; urged greater coordination with cognate departments for Anthropology, Neuroscience, and Earth, Environmental, and Planetary Sciences; and encouraged concentrations including French and Francophone Studies and Modern Culture and Medias to clarify curricular pathways.

In those cases where there has been structural change, we have ensured that students can continue to make educational progress. For example, a review conducted by the Provost's Office of the interdisciplinary concentration in Business, Entrepreneurship, and Organizations in fall 2018 concluded that student learning would be improved if it were grounded more firmly in the disciplines of Economics, Engineering, or Sociology. The College worked closely with those concentration to develop new tracks and to help students navigate any transitional issues. Students who had already declared a BEO concentration were able to complete their degrees according to the existing requirements. A similar approach was taken when the Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs revised its undergraduate program to sunset three separate concentrations (International Relations, Development Studies, and Public Policy) and create a single one in International and Public Affairs with separate tracks. Students in the class of 2024 and later have been declaring IAPA as their concentration; the last students completing the former concentrations will graduate this spring.

*Graduate Program Reviews.* The recommendations enumerated in the report of the Task Force on Doctoral Education are guiding University-wide efforts to make changes to admissions and recruitment; undertake curricular review; improve advising and mentoring practices; increase professional development opportunities; and address issues of climate. A detailed implementation plan and timeline have been developed to track progress and ensure accountability. Please see the E-Series forms.

At the more local level, we continue to evaluate individual programs through the regular Graduate Council reviews, and indeed have made efforts to strengthen that process. In 2019, an *ad hoc* Working Group considered how reviews could better support excellence in assessment without imposing undue or redundant burdens on academic units. It considered how best to align the external review process with the Graduate Council review and recommended improving coordination between the program, the Graduate School, the College, the cognizant Dean, and the Provost to identify issues of concern; streamlining materials to focus on key areas; and changing the timing of the Graduate Council review to provide a sufficient interval following the external review for programs to implement recommended changes. These changes will take effect when we begin the new cycle of external reviews next year.

Graduate Council reviews can lead to significant changes, for example in the reconfiguration of two Ph.D. programs, in Molecular Pharmacology and Physiology and in Biotechnology, to become a single new Ph.D. in Therapeutic Sciences, or the shift to an online format for the M.Sc. offered to Pfizer employees. Meanwhile, new programs continue to be developed in consultation with the Graduate Council: an M.A. program in Design Engineering (MADE), offered jointly between the School of Engineering and the Rhode Island School of Design, was approved in 2020 following a lengthy process of development and review. MADE is an intensive 11-month program offering an opportunity to work at the intersection of design and engineering, drawing on the unique and complementary strengths of Brown and RISD. Nineteen students have already graduated, and 20 are currently enrolled.

We continue to develop and refine policies to respond to new questions as they arise. One recent example was the collaboration in 2021 between the Graduate Council and the Academic Priorities Committee to establish guidelines for evaluating and assuring academic quality in low-residency or online master's programs. In anticipation of proposals for new and/or modified programs leveraging distance learning modalities, we sought to be confident that the principles for evaluating them are aligned with Brown's commitment to providing excellent educational programs, and that the quality of instruction and level of support for students are consistent with what we require for residential programs.

## STANDARD FIVE: STUDENTS

Brown University seeks to enroll the most promising students and to provide access to a Brown education to a wide range of learners. Admission at both the undergraduate and graduate levels is highly competitive, and the student population continues to evolve to include more international students, first-generation students, and students of color. We remain committed to need-blind admission for undergraduates (including international students), to providing competitive stipends for doctoral students, and to increasing our ability to provide need-based aid for master's-level students.

### *Integrity and Access*

In 2019, in response to the “Varsity Blues” scandal and its allegations about corrupt practices in admission to elite universities, President Paxson convened an *ad hoc* committee composed of faculty and Corporation members. Although Brown was not implicated, we nevertheless wanted to be assured that our undergraduate admissions practices were sound and equitable and that there were adequate safeguards to protect the integrity of the process, particularly around athletic recruitment. More broadly, the committee was asked to consider whether our admissions practices align with our institutional goals of building academic excellence, making Brown accessible to students from all economic backgrounds, and ensuring long-term financial sustainability. The committee quickly reassured itself that admission processes were not vulnerable to abuse and suggested some modest changes to the training of admissions officers. It spent more time on the second part of its charge, ultimately recommending a number of measures for expanding socioeconomic diversity through outreach, communication, and the expansion of financial aid. Our success in implementing those recommendations is discussed in more detail below.

### *Admissions and Financial Aid*

Brown has continued to see increases in the number of applications for undergraduate admission, which rose by more than 10 percent from 2018 to 2020 (from 33,218 to 36,876) and soared by another 37 percent in the last two years, to 50,646 in 2022. The rapid recent increase may in part be attributed to the adoption of a test-optional policy in June 2020, which has been extended through at least the 2023–24 admission cycle to recognize the ongoing impact of the pandemic on students’ secondary school experiences. Unsurprisingly, the rise in applications has resulted in remarkably low admit rates, with only five percent of applicants for the Class of 2026 offered admission to the College. The size of the undergraduate student body has risen modestly in recent years and now stands at 7200, up from 6700 in 2018. This expansion was planned, and new dorms will accommodate the increase.

The composition of the applicant pool has changed as well: in the last two admission cycles, due to expanded outreach, there have been significant increases in applications from first-generation students (35%), students from rural areas (25%), applicants for financial aid (30%), and international applicants (37%). This result is an undergraduate student body that is not only highly qualified academically and extraordinarily accomplished but also richly diverse. In the Class of 2026, 13 percent of matriculants are the first generation in their family to go to college, 24 percent are from historically underrepresented groups, and half are receiving need-based financial aid. There are 61 students enrolled in the Program in Liberal Medical Education, which enables them to complete both a Brown undergraduate degree and earn the M.D. from the Alpert Medical School in eight years, and 15 in the dual degree program offered with the Rhode Island School of Design.

The University remains committed to need-blind admission for domestic first-year students and is expanding this to include international students, becoming fully need-blind for the Class of 2029. In general, our aid program is one of the most comprehensive and inclusive in the country. When the reaccreditation team visited Brown in 2018, the University had just launched *The Brown Promise*, which eliminated loans from undergraduate financial aid awards beginning in academic year 2018–19.

To fund this and other initiatives, the scholarship budget has grown from \$135.4 million for FY19 to an estimated \$186.2 million for FY23, a 38 percent increase. This has been made possible in part because the *BrownTogether* campaign has been successful in expanding resources for need-based scholarship, both in raising endowment and increasing gifts and other funds. Although the majority of financial aid continues to be funded from the general operating budget, income from endowed funds increased by 15 percent from FY19 to FY22 and gifts and other restricted accounts grew by 84 percent, from \$9 million to \$16.66 million.

These figures tell only part of the story. What is more important is what they reflect: our deep commitment to making a Brown education accessible and affordable. To that end, we have deployed a range of initiatives in the last few years that have been carefully designed and thoughtfully implemented:

- By removing loans from financial aid packages, the Brown Promise enables students from moderate-income families to graduate without debt that might limit their professional choices.
- Scholarship aid covers all direct costs for students from families with annual income less than \$60,000 and assets of less than \$100,000—including tuition, fees, room, and meals. The middle/moderate family initiative reduced the percent of family income that is used in calculating parental contributions for families with annual incomes between \$100–200,000.
- In 2022, the University eliminated consideration of equity in a primary residence in aid awards.
- Through the Books/Course Materials Support Program (BCMS), expenses for books and other course materials are supported for all students receiving scholarship aid. BCMS enables students to use their Brown ID card to purchase books and other required course materials from the Brown Bookstore with minimal to no out-of-pocket expenses.
- All aided students who do not have comparable health insurance receive a Health Insurance Scholarship.

These and other initiatives have increased access and expanded socioeconomic and ethnic diversity: the percentage of incoming first-year students receiving need-based scholarship aid has risen rapidly from 43 percent in the Class of 2022, to 50 percent in the Class of 2026. Efforts to improve financial aid packages have also made Brown offers more competitive, with the overall yield for students offered aid increasing from 61 percent to 67 percent during this period; the yield for self-identified students of color has risen from 54 percent to 63 percent.

The implementation of the Brown Promise along with other changes to financial aid policies has reduced both the number of students who borrow and amount of debt they incur. The change was felt immediately, and has continued: in FY18 roughly 1,700 students borrowed; in FY19, the year the Promise was implemented, this fell by 43 percent, to 981. By FY21 the number had declined further, to 529 students. The average loan amount decreased significantly as well.

Finally, the University has taken important steps to support equity and expand access to research opportunities, internships, and experiential learning by consolidating funding through the SPRINT (Summer Projects for Research, Internships, and Teaching) program in the CareerLab, which enables students to gain skills, explore careers, and develop mentoring relationships. Financial support is available to students who may not otherwise be able to pursue such opportunities, and awards are calibrated to the level of student need.

### ***Campus Life and Student Services***

The past five years have been a significant period of transition and transformation for the Division of Campus Life, marked by both structural change and a reconceptualization of mission and identity. The Division has built an increasingly talented team with a shared sense of purpose and a dedication to operational excellence that positions Brown as an emerging leader in student affairs. This has required

aligning resources to support priorities and revising policies and processes to reflect changes in the composition of the student body. Key accomplishments include:

*Building an inclusive community.* The Division continues to support evolving student needs and changing demographics, including by increasing staffing at the six identity and community-based centers and offices that play a critical role in the academic and personal success of historically underrepresented and under-resourced students: the Brown Center for Students of Color (BCSC), Global Brown Center for International Students (GBC), LGBTQ Center, Office of Military-Affiliated Students (OMAS), Sarah Doyle Center for Women and Gender (SDC), and the Undocumented, First-Generation College, Low Income Student Center (U-FLi). Staffing in this area nearly doubled between 2015 and 2021, from 8.75 FTE to 16.5 FTE, and positions have been strengthened through promotion, reclassification, or equity pay increases. Operating budgets have increased by more than 150 percent since 2016, and spaces have been improved. There has also been a significant increase in the number of staff who identify as people of color, and the Division supports diversity and inclusion efforts across the full range of its activities.

*Advancing the residential experience.* Consistent with its goal of building an inclusive community and sense of belonging for students, Campus Life has made major improvements to the residential experience, including building new residence halls and investing in maintenance and upkeep. Brown opened its first new residence hall in 30 years in summer 2021, and two additional ones will open in fall 2023, adding more than 500 beds to the on-campus housing inventory. Important investments have also been made in improving program-related housing, including a renovation of Harambee House, which supports all students interested in the African Diaspora, in 2022–23. This is just the most recent work done to improve residential spaces to make them more equitable and inclusive—other projects include Kosher Kitchen (2018), Muslim Student Center renovation (2018), a new Native American Program House (2018), a new Asian American Program House (2018), and new space for the Office of Military Veterans (2019).

*Supporting health and wellness.* The 2021 opening of the Wellness Residential Experience at Sternlicht Commons was tangible evidence of our commitments to the residential experience and to a holistic and integrated approach to student health and wellbeing. Brown also continues to strengthen resources for mental and emotional health, in recognition of the increasing number of students who seek support from Counseling and Psychological Services, including by hiring therapists with expertise related to immigrant students, students of color, LGBTQ students, and students who are survivors of gender-based violence.

*Fostering operational excellence.* Campus Life is attentive to supporting the personal and professional development of staff, including through initiatives such as a newsletter (launched in 2018), staff awards (2019), and the creation of a committee to plan events (2019). The Division has engaged with data from the 2018 climate survey to improve morale and has completed a number of reviews of departments.

*Strategic planning.* The Division worked closely with the Provost to include Campus Life in the extension of the capital campaign, with a particular focus on community building and on health and wellness. And in October 2022, the Campus Life announced its Strategic Roadmap for the next three years (2022 – 2025). This internal document will guide the work of the division as it emerges from the pandemic by laying out key goals and actions and taking steps to ensure that equity and justice are embedded in all the Division’s processes, structures, and programs.

Brown has taken major steps in recent years to expand access and enhance support for our students, in keeping with our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusive excellence. The University has robust resources and structures in place not only to support students’ academic development (see Standards 4 and 8, in particular) but to address evolving student needs and foster their personal development.



## STANDARD SIX: TEACHING, LEARNING, AND SCHOLARSHIP

Brown places a high value on excellence in both teaching and research and we believe that excellence in one reinforces it in the other. The University provides support for the development of teaching skills through the Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning, course feedback from students, and peer mentoring within academic units. Scholarly activities are supported through the provision of travel funds, start-up and research accounts, seed grants, and policies that provide time for research.

The faculty ranks have continued to expand in recent years, with the number of tenure-stream faculty increasing from 693 in academic year 2017–18 to 747 this year (up 7.8 percent), with much higher growth in the number of faculty from historically underrepresented groups (up 54 percent in the same period, to 16.1 percent of the total). The number of lecturers and other non-professorial faculty has also expanded, from 70 to 99, with the growth due in part to efforts to regularize the positions of some long-serving adjunct and visiting faculty and in part to the expansion in master's programs. Looking ahead, we anticipate increasing the number of faculty in the research track as well as postdoctoral fellows, in support of the *Operational Plan for Investing in Research*.

### ***Support for Teaching and Learning***

The College Curriculum Council and the Graduate Council conduct regular reviews of concentrations and graduate degree programs, and the School of Professional Studies monitors the quality of master's programs. Among the areas of focus are the breadth, depth, and coherence of the curriculum; learning goals and student outcomes; and the quality of advising and support for students. Instructors are able to access a wealth of resources through the Sheridan Center related to assessment, course design, inclusive teaching, and scholarship related to teaching and learning, among other things.

*Teaching.* Feedback from students contributes to effective teaching. In 2018, after a wide-ranging process that included a review of the relevant research and consultation with faculty and students, a committee recommended a number of changes to Brown's use of student course ratings, shifting the approach from "evaluation" to "feedback" on the grounds that the latter is only one input into a multi-modal review of teaching effectiveness that is more appropriately conducted by academic units or review committees. In brief, feedback from students is intended to improve teaching, not to assess it. The name of the instrument was changed to "Course Feedback Form," and the form itself was revised to include flexibility for optional questions. Explicit attention was also given to mitigating the potential for bias.

*Advising.* Since the last accreditation cycle, advising obligations—which at Brown are considered part of a faculty member's teaching responsibilities—are now included in departments' three-year curricular planning to ensure consistency in advising as well as an adequate number of advisors. And in spring 2022 the College introduced *UNIV 0123: Practical Introduction to Peer Advising at Brown*. This half-credit course, designed in collaboration with current Meiklejohn student advisors, facilitates continuous feedback from students about how Brown can improve advising and curricular programs. Students who participate in the course receive preference toward participation in the Meiklejohn program and other College peer advising programs in the following academic year. This has increased the representation of first-generation college students, international students, students with high demonstrated financial need, and students from historically underrepresented groups in the program.

### ***Support for Scholarship***

The University has implemented a number of measures in recent years to expand support for faculty research and scholarship. First, the teaching load for tenure-stream faculty in the Humanities and qualitative Social Sciences was reduced from four courses per year to three, beginning in academic year 2020–2021. This change was made in response to concerns that were frequently raised by faculty in those divisions that one of the major constraints they faced was the lack of time for scholarly work, given the

high expectations for teaching and advising and the relatively small size of many Brown departments. The change was supported by an analysis of course offerings and enrollments, and consultation with departments to confirm that they would continue to be able to cover required courses and service courses as well as to mount a sufficiently rich slate of electives that students would not be negatively affected. At the time, we stipulated that there should be less teaching relief granted for departmental service roles, since a lighter teaching load should result in more colleagues being available to share those types of responsibilities. We have recently reassessed that stipulation, when it became clear that the work of the Director of Graduate Studies in particular had grown increasingly demanding, and have implemented a policy under which faculty serving as DGS may be awarded teaching relief and/or research funds according to a scale that takes account of the size of the program and years of service.

For some time, Brown has had a generous and flexible sabbatical policy, permitting eligible tenured faculty to apply for one semester of leave at 75 percent of salary after six semesters in residence. In December 2022, the Corporation approved a proposal to enhance the sabbatical policy further, to provide a semester of sabbatical at full salary following six semesters (or a year after twelve). This change, which makes Brown's sabbatical policy comparable to that of only a few other universities in the country, supports our ambitions for expanding research. Finally, internal research funds provided to faculty in the Humanities and Social Sciences have doubled in the last few years, in recognition of the importance of such support to scholarly productivity in disciplines where grant funding is less available.

### ***Current Issues and Initiatives***

*Gender equity.* In fall 2021 President Paxson convened a Task Force on the Status of Women Faculty to assess issues of representation, equity, and inclusion with respect to women faculty at Brown. Motivated in part by the recognition that the gender composition of the tenure-stream faculty ranks had barely shifted over the preceding decade, along with concerns about the stubborn persistence of gender-based disparities, the Task Force has assembled a vast amount of quantitative and qualitative data and formulated recommendations to structures, policies, and practices that will support equity and foster inclusive excellence. Its report will be issued in the coming weeks.

*Faculty salaries.* On a related point, it is worth noting that the University continues to monitor faculty salaries against internal and external benchmarks, and in 2021 conducted a major salary study using an outside consultant that resulted in equity adjustments for a small number of faculty based on the data.

*The role of research faculty.* While roles and responsibilities for tenure-stream and lecturer-track faculty are well documented and clearly understood, there is more variance with respect to research faculty. The offices of the Provost and the Dean of the Faculty are therefore currently reevaluating the definitions and consistency of titles, mechanisms for evaluation and promotion, and conditions of employment for campus-based faculty who are not in the regular faculty ranks. We expect this review process to result in improved policies regarding sick and vacation time, more consistent review procedures, and titles more appropriate to the roles that faculty fulfill at the University. The role of research faculty is likely to become increasingly prominent as we operationalize the plan for investing in research.

*Postdoctoral research associates and fellows.* Another group that has sometimes received insufficient or inconsistent institutional attention is the community of postdoctoral research associates and fellows that are so critical to supporting research and (in some cases) teaching. In summer 2020 Brown established a centralized Office of University Postdoctoral Affairs to coordinate initiatives affecting postdocs. The office serves as a central resource for postdocs who are seeking information and advice. Equally importantly, it expands capacity to deliver professional development activities, maintain consistent policies and training standards, build community across disciplines, and help recruit and retain a diverse pool of postdoctoral scholars.



## STANDARD SEVEN: INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES

Brown University has made significant strides in bolstering its financial position and investing in the administrative and financial infrastructure to ensure effective management of operations and efficient use of resources. Investments in key personnel and new systems demonstrates an important commitment to financial sustainability and long-term economic stability.

### *Human Resources*

Under the leadership of Sarah Latham, Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration, and Marie Williams, Vice President for Human Resources, both of whom are new to Brown since the 2018 review, the University has been undertaking a number of initiatives in the area of human resources. First, as is common throughout higher education and beyond, the turn to remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic has led us to rethink a number of longstanding policies and practices. The Future of Work Initiative, launched last year by President Paxson, has been considering new approaches to structuring work in ways that may lead to greater employee engagement and satisfaction while continuing to provide excellent service to the campus community. The preliminary recommendations emerging from that group's work include changes to alternative work arrangements (i.e. remote or hybrid work) to increase flexibility in terms of location and schedule. Investments will be made in technology and equipment so that all employees have the resources they require for their work wherever they are located, and in new training and development programs for managers and staff. We are also designing pilots to test shared space models and reworking orientation for new hires to build community across staff who may be working in different locations and on different schedules.

A University working group has also been created to develop recommendations for improving the staff performance evaluation process, which had been unchanged for many years. With the assistance of OIR, UHR conducted a survey to solicit views from staff and supervisors. The response rate was high (55 percent) and a number of suggestions are already being implemented in advance of a larger overhaul of the process for FY24. Finally, all position descriptions for non-union staff are being reviewed, with the goal of ensuring that they accurately reflect the major responsibilities and scope of the positions.

### *Financial Resources*

At the close of FY22, the value of the endowment and other managed assets stood at \$6.5 billion. Over a trailing 20-year period, the endowment's annualized return of 10.0 percent has outpaced the required return of spending plus inflation, as well as the 9.1 percent annualized return of the S&P 500. Over trailing 3-, 5-, and 10-year periods, the endowment's return places it in the top quartile of college and university peers, according to data maintained by Cambridge Associates. We saw excellent performance in FY20 (12.4 percent) and FY21 (an extraordinary 51.5 percent) followed by a modest decrease (-4.6 percent) in FY22, driven by market volatility. This nevertheless outperformed a number of broad market indices and surpassed many other institutions' return.

As is described in the section on managing long-term financial stability, the University is in an enviably strong position with respect to financial planning processes and continues to improve systems and operations. Brown's investment in key personnel and new systems demonstrates an important commitment to financial sustainability and long-term economic stability, and our ability to dedicate additional resources to fund priorities (e.g. financial aid) is evidence of the overall strength of our financial position. However, the long-term financial forecast projects limited operating margins and financial flexibility over the next ten years, which will require strong decision-making regarding the allocation of existing resources for priority needs and a willingness to take measured financial risks.

A significant milestone was reached in fall of 2021, when the \$3 billion fundraising target of *BrownTogether* was reached, more than a year ahead of schedule. Following consultation with senior

leaders as well as members of the Corporation and the development of a plan that includes additional support for original priorities as well as new areas for investment, the campaign was extended to December 2024, with a revised goal of \$4 billion. Priorities include raising funds for research and teaching in medicine, public health, engineering, and the arts, as well as student financial aid, career services, and athletics. We are on track to meet this goal, with \$3.6 billion raised to date.

### ***Information, Physical, and Technological Resources***

*The Library.* In 2018–19, Brown engaged an outside consulting firm to conduct a thorough staffing and compensation study for the Library, which concluded that the overall size of Library staffing was at an appropriate level. Over the past several years, the Library has been engaged in significant reorganization and renewal to meet evolving campus needs; as a result, many jobs have been revised or repurposed. This process was accelerated by staff turnover resulting from University retirement incentives; more than half of current staff have been in their roles for three years or less.

The Library has been investing heavily in updating the systems that provide access to scholarly materials, replacing technology that was variously decades-old, no-longer-supported, or home-grown. In 2021, we implemented the Alma/Primo systems for our core collections operations and front-end discovery. New systems for accessing materials have also been implemented for special collections, our offsite storage annex, and interlibrary loans. In spring 2023 we are launching a new system for course reserves that integrates with Brown’s learning management system (Canvas). We are currently in the process of evaluating replacement options for our digital repository platform, which includes student thesis work and dissertations along with faculty research data and digitized collections. Finally, the Library is engaged in an ongoing program of improvement to its public and programmatic spaces across its several specialized buildings. Notable activities in recent years include: a systematic effort to de-clutter the open book stacks, furniture replacement and refinishing in public reading rooms, lighting upgrades, improved attention to surface wear and tear, and better environmental controls.

*Facilities.* The University continues to invest in improvements to the physical plant. Development of and renovations to academic space in the past five years include the construction of Stephen Robert Hall, an expansion of the Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs (2018); renovated classroom space in Friedman Hall (2019); improved infrastructure and enhanced laboratory space in the GeoChem building (2019) and the Lincoln Field Building (2022). The Brown Office Building at 164 Angell Street, which had long housed administrative offices, was converted after offices were relocated to South Street Landing, to become a new home for the Carney Institute for Brown Science, the Annenberg Institute for School Reform, and other units, and two leased buildings have been fitted out as state-of the art space for the Nelson Center for Entrepreneurship and the School of Professional Studies. To support the student experience new dormitories are being built (including the already-opened Wellness Center), athletic facilities have been improved (the boathouse, the stadium) or constructed (a lacrosse and soccer facility), and community spaces have been developed (the LGBTQ Center in Stonewall House). A number of capital projects are underway, and we look forward to the opening later this year of the Lindemann Center for the Performing Arts. This new 80,000 GSF building will support performance, teaching, and research for music, theater, and dance and serve as the anchor for a future campus arts district.

*Information technology.* Vice President for Information Technology and Chief Information Officer Sharon Pitt joined Brown’s senior leadership team in December 2022. She is embarking on a strategic planning process to develop a multi-year roadmap to inform priorities, create a new organizational structure for OIT to align with the needs and priorities of the University, and establish a framework for future investments. A steering committee has been appointed and the project will be facilitated by an external consultant, Next Generation Leadership Partners. We are also taking steps to address challenges associated with data governance, including how to store it, who may access it, and how to use it to inform decision-making.

## **STANDARD NINE: INTEGRITY, TRANSPARENCY, AND PUBLIC DISCLOSURE**

Brown has a strong commitment to transparency, with information about priorities, policies, and practices easily accessible to interested constituencies. Communication is regular and robust, whether through daily Today@Brown messages (announcements and event listings targeted to relevant audiences), notices regarding the formal business of the University (agendas and minutes for faculty meetings, regular announcements following Corporation meetings), and periodic communications from President Paxson and other senior officers. The last was especially important during the COVID-19 pandemic, when frequent updates were crucial both to providing information and to sustaining the sense of community. The Healthy Brown website remains active and is a testament not only to Brown's management of the immediate crisis and its aftermath but is a living document that embodies the ethos of transparency.

University policies are accessible on the Policies site, which is continually updated as policies are developed and revised, and a wealth of other information is readily available, as is evident from the data first forms. As noted above, the University Code of Conduct was revised in 2022 to articulate the standards that all members of the community are expected to uphold. The Compliance Office provides oversight to help ensure that appropriate frameworks are in place for complying with applicable laws, regulations, and policies; it also maintains an anonymous reporting hotline and website (established in 2021) for reporting ethical and compliance concerns or behavior that is suspected to be inconsistent with University policies. The Chief Risk Officer, a role that was created in 2018, helps to identify, evaluate, and manage compliance risks at the institutional level and to coordinate responses to them. Finally, the Ombuds Office is a confidential resource for community members—faculty, staff, graduate students, medical students, and postdoctoral scholars—to seek support in managing concerns or conflicts.

Over a period of several years, the Faculty Executive Committee and others considered whether and how to conduct employment and educational verification on candidates for faculty appointments, and in 2020 the University adopted a policy that asks candidates to certify that they have not been subject to discipline for any misconduct at previous institutions, and that all information in their application is truthful, complete, and accurate. They also authorize the University to investigate any pertinent information and permit previous institutions to release information related to misconduct. The policy is intended to provide additional assurance that all individuals can work and learn together in an environment that is free of violence, harassment, discrimination, exploitation, or intimidation.

The commitment to integrity and transparency extends beyond these and other regular administrative practices and resources. In the course of conducting the University's regular business, opportunities for comment and discussion are built into our processes. When, for example, the Academic Priorities Committee is considering the establishment of a new academic unit or program, the written proposal is posted for a two-week comment period during which faculty input is solicited before the APC takes formal action. Drafts of major reports, including those referenced in this report, are routinely released for feedback and comments before recommendations are finalized, often accompanied by an open forum in which members of the community can raise questions and make suggestions. Faculty commons are convened by the FEC to address concerns or items of interest to the faculty. And when particular challenges arise, as happened with the Varsity Blues scandal, the University has been quick to respond.

Finally, and in keeping with Brown's foundational commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, the Corporation amended the policy statement on equal opportunity, nondiscrimination, and affirmative action in fall 2022 to explicitly prohibit discrimination based on caste. In doing so, we became the first Ivy League university to take this important step to expand protection by reaffirming and expanding the principle that individuals should be recognized solely on the basis of their qualifications and performance.

See also the Data First Forms.

## REFLECTIVE ESSAY STANDARD EIGHT: EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

### Overview

The mission of Brown University is to serve the community, the nation, and the world by discovering, communicating, and preserving knowledge and understanding in a spirit of free inquiry, and by educating and preparing students to discharge the offices of life with usefulness and reputation. The Open Curriculum, which celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2019, is intrinsic to the culture of teaching and learning at Brown, empowering students to be the architect of their own education and emphasizing each learner's ultimate responsibility for their own intellectual and creative development. Brown's flexible yet rigorous approach to education prepares students at all levels and in all modalities to thrive as innovative, independent thinkers.

The Statement of Principles that defines the Open Curriculum emphasizes that relationships with faculty and peers are critical to students' intellectual growth. University policies and structures foster these relationships and offer students the flexibility to pursue their individual educational goals. We routinely assess the impact of policies and structures on student learning with a particular focus on equitable outcomes. This assessment involves reviewing programs of study, providing structure and support through administrative and shared governance bodies, and evaluating the experiences of students in terms of the attainment of goals that extend beyond individual departments and programs.

This essay describes Brown University's educational effectiveness in four sections. *What Students Gain as a Result of Their Education* describes the learning goals for undergraduate and graduate education and how these are communicated by and to the University community. *Assessment of Student Learning* explains how the University systematically assesses curricular outcomes and learning experiences in ways that are aligned with the culture of the Open Curriculum and the University's mission. *Measures of Student Success* reviews critical data on graduation-related outcomes including retention, graduation rates, and post-graduation outcomes. *Student Achievement on Mission-Appropriate Student Outcomes* provides an overview of the University's indicators related to learning gains for key goals pertaining to undergraduate and graduate education.

### What Students Gain as a Result of Their Education

#### *Undergraduate Learning at Brown*

Brown University is committed to providing a well-rounded education in which students at all levels are empowered to set goals for their own intellectual and personal development. At the undergraduate level, the Open Curriculum is rooted in the liberal arts tradition of intellectual discovery. The College has identified eleven Liberal Learning Goals that students are encouraged to pursue throughout their time at Brown. These goals, which are widely communicated on the University website, in Orientation materials, and through advising are:

- Work on your speaking and writing
- Understand differences among cultures
- Analyze how power shapes human behavior
- Learn what it means to study the past
- Experience scientific inquiry
- Develop a facility with symbolic languages
- Expand your reading skills
- Enhance your aesthetic sensibility
- Embrace diversity
- Collaborate fully
- Engage with your communities

These liberal learning goals are foundational to courses across disciplines, and all concentrations require students to achieve some of these goals. Student learning gains related to Liberal Learning Goals are discussed in the section on Student Achievement of Mission-Appropriate Learning Goals (below).

Although the Open Curriculum has no breadth requirements, students report achieving meaningful learning across a diverse range of fields, with 80% of 2022 respondents to the Consortium on Financing Higher Education (COFHE) Senior Survey indicating meaningful gains in broad knowledge across a number of fields (compared to 78% at peer institutions). As another indicator of a broad liberal education, 58% of respondents reported significant gains in the critical appreciation of art, music, literature, and drama (compared to 55% at peer institutions).<sup>1</sup>

The Course Distribution Study supports students' self-reported experience. Among 2022 graduates, a small percentage took no courses in the Sciences (4.9%), Humanities (2.6%), and Social Sciences (7.3%). Data disaggregated by the knowledge area of student concentrations show that for 2022 graduates most concentrators in the Life Sciences (95%), Physical Sciences (86%), and Social Sciences (91%) took two or more Humanities courses. On the other hand, a smaller percentage of concentrators in the Humanities (38%), Physical Sciences (55%), and Social Sciences (46%) took two or more Life Sciences courses. Course taking patterns for Physical Sciences and Social Sciences courses by non-concentrators fall between these two poles and are more variable (see E-Series Forms: Course Distribution Study). According to Registrar course data, the percentage of the graduating classes that have taken at least one course with a diversity-related designation has continued to climb from 2018 to 2022, increasing from 69% to 77% (see E-Series Forms: Courses at Brown with a Diversity Designation). We have also seen consistently strong student participation in valuable summer experiences like internships, research or fellowships, which increased from 85% of graduating seniors in 2018 to 88% in 2020 (see E-Series-Forms: Internship, Research, or Fellowship Experience).

The University has identified several types of course-based learning experiences, or curricular programs, that all students are encouraged to complete. These include First-Year and Sophomore Seminars and four other curricular programs which center specific skills or issues. Collaborative Scholarly Experiences (COEX) courses engage groups of students in addressing a research question of interest to scholarly communities. Community-Based Learning and Research (CBLR) courses connect academic inquiry to community engagement. Race, Power, Privilege (RPP) courses examine issues of structural inequality, racial formations and/or disparities, and systems of power within a complex, pluralistic world. Writing-Designated (WRIT) courses embed multiple opportunities for writing and feedback. The University's course search platform filters for each of these curricular programs, allowing students to more easily identify courses that allow them to pursue these competencies.

*Writing.* Developing an ability to write clearly and persuasively is the only general requirement for an undergraduate degree: each student must take two WRIT courses in order to graduate. These courses are offered in nearly every department, allowing students the flexibility to meet the requirement while pursuing their own substantive interests. Instructors in any course are able to assign a writing support (WSUP) flag for any student they identify as facing specific writing challenges. Guidelines for assigning the WSUP flag are outlined for faculty by the Writing Center. More information about the WSUP flag can be found in Evaluation of the Writing Flag Process discussion (p. 38–39).

*Capstone Experiences.* Doctoral and master's programs have a long history of requiring a capstone project where students demonstrate their ability to integrate and apply their learning in the program to address authentic problems in the field. Since 2018, the University has promoted the idea of capstone experiences for undergraduate concentrations as well. Of Brown's 100 undergraduate concentrations, 59

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<sup>1</sup> Data cited in this essay is available in the E-Series Forms, p. 127 ff.



now include a capstone experience, typically a course that involves a significant integrative project. An additional eight concentrations require one or two semesters of research experience.

### ***Graduate Learning at Brown***

With innovative, student-centered academic training and a diverse and collaborative culture, Brown prepares graduate students to become leaders in their fields inside and outside of the academy. Brown's doctoral programs promote outstanding graduate education that supports the University's excellence in research and teaching while also preparing graduates to be field-leading scholars. In keeping with Brown's institutional priorities of flexibility and choice—and with the spirit of the Open Curriculum—graduate students may choose to complement their disciplinary training with a range of opportunities.

Interdisciplinarity is central to many of these. For instance, the Open Graduate Education program allows select doctoral students to define their academic journey by earning a secondary master's degree in a field of their choosing. Since the program was launched as a pilot in 2011, 102 doctoral students have participated. Other interdisciplinary opportunities allow graduate students to pursue fellowships in participating Centers and Institutes, including the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice, the Pembroke Center for Teaching and Research on Women, and the Institute at Brown for Environment and Society. The Graduate School also supports students' pedagogical development through teaching exchanges with Wheaton College and Tougaloo College, and to complete certificate programs in the Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning that serve approximately 200 graduate students per year. Graduate students who choose to pursue research opportunities off-campus are supported through Global Mobility Grants, travel research funds, and exchange programs with many universities.

Brown also offers a number of executive and professional master's programs through the School of Professional Studies with the goal of preparing the next generation of leaders. These flexible programs are designed to help working professionals advance in their careers without interruption. Many, including the Executive Master's programs in Healthcare Leadership and Technology Leadership, blend online learning with in-person experiences. The IE Brown Executive MBA Program, delivered in partnership with IE Business School and with immersive residential experiences in Madrid, Spain and Cape Town, South Africa, allows students to acquire an international perspective. Finally, Brown recently launched a fully online CEPH-accredited Master of Public Health, allowing working professionals and international applicants to benefit from a rigorous public health education while remaining in their communities.

### **Assessment of Student Learning**

#### ***Brown's Educational Philosophy and the Assessment of Learning***

The Open Curriculum has shaped a very particular philosophy of learner-centered curricula across undergraduate and graduate education at Brown. Students are expected to design their education to meet their personal intellectual goals. At the same time, students are expected to collaborate with their faculty and peers as part of this process. This has important consequences for how learning is assessed at the university. Students' self-assessment of their learning is a critical skill that is also valued in the evaluation of all programs of study. Likewise, advising and mentoring are critical features of Brown's educational philosophy and are therefore priorities in our assessment processes at all levels.

As Brown's students, faculty, and staff come from increasingly diverse backgrounds, the University has sought to ensure that it offers an inclusive learning and work environment that promotes equitable learning outcomes and experiences. The Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan has set important strategic goals for Brown's operations including in two areas central to student learning: Academic Excellence and Curriculum. To advance these strategic goals, the University assesses important student learning outcomes and experiences for equity. This involves examining results for racially marginalized groups,

women and non-binary students, first-generation college students, veterans, transfer and returning students, students with disabilities, international students, and students from low- and middle-income households. These projects seek to identify the structures and practices that may contribute to inequitable outcomes, and then pilot and assess changes that can lead to greater equity in educational results. (We discuss a number of examples below in the University-wide Assessment Projects Section).

*Assessment Infrastructure and Resources.* The University's academic review processes for undergraduate concentrations and graduate programs of study follow a cycle driven by internal and external reviews of departments and programs that are integrated into critical discussions. Three committees are central to this work: the College Curriculum Council (CCC) is responsible for undergraduate curricular offerings, the Graduate Council reviews graduate programs, and the Academic Priorities Committee (APC) oversees the external review process. The charge of the APC also includes advising the President and Provost on the allocation of academic resources, and this connection between assessment and resource allocation clearly communicates the importance of evaluation as part of planning processes.

Equally important to assessing student learning at Brown is the technical and staff infrastructure to support departments and programs in this process. The Office of Institutional Research is central to this infrastructure. OIR collects and analyzes a range of student transcript and survey data to help individual academic programs and administrative leaders understand longitudinal trends in student learning and experiences. Routine surveys of students at key points in their studies—first-year, senior year, biannual master's and doctoral-level surveys, doctoral completion, and alumni surveys—generate reliable data to track trends and examine equity in results and participation. By using common survey items (e.g. those used by members of COFHE), the University is able to also compare trends to peer institutions, which include all Ivy League institutions plus MIT, Stanford, University of Chicago, Washington University, and Duke. Pulling together data from student self-reports and the University's student information system, OIR has implemented a number of data visualizations and dashboards over recent years to help departments and programs better understand students' experiences at Brown and their outcomes.

In addition to OIR's contributions to assessment efforts, we have enhanced our organizational capacity for assessment of learning with the addition of several positions across the university. The Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning now has two staff supporting the assessment of learning, teaching, and the curriculum. This team brings perspectives on evidence-based teaching and learning to support assessment at the individual academic unit level as well as institution-wide efforts. To support new curricular proposals and curricular reviews, Sheridan staff offer consultative services on curriculum design, assessment data collection, and data interpretation. Sheridan also offers resources and templates for learning objectives, curriculum mapping, and benchmarking.

Other units have also enhanced their capacity for assessment of student learning with recent hires. The School of Public Health hired a Director of Assessment and Accreditation, and the Division of Biology and Medicine added a Director of Academic Assessment and Evaluation. As part of the efforts to harness data more effectively about the undergraduate experience in order to enhance learning and equity, the College has added an Academic Data Analyst and Systems Engineer position to support this work.

In 2019, the University instituted a new Course Feedback System overseen by the Dean of the College. A Course Feedback Review Committee worked over the preceding year to design a standard questionnaire for all courses, which replaced dozens of department-specific questions and significantly expanded the number of common questions. In addition to the standard questions, departments and instructors can add a small number of their own questions. The new platform also enables targeted surveys of all or some courses. This functionality has been used to gather student feedback on students' learning outcomes and experiences in special curricular programs like Community-Based Learning and Research (CBLR) and Collaborative Scholarly Experiences (COEX). The University also used targeted surveys to gather data on the student learning modalities for each course from spring 2021 to spring 2022 as part of an effort to



assess whether students were having an equitable learning experience in courses that combined in-person and remote options for students. (Results are discussed below as part of the section on the *Assessment of Pandemic Teaching and Learning*.)

*Required Elements for Brown Courses.* All Brown course syllabi are required to include course-level learning objectives. In addition, nearly all courses are worth one credit (a four-credit course equivalent at other institutions). To provide a means to ensure equally rigorous courses across a wide range of disciplines and course contexts, the University requires all instructors to document in syllabi how students on average will complete 180 hours of coursework in the term, in and out of class. In addition, fully online courses are required to document how they meet federal requirements for regular and substantive interaction. All new course proposals are reviewed by either the CCC or Graduate Council to ensure they appropriately meet these requirements.

*Concentration Learning Goals.* At Brown, each undergraduate concentration is responsible for developing learning goals and communicating them to students and the public on the University's website. This website, commonly referred to as Focal Point, is a primary way in which students learn about concentrations, and it serves as an important resource as they decide on a course of study. Concentration learning goals typically include both learning objectives and signature learning experiences. For example, students in the Urban Studies concentration are expected to: 1) Learn a comprehensive, interdisciplinary, evidence-based approach to solving complex urban problems; 2) Become conversant in diverse and international perspectives on cities and urban life; 3) Engage the local community through fieldwork, research, internships, and summer experiences; 4) Master basic writing and statistics and develop critical thinking and collaborative skills; 5) Conduct a research, fieldwork, or capstone project that integrates urban-related courses. By highlighting experiences as well as curricular objectives, the Focal Point website is designed to speak to students and address key questions they have about what concentrating in a particular field could look like. To help potential concentrators understand how their own goals can be advanced in the concentration, the site also encourages them to connect with faculty advisors and the department undergraduate group (DUG) (a student-led group of concentrators) for additional information.

*Learning Goals and New Program Design.* Learning goals are central to the design of new concentrations and graduate programs. For example, Brown and the Rhode Island School of Design promote the new Master of Arts in Design Engineering (MADE) program under the banner of "Iteration with Intention" by emphasizing how students will engage with the program's learning goals:

In this intensive, 11-month residential program, MADE degree candidates exercise creativity, analytical reasoning, and research skills to produce work that responds to small- and large-scale challenges. Working in studios and shops—including a well-equipped maker space for prototyping—students form strong connections with a close-knit cohort of designers and engineers. Project-based work with faculty and practitioners expands connections and gives ample opportunity to interact with the world as it is.

As part of completing the MADE program, students create digital portfolios that include individual and collaborative artifacts alongside reflections on their learning. These digital portfolios make it possible for the MADE program to make student learning visible to the public, including to potential future students.

As part of the proposal process, departments and programs are asked to identify program learning goals and map them to the proposed curriculum. With the increase of interdisciplinary programs taught by faculty from multiple departments, the curriculum mapping process is a particularly useful way to maintain fidelity to the program learning goals and to explain the relevance of courses in the curriculum. For example, a recently approved proposal for a Critical Native American and Indigenous Studies (NAIS)

Concentration identified the five learning goals and mapped those to 42 courses offered by 11 departments and programs. Working with faculty across these disciplines, the Executive Director of the NAIS Institute established the extent to which each course addressed each learning goal and why a capstone experience was critical to assessing student learning [See pp. 169-172: CNAIS Concentration Curriculum Mapping Matrix].

For Brown's accredited programs, it is equally important to communicate meaningful learning outcomes and develop a curriculum map to effectively address a large number of professional competencies. In developing the new Online Master's in Public Health, the School of Public Health identified seven learning goals that were strongly aligned with the 22 foundational competencies identified by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH). These streamlined seven goals define the kinds of learning that will happen repeatedly throughout the curriculum, which enhances coordination among faculty and communication with students. At the same time, a detailed curriculum map for all 22 CEPH competencies ensures the program can thoroughly assess student learning to meet accreditation requirements.

*Concentration Review Process.* To ensure that Brown's undergraduate concentrations are held to a high standard of intellectual rigor and contribute to the promotion of the Liberal Learning Goals, each program is evaluated by the College Curriculum Council in the year following the department's external review. In practice, this means that undergraduate curricular programming undergoes an intensive review process roughly every seven to eight years. In keeping with the University's educational philosophy, this process aims to center faculty and student voices and promote discussion within the department about the curriculum and concentration. In the concentration review process, departments are first asked to engage in self-assessment, which forms the basis of subsequent conversations and reporting by the CCC. The Council relies on assessment infrastructure in OIR and the Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning to provide robust qualitative and quantitative data to support this process.

During the concentration review, departments and programs are asked to reflect in writing on the learning goals of their curriculum and whether students are meeting them; strengths and weaknesses of advising structures; and the program's curricular offerings in support of core competencies around writing and diversity and inclusion. In a memo, the department or program leadership use OIR-compiled data and their own internal evidence to respond to a series of questions provided by the CCC. Departments and programs are encouraged to consult with the assessment staff from the Sheridan Center on the interpretation of data as well as possible sources of additional evidence to describe student learning in the concentration. Sheridan assessment staff also conduct focus groups with concentrators and submit a thematic summary to the CCC and department leadership. This focus group report and the department's own memo inform a conversation between a CCC subcommittee and department faculty and students, after which the CCC composes a report on the concentration, curriculum and learning outcomes, advising and mentoring systems, and culminating senior-year experiences. Following the subcommittee's report, the department may choose to prepare a written response, followed by a meeting with the full Council to discuss their program structure and goals. The review process concludes with the CCC providing a summary letter of that meeting, in which they identify key strengths and growth areas, and make recommendations to the department.

Concentration reviews have resulted in significant changes to curriculum and advising. For example, in fall 2020, the Department of History of Art and Architecture proposed a number of changes in response to the spring 2020 review. In its report, the CCC had recommended that the department clarify concentration requirements, streamline departmental websites and other communications, and strengthen the advising structure. The department implemented these recommendations by reducing the number and complexity of program electives, requiring that all concentrators complete a capstone, and developing documented pathways through the concentration. These pathways are not prescriptive tracks, but, rather, model programs that students can draw from and combine as they design their own progress.

With more concentrations offering capstone courses, the CCC recently added a question to the concentration review prompts provided to departments to encourage additional reflection on the ways in which student work provides direct evidence of mastery of key learning objectives. Specifically, beginning this year, departments are asked to reflect on the following questions: “If applicable, how does your capstone course or similar culminating experience help students to achieve your concentration learning goals? How do these student projects illustrate the strengths and possible weaknesses of your curriculum?” The University will document trends identified in our 10-year report to NECHE.

*Graduate Program Review Process.* Graduate programs are also consistently and extensively reviewed to ensure that they are upholding the University’s commitment to excellence in research and teaching while also preparing graduates to be field-leading scholars. The Graduate Council reviews are coordinated with the external reviews. While Graduate Council reviews were paused during the COVID-19 pandemic, they have resumed this academic year. In addition to formal reviews, the Dean of the Graduate School meets annually with program leadership in each department or school to review program and climate data, identify potential issues, and discuss admission for the coming years. These meetings serve as continuous touch points between departments and university administration.

In fall 2021, the Provost appointed a Task Force on Doctoral Education, charged with assessing the University’s doctoral programs and developing recommendations for promoting outstanding, innovative graduate education that supports Brown’s aspirations for excellence in research and teaching. The Task Force consisted of faculty, students, and staff from across the University’s academic units, and drew upon extensive quantitative and qualitative data as well as studies of doctoral education and comparisons with other institutions. In its report, the Task Force emphasized that review processes are fundamental to assessment and accountability and recommended a number of questions to be included in graduate program reviews going forward, pertaining to issues including admission, curricular requirements, diversity and climate, advising and mentoring, funding, and placement outcomes. The Interim Dean of the Graduate School has developed an operational plan for implementing the recommendations.<sup>2</sup>

*Assessment of Advising.* A robust advising structure at both the undergraduate and graduate levels is essential to help students successfully navigate the Open Curriculum or their respective graduate programs. Undergraduate and graduate advising is regularly assessed through program review as well as surveys of enrolled and graduated students.

As described above, departments are asked to report on the strengths and weaknesses of their advising structures during concentration review, and concentrators are asked about their advising experiences in focus groups and in surveys conducted by Sheridan Center assessment staff. Undergraduates are also asked about their advising experiences, especially those occurring prior to declaring a concentration, in surveys administered regularly by the Office of Institutional Research. At the graduate level, the Master’s Experience Survey and the Doctoral Experience Survey, both administered annually by the Office of Institutional Research, ask students to reflect on and rate their advising experiences. The Task Force on Doctoral Education also assessed the strengths and weaknesses of doctoral advising at Brown, supplementing OIR’s Doctoral Experience Survey with comparative data.

*Accreditation by Professional Associations.* In addition to Brown’s internal review processes, the University’s three professional schools—the School of Engineering, the Warren Alpert Medical School, and the School of Public Health—are regularly accredited by professional associations, and each of the schools publishes information about the accreditation process on its website. The School of Engineering undergoes accreditation review by ABET every six years; the most recent re-accreditation of undergraduate programs occurred in 2021. SOE’s newest undergraduate program, in environmental

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<sup>2</sup> The work of the Task Force is discussed more extensively in the area of emphasis on Doctoral Education and the implementation plan is appended to the E-Series Forms.

engineering, also applied for and received accreditation during the 2021 review. ABET reviewers did not cite any concerns, weaknesses, or deficiencies in the most recent accreditation report.

The Warren Alpert Medical School is accredited by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME). The Medical School's graduate and continuing education programs are accredited by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) and the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME), respectively. The last LCME site visit review was in October 2020 and involved key stakeholders from the Medical School, including students, faculty, administration, and staff. The Medical School was re-accredited by LCME through 2028.

The School of Public Health is accredited by the CEPH through 2028. As part of this accreditation process, the School of Public Health engaged in a self-study between 2019 and 2021 involving the active participation of faculty, staff, students, senior administrators, alumni, and community members in the assessment of all aspects of the School's operations. The resulting report was made available on the SPH website. The culmination of this intensive review process was CEPH's decision that the Brown School of Public Health be re-accredited for seven years, which is the maximum award.

*University-wide Assessment Projects.* University-wide assessment projects play a critical role in identifying ways to improve student learning and experiences in the curriculum and co-curriculum across Brown. Since the Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan was introduced in 2016, many of these projects have focused on equitable access and outcomes for key learning experiences offered through the curriculum and co-curriculum. This approach was particularly emphasized as part of the University's response to the COVID-19 global pandemic.

### ***Assessment of Pandemic Teaching & Learning***

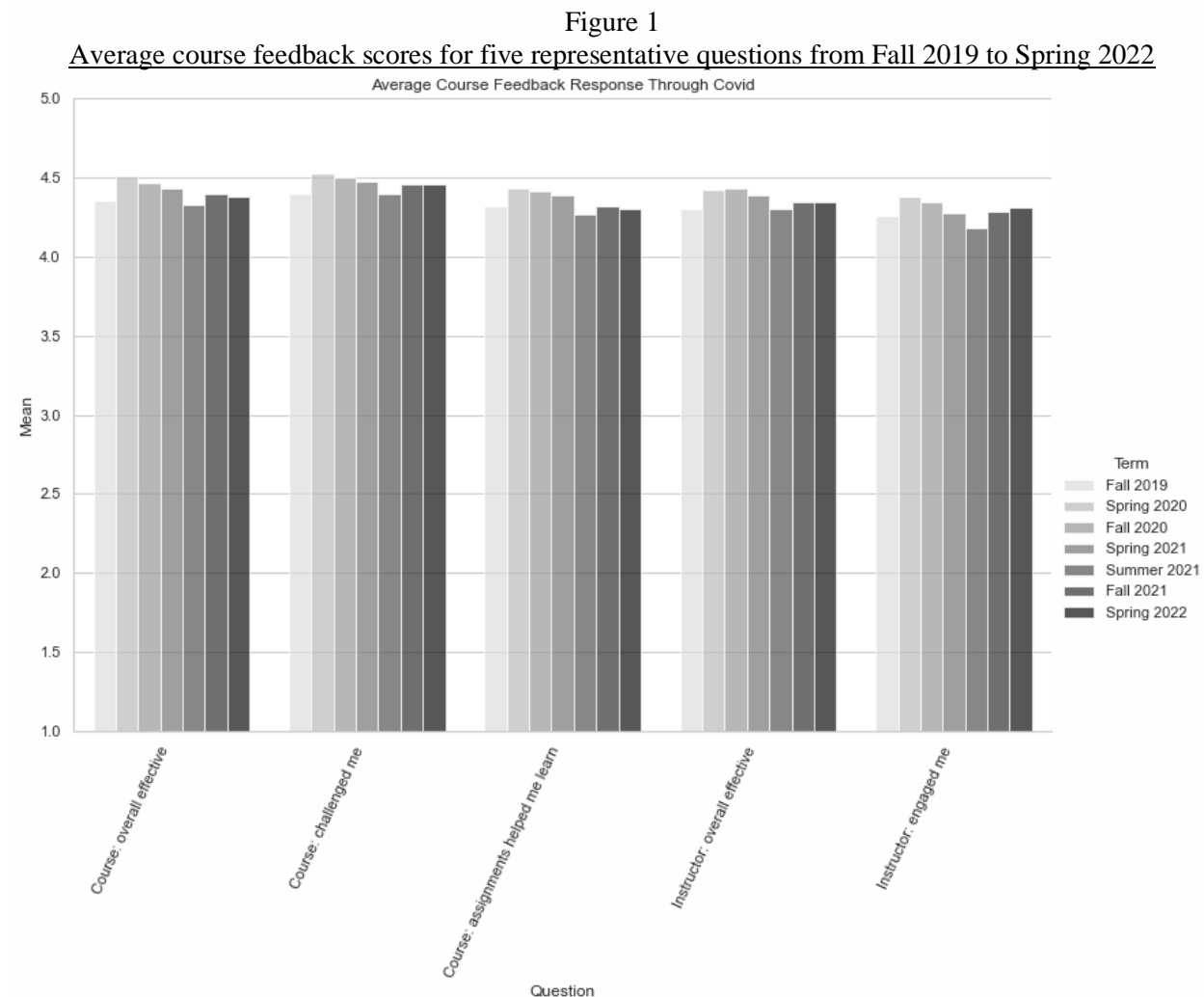
As part of Brown's early response to the pandemic, the University developed a needs assessment survey for every faculty member to describe the extent that their courses could be adapted for remote instruction. Similar surveys were conducted with undergraduates and graduate students to understand their needs and situation. This first needs assessment survey was conducted in the days ahead of the spring 2020 emergency transition to remote instruction. Subsequent assessments were conducted at the end of each semester in preparation for the next semester. Questions were added to these surveys to gather faculty perspectives on what was working well in their teaching, what challenges remained, and what forms of support they utilized. As semesters passed, faculty were asked what they planned to carry forward from their pandemic teaching strategies. Thematic analysis of faculty responses was used to inform a series of Sheridan Center web resources and newsletters.

The University's course feedback instrument provided a baseline to compare student course-level experiences as the learning modalities of students shifted over the next six semesters (including a special summer 2021 semester primarily for first-year students). All courses with more than 20 students were online in fall 2020 with remote start and end to the semester. In spring 2021, all courses started remote for the first two weeks of the semester. In AY 2020–21, first-year students began their first semester in spring 2021 and completed their second semester in summer 2021 (when almost all other students were not on campus). Course feedback response rates have been generally high, with a dip in the last year.

**Table 1: Course Feedback Response Rates by Term**

Term	Fall 2019	Spring 2020	Fall 2020	Spring 2021	Summer 2021	Fall 2021	Spring 2022	Fall 2022
Response Rate	88%	83%	88%	83%	87%	82%	67%	81%

In general, course feedback data show consistently strong ratings of instruction and courses even as learning modalities changed. Figure 1 illustrates relatively consistent scores across the six pandemic semesters compared to the fall 2019 baseline with five illustrative survey items.



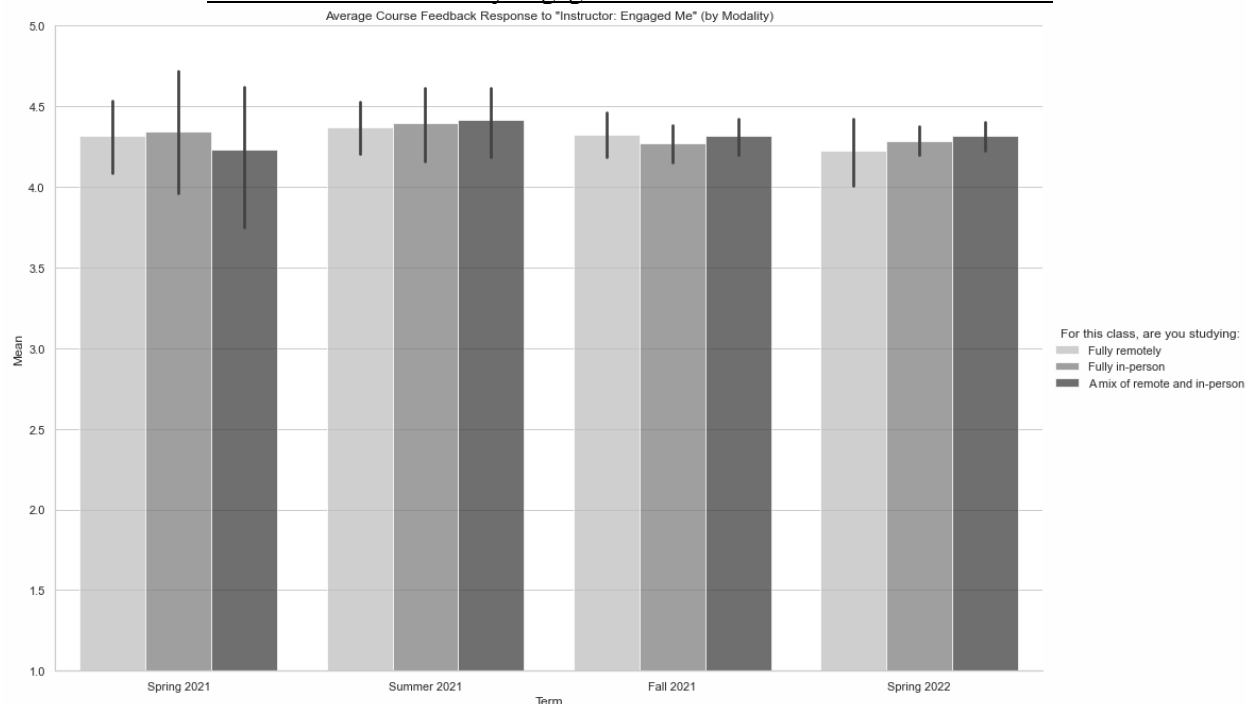
*Note: Scale is 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).*

*Full question stems can be found in [Brown University Course Feedback Form](#).*

To examine if student learning modality—whether in-person, remote, or a mix of in-person and remote—made a difference to the student experience, we examined course feedback data between spring 2021 and spring 2022 when the feedback form included an additional question on learning modality for each course. We selected a subset of courses that had at least some students completing the course in at least two modalities (e.g. at least five students reporting in-person and five reporting remote). This analysis revealed statistically insignificant and shifting differences in student feedback across the three possible modalities. Figure 2 provides an example of this data for the item focused on instructor engagement of students in class or in online modules across three learning modalities. This data illustrates similarly strong responses across modalities with very slight shifts across semesters.



Figure 2  
The instructor effectively engaged students in classes or online modules



*Note: Scale is 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).*

There has been a notable increase in the percentage of A grades for undergraduates during the pandemic, from 57% of in AY 2018–19 to 67% in AY 2020–21. The percentage of A grades declined slightly in AY 2021–22 to 63%. While some members of the University community believe this is the result of changes in expectations or increased cheating, others have suggested that new approaches to teaching and particularly assessment of learning have affected the grade distribution.

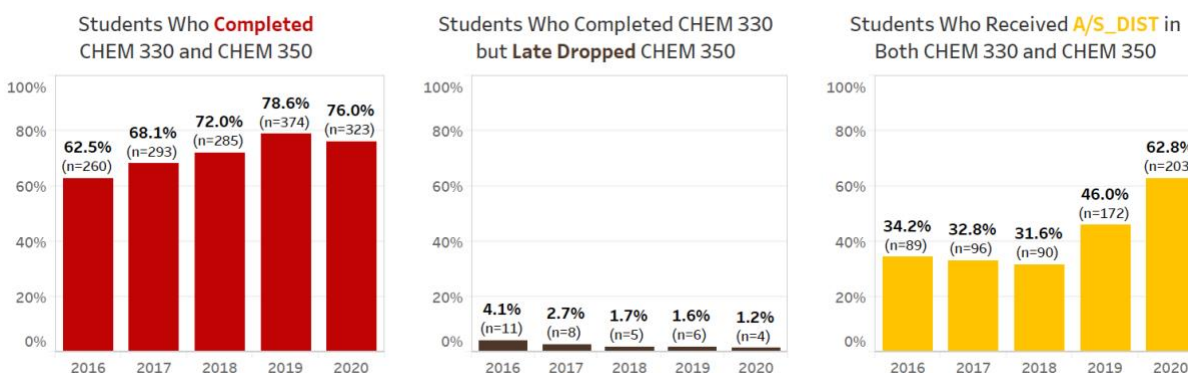
One way to explore these competing views is to examine student success in subsequent courses that build on the learning of the first course, as an indirect way assessing the extent to which they have mastered the material. OIR conducted an analysis of three of the most commonly taken course sequences at the University:

- MATH 100: Single Variable Calculus, Part 2 → MATH 520: Linear Algebra
- CHEM 330: Equilibrium, Rate, Structure → CHEM 350: Organic Chemistry 1
- ECON 110: Principles of Economics → ECON 1110: Intermediate Microeconomics

This analysis of students' progression through each sequence looked at the percentage of students who completed the first course and took the second within their first four semesters at Brown, the percentage of these students who dropped the second course late in the term, and the percentage of students who received an "A" or "S with Distinction" in the first course who received a similar grade in the second course. Data were reported by semester of matriculation from fall 2016 to fall 2020. For the MATH and CHEM sequences, there was an increase in the percentage of students taking the second course in the sequence for students who entered Brown in fall 2019 and fall 2020; a decrease in the percentage dropping the second course late; and an increase in the percentage of students who received an A in the first course receiving an A in the subsequent semester. For the Economics sequence, the number of sections of ECON 1110 in the 2020 and 2021 academic years fell by half and resulted in fewer seats for students in the second course. With this smaller pool, there was (unsurprisingly) a decrease in the percentage of students taking the second course among students matriculating fall 2020. Among this

smaller group, there was an increase in late drops and in the percentage of students who received A or S with Distinction in the first course who received a similar grade in the second course. These early results suggest that more students achieved learning outcomes that allowed them to be successful in the subsequent courses in the MATH and CHEM sequences, which are critical for a wide range of concentrations and career pathways. Repeating this analysis over the next few years will give us more insight into the forces shaping grade distributions.

Figure 3  
Example of Chemistry sequence results for student by fall term of matriculation



### *Evaluation of the Writing Flag Process*

As the only curricular requirement that all students must meet, writing is a critical learning outcome for Brown students. As an assurance that the University graduates students who are competent writers, a longstanding policy had been the “writing check”: any instructor (faculty or graduate TA) could issue a check on a course grade sheet when the quality of a student’s written assignments raised concerns. On transcripts, these flags were designated “WDEF” and a student who received a check was not able to graduate until it was remediated (strategies for doing so include enrolling in a Nonfiction Writing Class or working with a Writing Advisor over the course of a term).

In the 2019–20 academic year, because of the potential impact of writing checks, the large degree of discretion for instructors to assign them, and the heightened awareness around implicit bias, the Sheridan Center conducted an evaluation of the process. The study focused on who assigned writing checks, who received them, and the impact of receiving a writing deficiency notation on a student transcript. The evaluation combined quantitative analysis of student record data with qualitative interviews of faculty who frequently assign checks and students who had received one recently.

A small proportion of Brown students (3.5%) received a writing check, and only 11% of these students had more than one. Despite their infrequency, students from historically underrepresented groups, international students, first-generation students, aided students, and female students were overrepresented in the proportion of writing checks received. Disparities held even when controlling for incoming test scores. For example, students who scored in the lowest SAT Verbal/ACT English tercile from historically underrepresented groups received writing checks at a rate 1.7 higher than white peers in the same tercile. A very small number of instructors (ten faculty and three GTAs) assigned writing checks to three or more students between fall 2016 and spring 2019. All ten faculty members were interviewed with the results showing that lower-order writing concerns were frequently identified in their rationale. Many were not aware that writing checks were tied to graduation and at least one believed a check would give students priority in making appointments with the Writing Center. These interviews suggested that the process would benefit from greater structure and information for instructors considering assigning a check.

Student interviewees described powerful reactions to receiving a check, including diminished confidence as writers, surprise, and extreme confusion. Students suggested changing the code (WDEF) and the description from “helping students inadequate in English” to something that communicates “for students struggling in an area of writing, help is available.”

Based on the evaluation, the CCC enacted several changes to the process in spring 2020. This included changing the name from a Writing Deficiency (WDEF) check to a Writing Support (WSUP) Flag, providing more explicit guidance to instructors on the kinds of writing issues that are intended to be flagged, requiring instructors to document their rationale for assigning a flag, and creating a two-tier system where the first flag encourages students to take advantage of specific supports for their writing and subsequent flags require completing one of the resolution pathways. In the two academic years since these changes were implemented, there has been an increase in the number of students receiving writing flags, to an average of 60 students per academic year compared to 36 on average for the three prior academic years. We need a few more years of data to assess the impact of the changes noted above. However, despite the increase, we see that the vast majority of students consistently pass at least one WRIT course in the first two years (92-94% for fall 2016 through fall 2020 cohorts). The University will conduct a similar evaluation of the new processes for Writing Support Flags in AY 2025–26.

### ***Equitable Learning Inquiry Program***

In 2021, Brown was selected to join 37 other universities in the Learning Community for Howard Hughes Medical Institute’s (HHMI) Driving Change Initiative. As part of this initiative, Brown has committed to examining structural racism in STEM education across the University. To support this aim, the Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning launched the Equitable Learning Inquiry (ELI) Program in fall 2021. The ELI Program provides resources and support to help faculty members examine their courses to determine the extent to which student experiences and outcomes are equitable across members of different identity groups, with particular attention paid to differences across racialized groups. The ELI Program pilot focused on foundational STEM courses since success in these courses plays a critical role in students’ choices about pathways through the Open Curriculum overall.

Nine faculty members teaching large introductory STEM courses were invited by the Provost to participate in the program as HHMI Faculty Fellows for Equitable Learning. Supported by Sheridan Center staff, they defined key questions for inquiry, examined contextualized engagement and learning outcomes data for students in their course, identified goals and strategies to achieve more equitable learning, and evaluated the success of these efforts. Sheridan Center assessment staff worked with colleagues at OIR to collect quantitative data on student outcomes in foundational STEM courses since fall 2016 and analyzed this data to identify equity gaps. In a series of workshops, Faculty Fellows were introduced to key social psychological concepts related to equitable learning, including growth mindset, stereotype threat, metacognition, self-efficacy, science identity, and sense of belonging. Drawing on these literatures, they developed their own interventions and piloted them in their courses.

Analysis of grade data suggests that marginalized students enrolled in courses in which faculty members were participating in the ELI Program were more likely to get an A grade than marginalized students in other equivalent-level STEM courses. Results were particularly significant for Black and African American students: in ELI Program courses, equity gaps for Black students were reduced by more than half as compared to the same course taught in prior years by the same instructors. In addition, qualitative data suggest growth in students’ sense of autonomy, competence, and relatedness across ELI Program courses. For instance, in a course in which the Faculty Fellow implemented an intervention to promote metacognition, students were significantly more likely to invoke themes related to sense of autonomy in their qualitative responses than students in other participating courses that did not explicitly promote metacognition. In a course in which the Fellow’s intervention pertained to promoting growth mindset,

students were significantly more likely to invoke themes related to a sense of competence than students in other participating courses.

### **Measures of Student Success**

Brown's undergraduate retention and graduation rates are consistently extremely high. The current six-year graduation rate is 96% (a slight increase from 95% two years prior). The eight-year graduation rate for Brown undergraduates has remained constant at 96% since AY 2019–20. There is little variation in six-year graduation rates by gender, though the rate for women is very slightly higher than that for men. There is also little variation in six-year graduation rate by race or ethnicity, with the exception of Native Americans and Alaska Natives. The six-year graduation rate for this group is much lower and much more variable (57%–71%) due to small numbers compared to other racial or ethnic groups. A small number of Native and Indigenous students matriculate at the University each year, and Brown has committed to increasing support for these students' needs, particularly through the Native American and Indigenous Studies Institute and the Tribal Community Member in Residence.

Of the class of 2022, 28% graduated with concentration honors, and 23% graduated Magna Cum Laude. Brown undergraduates consistently exceed national average admission rates for both law school and medical school. In AY 2021–21, 81% of Brown applicants were admitted to law school, as compared to 68% of national applicants. In the same year, 81% of Brown applicants were admitted to medical school, as compared to 38% of national applicants. Average LSAT and composite MCAT scores of Brown applicants have hovered around the 95th percentile over the last several years. Brown undergraduates have also consistently performed well in national fellowship competitions, including the Beinecke, Fulbright, Goldwater, Marshall, Mitchell, Rhodes, and Truman Scholarships. With 29 Fulbright grants awarded to students and recent alumni for the 2021–22 academic year, Brown was the country's top producer of Fulbright winners, marking the fourth time the University earned the distinction.

Brown's graduate programs perform well with regard to retention and graduation. At the doctoral level, Brown is very competitive with peer institutions in terms of median time to degree, which ranges from 5.28 years in the life and physical sciences, to 6.27 years in the humanities. Over the past ten years, the average attrition rate across Brown's doctoral programs was 10.6%, with most attrition occurring in the first three years.

### **Student Achievement on Mission-Appropriate Student Outcomes**

#### ***Liberal Learning Gains***

Students' self-assessment of their learning is central to achieving the goals of the Open Curriculum. Self-reported learning gains on the COFHE Senior Survey (offered in even years with the exception of 2020)<sup>3</sup> provide useful longitudinal insights into students' perceptions of their learning gains related to several of the Liberal Learning Goals. Respondents indicating that the school contributed "Very Much" or "Quite a Bit" to a specific learning goal provides a useful metric of meaningful learning attributed to Brown's curriculum and co-curriculum. Extensive longitudinal data with peer comparisons can be found in the E-Series Forms: Learning Gains. Below are some highlights.

For several Liberal Learning Goals, Brown's 2022 graduates reported meaningful learning gains at a slightly higher rate than at peer institutions. "Work on your speaking and writing" is among the highest priority Liberal Learning Goals in the Open Curriculum, and 79% of Brown senior respondents in 2022 reported meaningful learning gains in their ability to write clearly and effectively compared to 75% of

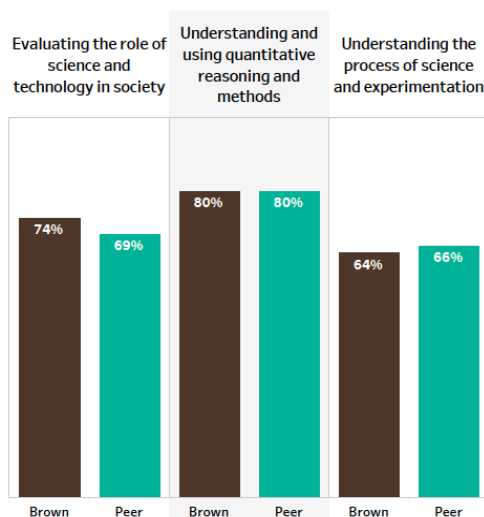
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<sup>3</sup> Because the COFHE Learning Gains questions are designed for multiple institutions there is not perfect alignment with the 11 Liberal Learning Goals.

seniors at peer institutions. Similarly, 74% reported meaningful learning gains in their ability to communicate well orally, compared to 72% at peer institutions. Two COFHE Senior Survey items align well with the liberal learning goal of understanding differences among cultures: “developing global awareness” and “placing problems in historical, cultural, or philosophical perspective.” For the first item, 76% of Brown seniors reported meaningful learning gains compared to 68% of peers. For the second item, 73% of Brown seniors indicated meaningful learning gains compared to 68% of peers). In terms of embracing diversity, 81% of Brown respondents indicated that the University contributed to meaningful learning gains for “relating well” to people of different races, nations, and religions” compared to 73% at peer institutions. In 2022, a significant majority of Brown seniors reported meaningful learning gains for functioning effectively as a member of a team (81% compared to 76% at peer institutions). Data from the 2022 senior survey are reflective of trends for these items over the last decade.

The longitudinal data reveal improvements in students reporting meaningful learning gains around scientific inquiry. In 2014, 2016, and 2018, a lower percentage of Brown seniors reported meaningful learning gains related to scientific inquiry relative to students at peer institutions. Results for 2022 indicate an improving trend for learning gains for all three items related to scientific inquiry: “evaluating the role of science and technology in society” (74% of Brown respondents reported meaningful learning gains compared to 69% at peer institutions); “understanding and using quantitative reasoning and methods” (80% of Brown respondents compared to 80% at peer institutions); and “understanding the process of science and experimentation” (64% of Brown respondents compared to 66% at peer institutions). Both relative to peers and in terms of the percent of students reporting meaningful gains, this last item represents the greatest place for growth. See Figure 4. The recent addition of COEX courses to curricular program options (discussed above) based on the course-based undergraduate research experience (CURE) model will increasingly offer more students opportunities to engage in authentic research.

Figure 4  
Percent responding “Very much” or “Quite a bit” on Senior Survey 2022  
Scientific Inquiry



### *Graduate Student Outcomes*

At the master’s level, a Brown education provides a strong foundation for post-graduate employment. The most common post-graduate fields for master’s students one year after graduation include higher education (22%), computing and information technology (16%), K-12 education (10%), medicine (6%),

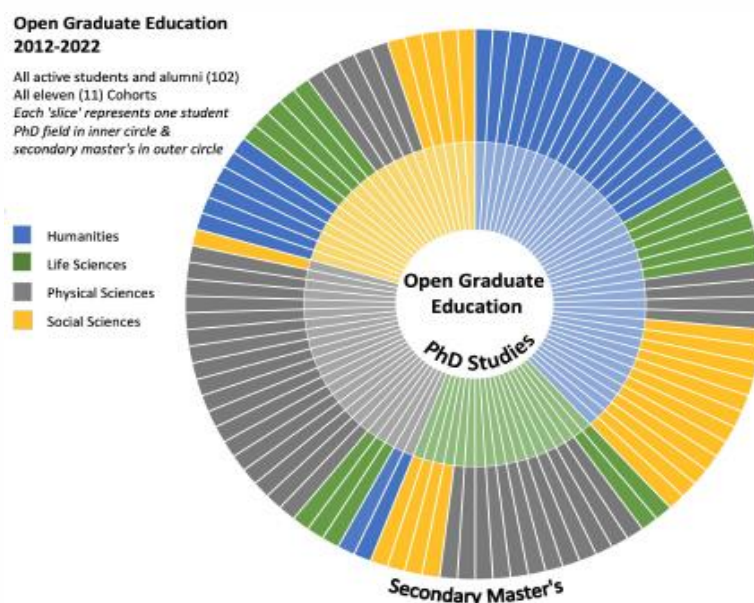


and pharmaceuticals (6%). For Master's of Public Health graduates, 98% were employed or pursuing educational opportunities within 12 months of graduation. In a survey administered by OIR, 75% of all master's graduates strongly or somewhat agreed that their education at Brown prepared them for their current careers, and 100% of respondents reported that their current job was related to their degree.

At the doctoral level, according to the Council of Graduate Schools Career Pathways Survey, a majority of Brown doctoral students in the humanities and social sciences aspire to careers in higher education; there is more variability in other divisions but it is still regarded as desirable by a significant number of students. Despite the challenges of the academic job market, the majority (58%) of all Brown Ph.D.s who graduated between 2010 and 2020 are working in academia, though there are divisional variations. Of those who graduated with a Ph.D. in a humanities discipline, 81% are working in academia; in the social sciences, 70% of Brown Ph.D.s are employed in academia. In the life and physical sciences, 53% and 42% of doctoral graduates are employed in academia, respectively. These placements likely reflect the broader range of professional opportunities available to Ph.D.s in some disciplines, as well as career aspirations in different fields, for example in the life and physical sciences. Among Brown doctoral graduates from the past 15 years, 48% of those employed in academia are working in AAU institutions. This is one metric that can be used to measure progress toward Brown's goal of producing field-leading scholars. OIR survey data suggest that Brown doctoral graduates also feel well prepared for life after graduation, regardless of employment sector: in 2020, 96% of respondents strongly or somewhat agreed that their Brown education prepared them for their current career, and 92% reported that their current job is related to their degree.

*Interdisciplinary Learning at the Graduate Level.* Interdisciplinarity is also an important component of graduate education at Brown. Data on the Open Graduate Program provide insight into this at the doctoral level. Figure 5 illustrates the disciplines of the doctoral and secondary master's degrees of Open Graduate Program participants and demonstrates the degree to which these cross divisional lines.

Figure 5



## Looking Ahead

In anticipation of the 2028 self-study, the University will assess a number of critical dimensions of educational effectiveness that are central to our strategic goals.

- As the number of courses and programs offered online increases, we will need to evaluate their effectiveness. For example, the new online MPH program can be benchmarked against the in-person MPH program; there should be similar or identical learning outcomes. Evaluating the effectiveness of remote-accessible courses is also critical as the University seeks to expand opportunities for students to study abroad and participate in other experiential learning opportunities away from campus. Remote accessible pathways are being identified in several concentrations and it will be important to assess the use of this new modality to meet concentration learning goals.
- With the longer-term impacts of the pandemic in mind, it will be important to continue assessing impacts on student learning and the effects of changes to instruction, e.g. new models of course-level assessment and the incorporation of digital teaching techniques to engage students. We will extend the analysis of course progression data to evaluate long-term trends in grade distributions and other student outcomes (e.g., concentration choices). Examining how well entering classes of students perform in foundational courses will address concerns of some community members about student preparedness and learning loss during the pandemic.
- The expansion of Race, Power, and Privilege (RPP) designated courses across the curriculum is intended to ensure that all undergraduates develop an understanding of how race continues to shape people's lives in the U.S. and around the world. In addition to evaluating the reach of these courses, the University will assess whether students are meeting the learning outcomes of this curricular program.
- Revisions to the Writing Support Flag process were designed to address potential bias and perceived arbitrariness in the assignment of flags and encourage students to use writing supports to grow as writers. Going forward, it will be possible to evaluate the new process to see whether the use of writing flags has changed and the impact on students' completion of the writing requirement.
- As capstone experiences continue to expand, there is an important opportunity to directly assess student learning in each concentration. New standard questions in the concentration review process provide an opportunity to assess how programs use capstones as a direct measure of student learning. This work will begin with an analysis of concentration reviews between fall 2022 and spring 2025.
- The Task Force on Doctoral Education emphasized the importance of developing field-leading scholars and the need to help doctoral students develop the professional skills needed for a wide array of career paths. The Graduate School is working with departments and programs to develop metrics to assess progress on these parallel goals. The University will evaluate these metrics and the insights on doctoral education that they provide as part of the 2028 self-study.

In keeping with its mission, Brown seeks to offer outstanding educational opportunities to students at all levels and is committed to the processes of critical self-reflection and continuous assessment that enable us—instructors, academic programs, and students themselves—to calibrate the extent to which our accomplishments are meeting our aspirations.

## CONCLUSION: LOOKING AHEAD

There are a number of issues that will likely engage Brown University in the next five years, from internal challenges and opportunities to external events over which we have little control. The last five years have been consequential in ways that were anticipated at the time of the decennial review in 2018 and those that were completely unexpected. In looking ahead, then, it seems reasonable to express some hesitation to predict with confidence the challenges that might confront us in the next five years, especially in light of the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic and the sharp rupture it caused.

The preceding section, on Educational Effectiveness, concludes with a number of issues that are related to our goal of inclusive academic excellence that we will want to explore in greater detail in the self-study leading up to the next decennial review. Other topics to be addressed include:

*Diversity, equity, and inclusion.* As is discussed throughout this report, Brown is committed to supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion in the belief that these values are essential components of our mission of excellence in education and research. We are committed to tracking demographic and other data in order to assess whether we are meeting our goals, and to finding ways of measuring the extent to which our community is realizing the vision of being genuinely inclusive. To that end, the University is preparing to administer a climate survey in spring 2023, as a follow-up to last one (2018) in order to understand the experiences and perspectives of all members of the community and how they may have changed over time. The results will help to guide initiatives that are responsive to the needs of students, faculty, and staff, and also help to assess the effectiveness of the DIAP. The forthcoming report of the Task Force on the Status of Women Faculty will likewise inform our planning with respect to ensuring gender equity and equal opportunity.

*The changing landscape of admissions.* Applications for undergraduate admission have increased over the past decade or more, and this trend accelerated after the requirement that students submit SAT/ACT scores was suspended. In terms of deciding whether to reinstate it, we will want to monitor the performance of students who do or do not submit scores to evaluate their importance in admission decisions and the extent to which test scores may correspond to academic outcomes. We also cannot predict well what would happen if Brown were to return to requiring scores, in particular on the size and composition of the applicant pool. A further complicating factor, of course, is the forthcoming Supreme Court decisions on affirmative action. If the court rules that race-conscious admission policies are no longer permissible, this will likely have an enormous impact on institutions like Brown that are committed to diversity and access. The University is already taking steps to assess that impact, and to develop alternative strategies for fulfilling our commitment to enrolling a diverse student body across all of our academic programs. The Provost has convened a working group with representatives from the College, Graduate School, Medical School, the Office of the General Counsel, and the Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity to evaluate the path forward.

*Investing in research and enhancing doctoral education.* The plan to increase Brown's research footprint significantly in the next five to seven years will require targeted investments in people, systems, and places. Planning efforts are well underway, and it is clear meeting our targets—which are ambitious—will require the same sort of sustained attention that has been the hallmark of *Building on Distinction* and the DIAP. One component of research excellence is support for doctoral education, and the Report of the Task Force on Doctoral Education has provided a roadmap for improvements and enhancements in that area. Tracking our progress in implementing the recommendations is a priority for the Graduate School and the academic deans in the next few years, and developing better data about students' experience and career outcomes is imperative if we want to be able to evaluate our successes and failures.

*Financial sustainability.* We continue to be attentive to the long-term financial health and sustainability of the University and have benefited from a period of excellent endowment performance, the fundraising success of *BrownTogether*, and the impact of new systems and processes that have improved planning capacity. This has made it possible to support existing programs and priorities and to make important investments in new ones. However, we have seen increasing signs of economic instability in the last year or so, with higher inflation and more volatile markets. While Brown’s financial position remains strong, the next few years may present challenges that require careful planning and stewardship of resources if we are to be able to make the sorts of investments we believe are essential to academic excellence.

*Leadership transitions.* Brown has seen a number of transitions in academic leadership in recent years. Mukesh Jain began his appointment as Senior Vice President for Health Affairs and Dean of Medicine and Biological Sciences in March 2022, and Tejal Desai joined Brown as Dean of the School of Engineering in September. Leah VanWey succeeded Kevin McLaughlin as Dean of the Faculty on July 1, 2022, and there are currently interim deans of the Graduate School (Thomas Lewis) and School of Public Health (Ronald Aubert). Francis Doyle, Dean of Harvard’s School of Engineering, begins his term on July 1 of this year. Finally, the Corporation of Brown University has extended President Christina H. Paxson’s current term to June 2026, noting her transformational impact on the University, her remarkable leadership, and her unshakeable commitment to elevating Brown’s excellence.

On the administrative side, there has likewise been an infusion of new senior leaders, including Michael White, Vice President and Chief Financial Officer (January 2020), Marie Williams, Vice President of Human Resources (July 2021), Sarah Latham, Executive Vice President of Finance and Administration (January 2022), and Sharon Pitt, Vice President for Information Technology and Chief Information Officer (December 2022).

Despite these transitions, Brown has enjoyed a high degree of continuity, as a consequence of a highly collegial and consultative culture and the centrality of strategic planning efforts in articulating priorities and providing direction. While new plans and priorities will no doubt emerge in the coming years, we anticipate that they will be reflective of the University’s enduring mission and consonant with its values.