



Iona College

715 NORTH AVENUE, NEW ROCHELLE, NY 10801-1890

PHONE: (914) 633-2000

November 8, 2011

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

We recently discovered inaccuracies in student performance data reported to external agencies. In response, we subsequently initiated a thorough investigation by outside legal counsel with the assistance of a third-party independent auditing firm. The audit found that inaccurate data—related to acceptance rates, SAT scores, graduation rates, and alumni who give annually—was reported to external agencies.

The principal findings of those investigations are contained within this report.

We believe that the character of Iona College will be measured in how we handle this matter moving forward. Therefore, the College has adopted a position of transparency and taken steps to ensure that such discrepancies cannot occur again. We have self-reported the inaccurate data to all external agencies and made the findings of this report available to the public. We also have made a commitment to restoring the integrity in our reporting processes by reviewing and redefining all management practices and procedures surrounding data collection, including establishing an Integrity Reporting Committee.

As always, Iona College remains dedicated to the values of justice, peace, and service and to the growth of its students, faculty, staff, and alumni. We hope that you will join with the Board of Trustees, the faculty, and staff in our commitment to the development of Iona College. Your feedback is valued, so please contact us if you would like to share your thoughts and comments.

With high regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James P. Hynes".

Mr. James P. Hynes
Chairman
Board of Legal Trustees

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joseph E. Nyre".

Joseph E. Nyre, Ph.D.
President



**A REPORT TO THE IONA COMMUNITY ON
THE INVESTIGATION INTO
STUDENT PERFORMANCE-RELATED DATA**

FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

NOVEMBER 07, 2011

Overview

Upon being appointed the new president of the College, Dr. Joseph Nyre learned of allegations about inaccuracies in data reported to external agencies. An initial inquiry into the allegations focused on mean and percentile rank SAT scores and included interviews with the Provost and administrative staff. Tarter Krinsky & Drogin led this preliminary review, which revealed a deviation in actual SAT data versus the information reported to external agencies. Tarter Krinsky & Drogin conducted the investigation into the allegations with O'Connor Davies Munns & Dobbins, LLP, an independent auditing firm.

Investigation Principles & Resolutions by the Legal Board of Trustees

The investigation was guided by the following resolutions and principles proposed by President Nyre and adopted by the Board of Trustees:

1. **Transparency & Integrity:** Consistent with and in support of the mission, heritage, and integrity of Iona College, the Board of Legal Trustees endorsed the President's recommendation for transparency to all external agencies, faculty, staff, students, alumni, and related stakeholders.
2. **Self-Reporting:** The Board of Legal Trustees authorized and endorsed the President and legal counsel to self-report the discrepancies in data to external agencies. Preliminary concerns about the reliability and validity of data were reported to external agencies and additional communications with those agencies has been ongoing. In addition, the Integrity in Reporting Committee, comprised of campus leaders, was established by Dr. Nyre to review reporting needs and to ensure open and honest communications with Iona faculty, staff, alumni and donors, and the community.
3. **Internal Audit:** Authorized the President to direct Tarter Krinsky & Drogin to retain O'Connor Davies Munns & Dobbins to conduct a full review of the student performance data reported to outside organizations.
4. **Commitment and Support of Iona College:** As a reflection of continued confidence in and support of Iona College, the Trustees reaffirmed their membership and commitment to the Board of Legal Trustees.
5. **Provost Resignation:** The Board of Legal Trustees accepted the resignation of the Provost and accepted the President's recommendation to install Dr. Brian Nickerson as Interim Provost, Iona College.

Summary of Findings

The audit found a consistent pattern of overstating student data by Iona during a 10-year period of time, beginning in the year 2002. The College reported inaccurate data to external agencies in a total of 10 categories (see Table below for full information):

- 1.) Freshman acceptances;
- 2.) Acceptance rate;
- 3.) Yield rate;
- 4.) Mean and percentile rank SAT scores;
- 5.) Student-faculty ratio;
- 6.) Freshman retention rate;
- 7.) 4-year graduation rate;
- 8.) 5-year graduation rate;
- 9.) 6-year graduation rate; and
- 10.) Alumni who give annually.

Table Variable	Actual vs. Reported Values		Percent Difference Between Actual and Reported Values		
	Average Actual	Average Reported	Average	High	Low
Freshmen Acceptances					
Applications	5401	5486	1.6%	5.1%	0.0%
Acceptance Rate	69%	63%	6%	9%	4%
Yield Rate	24%	27%	3.8%	3.8%	2%
SAT Verbal					
25th Percentile	454	523	15.2%	20.0%	10.9%
75th Percentile	548	622	13.5%	18.5%	8.9%
SAT Math					
25th Percentile	456	534	17.1%	22.2%	11.4%
75th Percentile	556	630	13.3%	20.0%	7.3%
SAT Average	1015	1081	6.5%	8.5%	2.0%
High School GPA Average	84	88	4.8%	7.2%	1.2%
Student-Faculty Ratio	15:1	13:1	13.3%	13.3%	0%
Freshmen Retention Rate	78%	81%	3.7%	13%	0%
Graduation Rates					
4-Year Graduation Rate	40.2%	48.5%	20.5%	21.8%	19.8%
5-Year Graduation Rate	55.1%	57.2%	3.8%	4.2%	3.5%
6-Year Graduation Rate	58.4%	60.8%	4.1%	4.3%	3.9%
Alumni Who Give Annually	3380	6774	100.4%	121.2%	74.7%

During this period, data in the above mentioned categories was reported to meet the specific and varied requirements of the following external agencies:

1. National Center for Education Statistics - U.S. Department of Education;
2. New York Department of Education;
3. Dormitory Authority of the State of New York;
4. Middle States Commission on Higher Education;
5. Standard and Poors;
6. Moody's;
7. Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities;
8. College Board;
9. American College Testing (ACT);
10. National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA);
11. U.S. News and World Report;
12. Princeton Survey;
13. Peterson's; and
14. Barron's.

Actions Taken by the College

The Board of Trustees and the President have placed the highest priority on promptly responding to this situation by supporting a full and complete investigation and by taking immediate steps to resolve the matter. The leadership of the College has repeatedly demonstrated their commitment to transparency from the initial discovery of inaccurate data to this final report. Their actions thus far include:

- The College self-reported the preliminary concerns about the accuracy and reliability of the data to all external agencies and has continued to communicate openly with those agencies about the matter.
- The Integrity in Reporting Committee, comprised of administrative staff leaders and faculty from across the College, was established by President Nyre. The Committee has developed institutional policies and guidelines on appropriate collection, reporting, and use of data to ensure the accuracy and reliability of data reported by the College. The Committee also is responsible for providing transparency in communications with internal and external audiences. Information about the committee's activities is regularly updated on the Iona website.
- The Board of Trustees and the Alumni Board of Directors unanimously passed resolutions supporting full disclosure, transparency and self-reporting. As a reflection of their continued confidence in and support of Iona College, the Trustees present during a meeting at the College on September 21, 2011 reaffirmed their membership and commitment to the Board of Legal Trustees.

- The President, Interim Provost and members of the Integrity in Reporting Committee have conducted meetings, including Q&A sessions, with all academic and administrative departments.
- A news release was sent to the media announcing that the College had discovered inaccuracies in student performance data reported to external agencies. The release also stated that an investigation was being conducted by legal counsel and an independent auditing firm had been engaged to determine the nature and scope of the reporting problems.

Additional Recommendations for Internal Processes and Structures at Iona

Going forward, Iona will take a number of management, organizational and policy/procedural actions in order to ensure, that appropriate checks and balances for data collection and reporting are in place. The four following actions are recommended:

1. Establish a formal Office of Institutional Research and create a full-time Director position. This office should be responsible for approving all reporting methodologies, including authorization of the appropriate personnel for collecting and issuing reports for either internal or external purposes.
2. Codify the institutional policies and guidelines on appropriate collection, reporting, and use of data created by the Integrity in Reporting Committee. Once established, these policies and guidelines should be shared broadly with campus stakeholders and others.
3. Increase administrative staff to ensure data is properly collected, reported and verified through the use of appropriate checks and balances.
4. Individuals who possess knowledge of any improprieties at Iona will have access to and be reminded to use the College's whistle-blower hotline and related procedures for reporting potential misconduct, which Iona can then investigate.
5. Conduct an independent annual audit of the College's data systems and reports to verify data quality and validity.
6. Renew the College Code of Conduct, with the involvement of faculty, staff and students.